

Worship Service
Third Sunday of Epiphany – January 24, 2021
St. Christopher-by-the-Sea
Gibson Island, Maryland

Introduction – The Rev. Charles Rowins

Hymn 529, stanzas 1-3

In Christ there is no East or West

Minister: Blessed by God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

People: *And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.*

Minister: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Song of Praise

*Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you,
we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.*

*For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.*

Collect for Third Sunday after Epiphany

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Give us grace, O Lord, to **answer** readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and **proclaim** to all people the good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Jonah 3:1-5, 10 – see lesson insert

Psalm 62:6-14 – see lesson insert

Second Reading: I Corinthians 7:29-31 – see lesson insert

Hymn 126, stanzas 1-3

The people who in darkness walked

Gospel: Mark 1:14-20 – see lesson insert

Sermon – The Rev. Charles Rowins

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father,
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;
That we all may be one.

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;
That your Name may be glorified by all people.

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;
That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;
That there may be justice and peace on the earth.

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;
That they may be delivered from their distress.

Give to the departed eternal rest;
Let light perpetual shine upon them.

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;
May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

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Lord, hear the prayers of your people; and what we have asked faithfully, grant that we may obtain effectually, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Confession

Most merciful God,
We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. *Amen.*

Announcements and *America*

*My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;
Long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might, great God, our King.*

Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication unto thee, and has promised through thy well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name thou wilt be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

Hymn 544, stanzas 1, 3 and 5

Jesus shall reign

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland, Third Sunday of Epiphany, January 24, 2021.

Our theme for today is “answer and proclaim.” Not proclaim and answer, but answer and proclaim. The sequence is important, and is evident in the Collect for today: “Give us grace to answer the call of our Savior and proclaim the Good News of his salvation.”

This sequential theme is evident in all of today’s lessons.

- Jonah (**Jonah 3:1-5, 10**) is told by the Lord to “get up and go to Nineveh,” and warn the people that, if they did not change “their evil ways,” they would be overthrown.
- St. Paul (**I Corinthians 7:29-31**) warns the Corinthians that “the present form of this world is passing away.” “I mean, brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short.” In other words, change is coming.
- Today’s gospel (**Mark 1:14-20**) identifies the change. It is Jesus. “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the Good News.”
- **Psalms 62** confirms the importance of the right change. “Put your trust in him, always, O people, pour out your hearts before him, for God is our refuge.”

When we have been warned, there is an expectation that we will warn others. When we have answered the call, there is an expectation that we will encourage others to listen as well. When we recognize danger, we will give others a heads-up.

Now, this all makes sense if we’re talking about impending disaster. But, is that what we are talking about when we speak of Jesus? Is Jesus the one that is standing between us and safety? Really? How critical, after all, is proclaiming the Good News? What difference does it make? Why should people heed our message, our proclamation?

For me, and I suspect for you, the question is not heaven or hell as an outcome, but quality of life here and now. Outcome is someone else's choice. Our responsibility is right here.

What I hear Jesus saying in Scripture is not "do it this way or else," but "let me help." We don't know about "outcomes," but we do know about trials and tribulations in this life. And we know from our own experience that listening to Jesus and trying to reflect his sacrificial love in our lives is – that is answering and proclaiming – is both helpful to others and satisfying for us.

We see faith as a gift to be shared. In all sorts of ways, God is reaching out to us, hoping that we will answer and proclaim. Indeed, our answer, our thank-you, is proclamation. "I have Good News to share. Give me a few minutes, and let me explain."

This answering and proclaiming takes many different forms. People share love in all sorts of ways. Sometimes the love is obvious. Other times it is tough to identify. Sometimes there is an abundance of Good News. Other times Good News seems really elusive. Yet, even when elusive, Good News can be shared.

And, when it is shared and recognized, that's a good feeling. But sometimes our sharing is not recognized, and that's frustrating. Frustrating both for the giver and the receiver. And, if frustrating for us, think about how frustrating God must be when the gift of His Son is ignored.

And this ignoring can take place both at the answering stage and the proclamation stage. As parents and grandparents, we see young people missing messages, and, even when received, not responding to those messages. What we tend to forget is that roles can be reversed. Sometimes we as parents and grandparents miss messages and, even when received, fail to respond.

That's why family "chats" are important. That's why Scripture is important. That's why Jesus is important. He puts things in front of us. Sometimes it's a mirror, and sometimes it's a window. Whatever its nature, it is important. We are being urged to listen and to respond. And, in some cases, to answer and proclaim.

Don't you love it when your children or grandchildren rush in and say with excitement, "Guess what!" You just know that something special has happened. In their own way, they are answering and proclaiming. We hope that it is Good News. But even if the News is not good, better to have heard it than not to have heard it.

Which leads us to ask, "Where are our children and grandchildren getting their news? What are the sources of their information?" And, if we are concerned, we need to fill in the gaps, don't we. It's called our proclamation. It's called our sharing what is important to us. It's called our passing on lessons learned and hopes fulfilled.

And among the really important lessons and hopes are what you and I believe about God and how God engages the Creation, including the gift of Jesus. What you and I quickly realize, however, is that the notions of God and of God engaging the Creation and of the very special engagement called Jesus are not automatically delivered and received. They need reinforcement. They need our proclamation.

Whether deserved or not, we are providers of information. Young people need you and me to step up and deliver. We are not only deliverers. We are trainers, teachers, proclaimers, sharers. We too have the opportunity and responsibility to say with excitement "Guess what!"

And, more to the point, we have standing with young people. We might not be sources on issues of technology. But we might well be regarded as sources of wisdom, including knowing where to find wisdom, including the Good News.

In his Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul asks an important question: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" Well, guess who the believer is. And guess who the speaker is. You and I are to fulfill these roles, just as the Lord commanded. We are to answer and then we are to proclaim.

What an honor to be entrusted with the Word of the Lord! And, what an honor to do our best to fulfill that trust. Amen.

Lessons for Third Sunday after Epiphany – January 24, 2021

Collect: Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the good News of his salvation, that we and all the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Jonah 3:1-5, 10

The Word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, “Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.” So 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. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day’s walk. And he cried out, “Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth When 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.

Psalm 62:6-14

For God alone my soul in silence waits;

truly, my hope is in him.

He alone is my rock and my salvation,

my stronghold, so that I shall not be shaken.

In God in my safety and my honor;

God is my strong rock and my refuge.

Put your trust in him always, O people,

pour out your hearts before him, for God is our refuge.

Those of high degree are but a fleeting breath,

even those of low estate cannot be trusted.

On the scales they are lighter than a breath,

all of them together.

Put no trust in extortion; in robbery take no empty pride;
though wealth increase, set not your heart upon it.
God has spoken once, twice have I heard it,
that power belongs to God.
Steadfast love is yours, O Lord,
for you repay everyone according to his deeds.

Second Reading: I Corinthians 7:29-31

I mean, brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, and 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, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

Gospel: Mark 1:14-20

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

Hymns for Third Sunday of Epiphany – January 24, 2021

Hymn 529, stanzas 1-3

In Christ there is no East or West

In Christ there is no East or West, in him no South or North,
but one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth.

Join hands, disciples of the faith, whate'er your race may be!
Who serves my Father as his child is surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both East and West, in him meet South and North,
all Christly souls are one in him, throughout the whole wide earth.

Hymn 126, stanzas 1-3

The people who in darkness walked

The people who in darkness walked have seen a glorious light;
On them broke forth the heavenly dawn who dwelt in death and night.

To hail thy rising, Sun of life, the gathering nations come,
Joyous as when the reapers bear their harvest treasures home.

To us the promised Child is born, to us the Son is given;
him shall the tribes of earth obey, and all the hosts of heaven.

Hymn 544, stanzas 1, 3 and 5

Jesus shall reign

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun doth his successive journeys run;
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore, till moon shall wax and wane no more.

People and realms of every tongue dwell on his love with sweetest song;
and infant voices shall proclaim their early blessings on his Name.

Let every creature rise and bring peculiar honors to our King;
angels descend with songs again, and earth repeat the loud amen.