

January 24, 2021 – 3rd Sunday After Epiphany

Prelude

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction to the day

As we continue through the time after Epiphany, stories of the call to discipleship show us the implications of our baptismal calling to show Christ to the world. Jesus begins proclaiming the good news and calling people to repentance right after John the Baptist is arrested for preaching in a similar way. Knowing that John was later executed, we see at the very outset the cost of discipleship. Still, the two sets of brothers leave everything they have known and worked for all their lives to follow Jesus and fish for people.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

We Remember Murray Lubitz, who Jesus Christ called home on January 20th. We light a candle to remember Murray and pray for his family that mourns him.

Let us Pray

Lord of consolation, we thank you for the comfort of knowing our departed loved one is face to face with you. Although our hearts long for him to be with us, we know he is experiencing unspeakable joy in your glorious presence. We know that the one who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also raise us – holy, unblemished, and blameless. We thank you for releasing our loved one from the clutches of death into eternal life because he trusted in you. Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP

From God comes my salvation. Ps. 62:1–2

For God alone my soul waits in silence.

God alone is my rock and my salvation.

God is my fortress; I shall never be shaken.

COME LET US WORSHIP.



CALL TO CONFESSION

Trusting in the promise of grace, Ps. 62:8

let us pour out our hearts before God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Forgiving God, Jonah 3:1–2, 10
we repent of all the ways we turn from you.
You call, but we do not listen;
you show us your path, but we prefer our own way.
Forgive us, heal us, and lead us back to you,
that we might show mercy to others.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

This is the word of the Lord:
in Jesus Christ, you are forgiven by God and given new life.

Gathering Song: ELW #308 - *“O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright”*

Greeting: The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Kyrie

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

The present form of this world is passing away.

1 Cor. 7:31

Therefore, help us to keep our focus on you, Lord, for true power and steadfast love belong to you. **Amen.**

Ps. 62:11-12

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Speak to us your word, O God, that we may hear Jesus' call to be his disciples. **Amen.**

First Reading: Jonah 3:1-5, 10

A reading from Jonah.

The book of Jonah is a comedy starring a reluctant prophet who is given a one-sentence message: Nineveh will be destroyed in forty days. Much to Jonah's dismay, the people of Nineveh repent. The point of the story is to get the reader to wrestle with the question "On whom should God have mercy?"

¹The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying, ²"Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you."

³So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across.

⁴Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" ⁵And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth. ¹⁰When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 62:5-12

God alone is my rock and my salvation. (Ps. 62:6)

⁵For God alone I wait in silence;
truly, my hope is in God.

⁶**God alone is my rock and my salvation,
my stronghold, so that I shall never be shaken.**

⁷In God is my deliverance and my honor;
God is my strong rock and my refuge.

⁸**Put your trust in God always, O people,
pour out your hearts before the one who is our refuge.**

⁹Those of high degree are but a fleeting breath; those of low estate cannot be trusted.

Placed on the scales together they weigh even less than a breath.

¹⁰**Put no trust in extortion; in robbery take no empty pride;
though wealth increase, set not your heart upon it.**

¹¹God has spoken once, twice have I heard it,
that power belongs to God.

¹²**Steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord,
for you repay all according to their deeds.**

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Paul does not disapprove of marriage or other human social institutions. He does, however, want Christians to live in the present in fervent anticipation of God's future, which even now has dawned through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

²⁹Brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, ³⁰and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, ³¹and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: Mark 1:14-20

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Before Jesus calls his first disciples, he proclaims a message that becomes known as "the gospel" or good news from God. God is ready to rule our lives. Those who realize this will respond with repentance and faith.

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." ¹⁶As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁷And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." ¹⁸And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets.

²⁰Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

The gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Message: *Epiphany Sermon Series*, Bishop Greg Mohr, BC Synod.

SERMON



BISHOP GREG MOHR, BC Synod

Ominous words begin today's gospel reading.

"Now after John was arrested..."

You can hear the music in the background change. There is a sense of foreboding . . . danger.

Granted, these are not the first words in the gospel of Mark, but they are pretty close to the beginning. After all, we're only in chapter 1, verse 14 here.

But these are the first words of this large, major section of the gospel of Mark. This begins Jesus' ministry.

Before I go further, I want to bring my greetings to all you across the ELCIC, as well as to the parishes of the Anglican Diocese of Caledonia in northern BC, and to Bishop David Lehmann, upon his invitation to share in this way for the observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Now after John was arrested..."

Reading those words, you know that there is more than a hint of danger here. There is a recognition that evil, that sinister powers, are at work. There's a darkness that hangs in the air. It's a foreshadowing, certainly, for we know the rest of the story and of what happened to Jesus.

Jesus is always mindful of what he will be facing, confronting, and encountering in the months and years ahead.

The gospel writers often refer to Jesus as "turning his face toward Jerusalem." (Again, another ominous statement.) Maybe John's arrest was expected; inevitable.

Not only did John confront the religious leaders of the day by using some not-very-nice words “ –you brood of vipers” probably doesn’t sit very well; I mean, that is going to elicit a few calls to the Bishop, I tell you, by congregational members concerned about their pastor’s lack of tactfulness. But John the Baptist also had the temerity to challenge King Herod #2. John made the unpardonable sin (from the King’s perspective, that is) of challenging the King’s morality. Herod not only married his own niece, which was *verboten* enough, but his niece was also married to Herod’s brother at the time.

Well, John the Baptist didn’t think this was an action worthy of a king and said so. He condemned Herod and Herod took offence.

And so now John is in prison and things look grim. Enter, stage right, Jesus. Jesus is from the town of Nazareth in Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is about 30 kms to the east. Jesus comes proclaiming the good news of God — “gospel.”

This is the **kairos time**, the right time. The reign of God has come near. It is at hand, right in front of you, all around you. This is God’s time, breaking in, among us, in us, through us.

“Turn around,” said Jesus. “Repent. You’re going the wrong way. The good news is here. God’s activity is among you.”

Then Jesus goes for a walk along the beach. He sees Simon and Andrew — brothers — fishing. And he calls them, to come and follow.

It’s sort of **not** how we do things when calling someone for ministry. What happened to the colloquy exams of candidates? And what of ordinations and council meetings and issuing formal letters of call?

No. Here, Jesus speaks, a word: “ Come. Follow me.”

It is a word that invites us, calls us, calls us to something, calls us into something; calls us on a journey of which we cannot know the ending.

Simon and Andrew are the first to be so called. Then also, Jim and Johnny. There are more to come in this Round #1 of the Disciple Draft. But these four begin the gathering of the disciples.

Now remember what I said about the theme of the opening statement in this story — about John’s imprisonment. That is the context in which this “Call” story takes place. It speaks of the hardships and challenges of life, and it speaks of ministry “*in spite of*” such things.

The gospel calls us, compels us, to be people of grace, to be light in this world, and salt of the earth, in spite of, or maybe **because** of the difficulties and challenges we face.

Jesus calls.

Jesus does not promise a life of ease. He certainly does not promise riches and wealth. But he does promise that he will be with us, all the way to the cross and beyond.

It is this promise of grace and presence that sustains us during the dark moments of our lives.

Jesus and John the Baptist faced the reality of despotic rulers and the likelihood of imprisonment – even death. They witnessed evil incarnate, and they also saw how cheap life was and how easily people were cast aside in their society.

For us, maybe it's not "evil," so much as just the reality of life in this day and age. COVID-19 is laying bare the divisions in our society and the systemic injustices all around us.

We see more clearly the financial inequities, the extra burdens placed upon the poor, the underemployed, those without security of housing, without secure access to food, without guarantees of work.

We see those who are marginalized be even more at risk.

We see so vividly how this COVID-era has affected people's mental and emotional health; the increasing stress and strain, the challenges many face in their relationships.

We see more clearly the fragility of life, the vulnerability of elders in care.

And yes, for many of us, for **all of us**, there is the reality of heartache, pain and sorrow; of isolation and loneliness, and perhaps also the death of a loved one.

For many people in this COVID-era, there is a renewed search for meaning and purpose; unsure of their place in this world, of what they want their future to be.

Old patterns and ways of being and thinking are being re-thought.

What can be, should be, needs to be, set aside? What am I learning about this time that I want to ensure stays with me as we move forward together?

What does it mean to be kind? To be part of community? To live out our faith? To live out this calling that we have been given by Jesus?

As the world has changed around us, we are struggling with questions as to what it means to be the church in this 21st century. It used to be that we could put up a new church building and people would come and fill it. That doesn't happen anymore.

Our world today is quite different: it is increasingly multi-cultural; increasingly multi-faith; there is a strong emphasis on "personal" and "individual" faith; and where everything is "relative"; and there is a significant consumeristic approach to religion as people pick and choose from a variety of religious and spiritual practices.

In addition, religion is often seen as suspect, particularly as the radicalism of religion increases.

As if these challenges were not enough, we are hearing more and more that people simply find the church irrelevant.

In light of such dramatic shifts in the world and within the church itself, it is easy to be paralyzed. We often are unsure of what it means to **be** the church and **how** to be the church in this day and age.

But in the midst of this uncertainty, in the midst of this changing culture, Christ's call to each of us remains the same.

Jesus prayed for us with these words: "As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world." Such words are a reminder that the church does not exist for itself but that Christ calls us to be in the world.

Jesus' call to us continues to re-orient us; to refocus our attention and our action.

First and foremost, his call reminds us of our **identity**: that we are claimed by God, adopted, spirited, enlivened.

It is **Christ** who calls us; and it is Christ who sends us into the world . . .

Or maybe a better way to say that is: It is Christ who calls us out into the world in which Christ is already there; to join Christ in the world, walking along the seashore, serving those on the margins, challenging systems of injustice, caring for the lost, the last and the least, welcoming prodigal children, turning water into wine, and hearing that even a cup of water given in his name is big and huge and Christ-like.

Our identity informs our living; that is, our **living** arises out of our calling, out of our identity. Baptized into Christ we are called to the same mission and the same ministry to which Jesus himself was engaged.

That is our calling. That is our vocation. The word **vocation** literally means a call or summons.

According to James Fowler, “Vocation is **NOT** our job, our work, or our occupation. It may, of course **include** (such things) but it should not be limited to ...one’s source of livelihood (or) identified with one’s career.”

“What is vocation, then?” asks Fowler. He proposes the following:

“Vocation is the response a person makes ... to the address of God and to the calling to (be in) partnership (with God).”

“(It) involves the orchestration of our leisure, our relationships, our work, our private life, our public life, and the resources we steward, so as to put it all at the disposal of God’s purposes in the services of God and the neighbour.”

(James Fowler, Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian)

That is pretty heavy stuff.

But what it is reminding us of, is that **because** we have been called by God, all of our life is to be lived in grace – in joyful response and thanksgiving to the grace and love of God.

Mother Teresa, among others, says it in a similar way. The story has it that when a young man asked Mother Teresa how he could know what he should do with his life, she responded, “Where the needs of the world intersect with your gifts, there is your calling.”

Jesus calls; calls us to follow, calls us to faithfulness, calls us to be like the sower, out there sowing the seed regardless of the results.

The sower is all too aware of the rocks, the trodden path, the birds, the thorns. But the sower sows nonetheless.

Our job, our calling, our **vocation**, is to sow the seed, to serve and love, to worship and praise.

Our calling, our vocation, recalls the words of the prophet Micah:

*“What does the Lord require of you,
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)*

“Now after John was arrested . . . “

Jesus walks beside the Sea of Galilee . . . and he calls: Simon, Andrew, James, John, me, you ...

to ventures of which we cannot see the ending by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown.

We walk forward in faith, trusting in the God who has called us by name.

Hymn of the Day: ELW #817 - *“You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore”*

Prayers of the People

Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

For the church throughout the world, for pastors and teachers, for deacons and deaconesses, and for musicians and servers, that all proclaim the good news of God’s reconciling love, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For skies and seas, for birds and fish, for favorable weather and clean water, and for the well-being of creation, that God raise up advocates and scientists to guide our care for all the earth, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For those who provide leadership in our cities and around the world, for non-profit and nongovernmental organizations, for planning commissions and homeless advocates, that God inspire all people in the just use of wealth, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For Christian Unity, Jesus prayed that his followers might be one. Make all Christians one with him as he is one with you, so that in peace and concord we may carry to the world the message of your love, Let us pray, **Have mercy O God.**

We Pray for the Call Committee of the Zion Lutheran Church, as they prepare to call a new pastor. Pray we focus on what matters: a person who loves Christ, His Word, and His church. Pray the new pastor will be a person of Christ-like character. Let us pray. **Have mercy O God.**

For those who are sick, distressed, or grieving; for the outcast and all who await relief, we pray for Florence, Jason, Harold, Laretta, Richard, Murray, Dorian, Sharon, and those we name silently in our hearts that in the midst of suffering, God's peace and mercy surround them, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For our congregation and community, for families big and small, to guide us and be the church for all during social isolation and restrictions to stop the spread of the Corona Virus that has imprisoned us for 10 month. May the vaccines be distributed in an orderly and efficient method over the next few months, that God's steadfast love serve as a model for all relationships, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

In thanksgiving for our ancestors in the faith whose lives serve as an example of gospel living, that they point us to salvation through Christ, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

God is our rock and our fortress. Let us celebrate our salvation by fearlessly giving a portion of what has already been given to us.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING/DEDICATION

Merciful God, you have saved us for a purpose. We dedicate these gifts as we dedicate our lives to you, that you will make us fishers of people.
Mark 1:17

GREAT THANKSGIVING/COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,.....we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

Lord God of pow'r and might:

Heav'n and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory.....

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see that the Lord is good. We will commune together:

Communion Hymn: *"Lamb of God"*

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (ELW p. 155)

Let us pray.

Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. Now send us forth to be your people in the world, and to proclaim your truth this day and evermore, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

BLESSING

The God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another,

in accordance with Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The God of all grace ✝ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG : ELW 866, *“We Are Marching In The Light Of God”*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

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News and Announcements:

Please Pray for Those Who are Ill, in Hospital, or Requested Special

Prayers: Florence Felske, Jason Godin, Harold Hampel, Richard Hubert, Dorian Verch, Sharon Watt.

SERVICE BROADCAST ON COGECO

Cogeco Community Channel is now broadcasting Zion's services at 9:00 a.m. and 12 noon on Sunday mornings, a week later.

COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR - ABOUT THE EVENT

It's cold out there. The Coldest Night of the Year is a covid-safe, family-friendly walk to raise money for charities serving people experiencing homelessness, hurt, and hunger. Walk virtually or in-person on February 20, 2021 – there's a place for everyone!

About Our Cause

The Coldest Night of the Year is a moment when tens of thousands of Canadians step outside the warmth and comfort of home and shine a light of welcome and inclusion.

Together, we're collecting donations that fund critical services at a local charity partner who serves and supports vulnerable families and individuals in our CNOY community.

- **We walk** through the cold and dark on **February 20, 2021** to declare our concern for people who have no home, and take shelter in nooks and crannies.
- **We walk** for those whose days are a battle to house and feed their families, and whose nights are filled with fear and frustration.
- **We walk** for those driven from home by violence and abuse. And we walk for people overwhelmed by isolation, guilt and despair
- **We walk** humbly, realizing that anyone can lose their footing and then lose everything else.

Each step we take brings someone closer to safety, health and home, as together, we raise funds for organizations whose commitment and work transforms peoples' lives.

Please help anyway that you can. Call Ellen @ 613 732 7649 if you have any questions

Your Social Ministry Committee

Today's Video Has Been Brought To You By Zion Lutheran Church's Production Crew:

Presider: Pastor Leena Jensen

Musician: Blaine Sack

Worship Assistant/Reader: Debbie Wegner

Projectionist: Philip Vandersleen

Credit Researcher: Diane Hammel

This Week at Zion – January 25 – 31

Tuesday 7p.m. Narcotics Anonymous

Thursday

10am

Recording of Epiphany 4 Service