

Church of the Divine Love

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

JANUARY 23, 2022

10:15 AM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #616 – Hail to the Lord’s Anointed

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10**

Psalm 19

Second Lesson: **1 Corinthians 12:12-31a**

Gradual Hymn #632 – O Christ, the Word Incarnate

Gospel: **Luke 4:14-21**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

Nicene Creed page 358

General Thanksgivings pages 836, 837

Confession of Sin page 360

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn #531 -O Spirit of the living God

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer B page 367

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| Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal) | page 362 |
| The Lord's Prayer | page 364 |
| The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer | page 337 |
| The Communion of the People | |
| Communion Hymn – #321 -My God, thy table now is spread | |
| Post Communion Prayer | page 365 |
| Prayer for Peace – on insert | |
| Prayer of St. Francis | page 833 |
| Dismissal Hymn #460 – Alleluia! sing to Jesus | |

Sermon Sunday January 23, 2022

Nehemiah 8: 1-3,5-6,8-10; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31a; Luke 4: 14-21.

Lord I have studied, but I need your strength. I have prepared, but I need your power. I am willing, and I want to, but only you can make me able.

Let the word of my mouth, and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our God, and our redeemer! Amen.

Beloved people of God,

“I feel like I live with one foot in the past and one foot in the future,” he said. That’s how a friend of mine once described his life. He went on to tell me about events of the past, lost opportunities, wounds, and regrets. There was an emptiness about him. He sounded trapped and imprisoned by his own history, things done and left undone.

After that he talked about the uncertainty of his future and what might or might not be. He was scared. There were a lot of unknowns in his life. Even as he listed his hopes for what might happen and the way he wanted his life to be, he had to admit these were things he could neither control nor predict. With one foot in the past and one in the future we straddle and completely miss the present. We become captive to what was, oppressed by what might be, and blind to what is. Our life is impoverished, small, and empty. We are absent to God, others, and even ourselves. We are unavailable to those we love, to the needs of the world, and to the fullness of life that God offers.

That is no way to live. That is not the way Jesus lives and it is not the life to which he calls us. The life Jesus offers us is a life of freedom. I’m not talking about autonomy, the ability to choose and do what we want, a life determined by individual preferences. I’m speaking of the freedom to be and become fully alive, the freedom to be and become fully human, the freedom to be and become fully Christlike. That can only happen here and now, in the present moment. Jesus neither reminisces about the past

nor forecasts the future. He comes to his people in the very circumstances of their lives. That's what he did that day in Nazareth and it's what he does for each one of us. "Filled with the power of the spirit" and "anointed to bring good news to the poor," he comes "to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaiming the year of the Lord's favor" (Lk. 4:14, 18-20). This is about my friend, about you, and about me. We are the poor, the captive, the blind, the oppressed, and the ones seeking the Lord's favor. How we understand that about ourselves depends on our own lives and experiences.

Poverty might be about money or material needs such as food, clothing, or housing. It might also be poverty of love, hope, or meaning. Regardless, our world is empty. The captive might be a prisoner, an addicted person, a cancer patient, or one overcome by anger and resentment. Regardless, our world is small and closing in. Blindness is not only physical but can also be emotional or spiritual. Regardless, our world is dark. Oppression happens in hundreds of ways from physical or emotional violence to racism, to fear, to profound sorrow. Regardless, our world is not safe. In the midst of these circumstances, when life gets really difficult, it is easy and tempting to run away, to get stuck in the past, or fixate on the future. Yet, Jesus comes to us today, here, now. He is not lost in our past or hidden in an unknown future. The only place we can meet Jesus is today, in this present moment, in whatever the circumstances of our life might be.

"Today" is the first word of Jesus' public teaching. It's not about what happened yesterday or what might happen tomorrow. It is about today. "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing," Today he brings good news to the poor. Today he proclaims release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind. Today he lets the oppressed go free. Today he proclaims the year of the Lord's favor. Here's the irony. We too often miss today fretting over yesterday and worrying about tomorrow and yet the presence of Christ today somehow heals our past and prepares us for the future. Good news, release, sight, freedom, the Lord's favor. All these are made real and present today, in the current context and circumstances of our lives. Those are not just things Jesus does they are the manifestation of God's presence, life, and love with and in God's people. They are manifestations of the freedom Christ brings. They are fulfilled, brought to fullness, in our hearing. To the extent we are unable to hear Jesus' words we are either stuck in the past or living in a future we do not yet have.

Hearing is about more than sound. It is about our presence, openness, and receptivity. We must be willing to take into ourselves the reality and truth of what is spoken. We must also be willing to take into ourselves the life and presence of the one who is speaking. Jesus is not just speaking words. He is speaking new life. In his speaking and our hearing his life and our life become one life and it is happening today. In today's gospel (Luke 14:14-21) Jesus comes to Nazareth, the town where he grew up, to the synagogue where he worshipped, and to people who know him. He reads from the Prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. "Those words describe the politics of Jesus. Good news to the poor, release to the captive, sight to the blind, letting the oppressed go free, and declaring God's favor are the building blocks of Jesus' politics, his political platform. They are not campaign promises but a present reality, a reality made present in Jesus. "Today," Jesus says, "this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus' political agenda is not determined or influenced by who is good or bad, or an insider or outsider. It doesn't seem to matter to Jesus who you are, what you have done or left undone, or what your life is like. It's really pretty simple. Are you poor? Good news to you. Are you a captive? Release for you. Are you blind? Sight to you. Are you oppressed? Go in freedom. Divine favor is not given to the poor, the captive, the blind, or the oppressed because they are good or righteous but because God is good and righteous. What if we adopted Jesus' political platform as our own? What if we began our political thinking and conversations by asking, "Where does it hurt?" What if we entered those difficult and divisive situations with that question? What if we let that question establish our priorities and guide our decisions?

Presence with and compassion for another human being would replace resolving issues, fixing problems, and winning votes. We would listen more than we speak. Power would look like cooperation and collaboration. We would have to have the courage and will to stand with another in his or her pain, and the vulnerability to risk letting another stand with us in our pain. We would open rather than close places, people, and ourselves to the divine favor. We would know the fulfillment of "this scripture" here, today, right now. Amen!

Masks are required during the service.

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| SUNDAY – 3 EPIPHANY | 10:15 AM | HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (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 |
| SUNDAY – 4 EPIPHANY | 10:15 AM | HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom) |
| | 11:15 AM | PARISH ANNUAL MEETING |

SUPPORT THE FOOD DRIVE – DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Give to all who suffer the refreshing waters of your compassion and healing. Make them dwell in the safety of your care even in the midst of all that troubles them. Especially we remember before you:

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| Girard Bishop | Chrissy Neville | Bob Curley |
| Nathan Treadwell | John Loubengeiger | Dorothy |
| Chris Dickson | Kate Jones | Grace Schinella |
| Michael Echevarria | John Rocco | Robert Sweat |
| Martinisi Family | Michael & Family | Warren |
| Charlotte H. | Bernie Walther | Sylvia |
| Mo (Rachael) | Bill Conklin Sr. | Laura |
| Anthony Paribello | Barbara Curran | Taylor |
| Ciara | Gabriel | Aidan |
| Elodie | Del | Julia |
| People of Haiti | Parkhurst Family | Tim |
| Theresa K. | Amy E. | Jason |
| Christopher & Family | Victims of Natural Disasters | |

Help us to speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them. Bring us with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen

