

Church of the Divine Love
THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

March 7, 2021 10:15 A.M.

Morning Prayer, Rite I

<i>Please observe silence after altar candles are lit</i>	<i>All pages refer to The Book of Common Prayer</i>
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Sermon Sunday March 7, 2021

Exodus 20: 1-17; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1: 18-25; John 2: 13-22

Dear people of God,

You may have heard the real-estate mantra “Location, location, location.” It means that where a home is located affects its value. Even if you have a really nice home, if it is located on a busy street you might have difficulty selling it because of the high traffic flow. How does location affect us in other ways? We try to choose a nice place to live, the nicest we can afford, because the environment around us matters.

For the Jews in Jesus’s day, the location of their worship was important. The temple was where they would worship God through specific rituals and offerings. Jesus also worshipped at the temple, taking part in the rituals and offerings. Until the one time that he didn’t. By cleansing the temple of the money changers and the people selling the cattle, sheep, and doves, Jesus stopped the corrupt practices associated with taking advantage of people bringing in animal sacrifices as part of their worship. The money changers were making worship more difficult by inserting themselves between the people and worshipping God. They were imposing their own rules and requirements and taking advantage of people. They had turned the temple into a trade market.

Jesus said in verse 19, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” While they assumed, he was referring to the physical temple, he was referring to his body. We could take this as a prophecy of his resurrection, as the disciples did, and it is, but we must also realize that Jesus isn’t just talking about his body being a future temple, but a temple already. We see in John 1:14 that the Word became flesh and dwelled among us. The Son of God entered a new temple—a human body. Through this human body, Jesus is showing a new intersection where God and humanity meet, one that wasn’t dependent on location. This human body (Jesus’s body)—where humanity and God met—shows us how much God values human bodies. Our embodied experience is our way of being in the world, and as we seek to integrate the truth of our being (who God says we are in Christ—loved, treasured, held) with our way of being (how we move in the world), we also become temples—places of intersection where the divine and human meet. Recognize that Jesus wants to clear out anything that keeps the way we move in the world from reflecting the truth of who we are in Christ. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19), and just as Jesus cleared the temple of anything that was preventing full, unobstructed worship for all people, so he also wants to cleanse us of anything that keeps the way we live our lives from matching the truth of who we are: beloved, valued, worthy. What limiting beliefs keep you from believing you are treasured by God? Value yourself and others as temples of God. No longer are we tied to worshipping at a set location, as if God could be confined to one spot. Instead, as we move in the world, we are never separate from the Holy Spirit. We are so valued by God that the temple has become us. Consider the beauty and the care that was taken in the construction of the tabernacle (Exodus 36) and Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 6). While these were symbolic of God’s presence, Jesus embodied flesh to show that God wants to dwell in and with us, not in a building. People are valuable, made in God’s image, and filled with God’s Spirit.

Location is everything in real estate. It is also important in our spiritual lives when we realize that no matter where we find ourselves, God is there. Where we worship together, God is with us. When we have to be separate because of a pandemic or other issue, God is still with us. Whether we can be together in person or on Zoom or other social media, we are evidencing the presence of God with humanity. As we love and care for one another, we show love and care for the temples of God. The Word became flesh so that the temple might become human. Jesus continues to overturn and throw out business as usual because the truth is there are still Samaritan women waiting at the well in our world today. There are still lame people grounded by business as usual. Empty and hungry people are still a reality in our world and there are dead people waiting to be made alive. Maybe for you today this isn't about other people. Maybe you are the women at the well. Maybe you know what it's like to be grounded and paralyzed. Maybe you are empty and hungry today. Maybe you need to be called to life. Maybe business as usual needs to be interrupted in your life. Regardless of who we are, what we've done or left undone, or how we see or judge our life, we are the temple of God and there is one who stands in the temple of our life interrupting business as usual. So, tell me this. What does the temple of your life need today? What tables in your life need to be overturned? What animals need to be driven out?

This is the message. The transformation is not only about personal transformation, but about the transformation of the community of faith and the church for whom John was writing, as they very painfully separated from their Jewish brothers and sisters. This is about a change from worshipping God located in the holiest place, accessed only by the priests in the temple, to God who came to us in human form, not confined to a building, but located within the temple of the body of Jesus Christ. This transformation is about worshipping God who suffered, died and was buried, and who on the third day rose again, thereby changing the meaning and the focus of our worship. Our worship is relational, with a God who understands us to our very core. Chapter two of John's Gospel is a reflection on its overall message of the good news of the transforming power of Jesus Christ.

I am not asking about what needs to happen so that you can become holy or become the temple, but so you can see that you already are the temple and claim what is already yours. Jesus does not make us into something we were not. He calls us back to who we've always been. So, where will you meet Jesus this week? How will you relate to God? Will you meet him in scripture, in the stories of his humanity and his divinity? Or perhaps you meet Jesus in worship, in the music, the liturgy. Perhaps you meet Jesus in the world outside, in the beauty of creation or in the people you meet and serve, or who serve you. Perhaps you find Jesus in prayer and meditation. In whichever way that you connect with our amazing God, you can be transformed. Why not make this Lent a time for renewal of your own temples? A time to confront some of the brokenness in your own lives and bring this brokenness to Jesus, who surely knows all about brokenness.

Let us end in prayer: Loving and gracious God, we give you thanks for your transforming Son, Jesus Christ. Give us strength and courage for our Lenten journeys, whatever they involve; prayer, fasting, acts of service. Keep us strong in your faith and alert to your love and grace. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen!**

Bishop's Directive – When attending services we are all required to wear a mask, use hand sanitizer, sign in with name and phone number for tracing purposes, and only sit in pews with decals.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

3 LENT

10:15 AM MORNING PRAYER
(also on zoom)

11:15 AM VESTRY MEETING

MONDAY

8:00 AM AA MEETING

WEDNESDAY

7:00 PM AL-ANON MEETING

THURSDAY

10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP

8:00 PM AA MEETING

SATURDAY

10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS-SET CLOCKS AHEAD 1 HOUR

4 LENT

10:15 AM MORNING PRAYER (also on Zoom)

SUPPORT THE FOOD DRIVE DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

Prayer for Grace and Favor:

Dear God, we ask that you provide for our needs, we ask for your grace and favor. We pray for your blessings to cover us; we pray that you would help us to prosper and make every plan that you have birthed in our heart to succeed. We pray that others would take notice of your goodness and could not help but say, "these are the ones that the Lord has blessed." Shine your light in us, through us. May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. Set your way before us. May all your plans succeed. We may reflect your peace and hope to a world that so desperately needs your presence and healing. In Jesus Name, Amen.

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Barbara Curran	Marricco Family	Dina Palkowski
Margaret	Frances & Donna Mongelli	Bernie Walther
Nathan Treadwell	Jerry & Family	Tyler Gorman
Kim	Chris Dickson	Rachael
Michael Echevarria	Caesar	Warren
Bill Conklin	Michael & Family	Anthony Paribello
Martinisi Family	Edward Lent	Lois Kessler
Kate Jones	Kathleen	Del
Irene	Girard Bishop	Warren

Children who are ill:

Christopher and his family	Franklin Tenesaca	Ciara Berbeck
Aidan	Gabriel	