



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

www.trinitylutheran.ca

January 14, 2024
Second Sunday in Epiphany

Announcements

January 28 Service will be one to mark Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Sunday. This is a day set aside for congregations that have been designated as RIC congregations and those working toward such a designation (something being discerned by Trinity's council) to affirm their commitment to being communities that intentionally invite and welcome members of the 2S LGBTQIA+ community.

Annual Congregational Meeting is set for Sunday February 4. The meeting is an opportunity for you to share your voice as Trinity and its ministry moves into the post-Covid world. As well, council elections will take place during the meeting.

Next Trinitarian the next issue of Trinity's newsletter is due out later this month. If you have news, recipes, pictures or even a bad pun, please send it to the church office trinitywlutheran@gmail.com. We'd be happy to share it.

Shrove Pancake Supper is scheduled for 5 - 7 p.m. Tuesday, February 13. Invite your friends and family to this meal before we begin our Lenten journey toward the cross.

We Remember in our Prayers

In Residence: Cordelle, Dorothy, Katie, Margaret, Sharon, Vern.

Members: Bunny, Donna, Ed, Joan, Susan, Evelyn

Friends & Family: Anna, Asdis, Audrey, Dot, Jean, Mary, Michelle, Randy, Roger, Rose

Introduction to the day

All the baptized have a calling in God's world. God calls not just pastors and deacons but also the youngest child, like Samuel. The story of the calling of Nathanael plays with the idea of place. Nathanael initially dismisses Jesus because he comes from Nazareth. But where we come from isn't important; it's where—or rather whom—we come to. Jesus refers to Jacob, who had a vision in a place he called "the house of God, and . . . the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:17). Jesus says he himself is the place where Nathanael will meet God..

Suggested Hymns

WOV # 788 Glory to God

ELW # 798 Will you come and follow me

ELW # 574 Here I am Lord

ELW # 671 Shine Jesus Shine

Prayer of the day

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, most merciful redeemer, for the countless blessings and benefits you give.

May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day praising you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

AMEN

First Reading: 1 Samuel 3:1-10

¹Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

²At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. ⁴Then the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" ⁵and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. ⁶The Lord called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." ⁷Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. ⁹Therefore Eli said to

Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

¹Lord, you have ^l searched me out;
O Lord, you ^l have known me.

²**You know my sitting down and
my ^l rising up;
you discern my thoughts ^l from
afar.**

³You trace my journeys and
my ^l resting-places
and are acquainted with ^l all my
ways.

⁴**Indeed, there is not a word ^l on my
lips,
but you, O Lord, know
it ^l altogether.**

⁵You encompass me, behind ^l and
before,
and lay your ^l hand upon me.

⁶**Such knowledge is too
wonder- ^l ful for me;
it is so high that I cannot at- ^l tain
to it.**

¹³For you yourself created my ^l inmost
parts;
you knit me together in
my ^l mother's womb.

¹⁴**I will thank you because I am
mar- ^l velously made;
your works are wonderful, and
I ^l know it well.**

¹⁵My body was not hid- ^l den from you,

while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths ¹ of the earth.

¹⁶**Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb; all of them were written ¹ in your book;**

my days were fashioned before they ¹ came to be.

¹⁷How deep I find your ¹ thoughts, O God!

How great is the ¹ sum of them!

¹⁸If I were to count them, they would be more in number ¹ than the sand;

to count them all, my life span would need to ¹ be like yours.

Second reading:

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

¹²“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are beneficial. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. ¹³“Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food,” and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, “The two shall be one flesh.” ¹⁷But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. ¹⁹Or do you not know that your

body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.



Gospel: John 1: 43-51

⁴³The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.” ⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” ⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, “Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!” ⁴⁸Nathanael asked him, “Where did you get to know me?” Jesus answered, “I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.” ⁴⁹Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You

are the King of Israel!" ⁵⁰Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." ⁵¹And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Sermon

Open invitation

A group of us were sitting in the courtyard of the hotel in Bethlehem.

There was a 12-foot solid wall around the hotel grounds ... so it felt more like a compound than a hotel.

It was dusk and after a long day of visiting churches, and visiting a Palestinian farmer who was under almost constant siege by Jewish settlers who wanted his land for their condos ... it was time to relax and have conversation over what we had come to call "reflection juice."

Suddenly, loud pops broke into the dimming light and brought our conversations to a halt. We all listened ... some worried about the potential for what they assumed was nearby gunplay.

Then there were more pops ... this time with bursts of flowering light high in the sky.

Fireworks ...

Music began playing ... and the sound of cheers and a celebration

drifted through the air of the hotel courtyard. There were more bursts of fireworks as the moments passed.

One of the hotel servers told us there was a wedding celebration nearby.

Well, using the "w" word around a bunch of pastors and pastor-wannabes is just asking for trouble.

"Let's go see," suggested one member of our hardy band of theologians.

Some of those gathered around the tables in the courtyard pooh-poohed the suggestion ... saying it wasn't the safest move ... or assuming the presence of strangers wouldn't be welcomed by the participants.

Maybe it was the reflection juice talking or maybe it was our faith in people ... but a handful of us went through the iron gate that controlled access to the hotel and made our way through the cobblestone streets to find the wedding celebration.

A few streets from the hotel the party was well underway by the time we arrived to watch the festivities.

We had only planned to watch the event from a distance, but once this small group of strangers who didn't look like the celebrants were spotted ... a conversation began ... then an invitation was made and accepted ... and just that quickly bearing witness to a joyful event in the lives of the community became something more ... a relationship.

When the group of us set out, we didn't know what to expect ... we didn't make any assumptions about the people or the community ... about what we would find or experience. Maybe that's

why the moment was so special ... because we were open to the “whatever.”

“Go and see...” those words and this event always come to mind when I read this morning passage from John.

Jesus is traveling through the region ... gaining followers along the way. Two disciples had been followers of John the Baptist until John calls Jesus the lamb of God.

Just before this morning’s passage, Jesus asked the two men what they are looking for ... he tells them to “come and see” and they become followers.

Now, he heads to Galilee. There, he meets Philip ... who finds Nathanael.

When Philip tells Nathanael that Jesus had been located, Nathanael’s response was to question if anything good could come out of Nazareth.

Nathanael is the skeptic and the cynic in this part of the story. His supposed knowledge of the world colours his expectations. You could almost picture the sneer on his face as he says the name ... “NAZARETH.”

“How could the messiah come from such an insignificant place as Nazareth?” he might have been thinking.

Nazareth was one of the smaller villages in the region. It was home to craftspeople who worked in the nearby quarries. It was a stable community, but not as prosperous as the city of Sepphoris, a couple of hours away by foot ... or even of Cana, Nathanael’s hometown.

It’s clear that Nathanael has limited expectations for Jesus because of his

link to Nazareth. After all, the people’s saviour ... the one who will lift the yolk of oppression and free them from the romans ... has to come from some place closer to the seat of power ... someone closer to Jerusalem and the temple.

The messiah certainly couldn’t come from Nazareth.

In John’s gospel, the Word became flesh and came to live among us ... to intimately know us ... to understand suffering at its most basic level. So, it makes sense that Jesus ... the Word in the flesh ... would be among those who are at risk rather than parked on some high hill ... in some major city ... or within the temple.

Jesus is found among the least of the region ... the places where expectations are low, but where assumptions abound. God... through Jesus ... breaks such expectations and assumptions.

And what’s Philip’s response to Nathanael’s question?

Simply “come and see.”

Nathanael accepts the invitation and is transformed by his skeptical acceptance.

We aren’t told what Nathanael saw ... we don’t know what he experienced. We just know that he comes to recognize that Jesus had known him all along.

What did he witness to come to such a revelation? We don’t know ... like most coming to Jesus moments ... it’s personal and different from others’ moments.

Philip simply invites Nathanael to experience Jesus for himself. To see Jesus' ministry and hear his teaching ... we can wonder what Nathanael found ... what was so profound that the disciple was no longer a cynic. And ... because he was a cynic, his testimony ... his transformation ... rings true.

Nathanael had accepted an invitation to an epiphany.

“Come and see...”

We hear this invitation as an invitation into discipleship ... but during these days of shrinking church attendance ... it can easily become a recruitment slogan ... an invitation to come through the doors of the church and see what a congregation is about ... rather than a call to serve as it was intended.

Come and see ... our fabulous worship space...

Come and see ... our beautiful service and hear our wondrous hymns

Come and see ... all our heart-felt ministries.

Come and see ... come and join our faith-filled family.

At its core, “come and see” is an invitation to see what God makes possible in the world ... what unconditional love in action looks like.

“Come and see ... what inclusion looks like.”

“Come and see ... where love abounds.”

“Come and see ... because you are not forgotten.”

“Come and see” is not just an invitation to discipleship ... it is an invitation to come into relationship – with God and with one another.

Now ... what if ... rather than taking this as an invitation to come through the doors into the church ... “Come and see” is taken as an invitation to go out from this place and into the world without expectations or assumptions about what we'll find?

What if “come and see” is not just an invitation we continue to offer, but is one that we continually accept, as well?

“Come and see ... the places that make you uncomfortable”

“Come and see ... the stranger in their community.”

“Come and see” the people lined up hoping for food at the food bank.

“Come and see” the people who are making decisions between rent and food because affordable housing is beyond their means.

“Come and see” The young people forced to live on the street or who have to couch surf because their parents oppose their sexuality or their gender choice.

How would it change such a relationship if we accepted such an invitation rather than just offer it? Would it change how we approach or how we embrace God's call ... God's invitation ... to us?

Would it change the expectations or assumptions we make whenever we

meet a stranger or whenever we walk on unfamiliar ground?

I believe it must ... it has to change our perceptions of the world and the needs of others ... simply because we came and saw.

Throughout the gospel stories, Jesus acts with intention.

What Jesus does ... what Jesus says ... where Jesus goes is all done with purpose. The invitation to “come and see” ... the invitation to be in relationship ... is no different.

It is an invitation to be made with intention ... with purpose.

It is an invitation leads us to recognize that God has known us all along ... and that this relationship calls us to also see and act with intention as we relate to one another ... as we minister to the world ... as we live into our grace-filled call to be a presence in others' lives.

To come and see ... what love can truly accomplish.

AMEN

Lord's Prayer

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace.

Amen

