



# Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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January 21, 2024  
Third 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.

**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.

**Lenten Messy Church** is planned for Wednesday, February 21. This is a mid-week alternative worship for families of all types and sizes. Messy Church involves a meal, activities, crafts, a quiet area and a brief worship. Please let Pastor Chris or Donna know if you would like to attend or help with the event.

## 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

*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.*

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## Suggested Hymns

WOV # 788 Glory to God

ELW #423 Shall we gather at the river

ELW #307 Light shone in darkness

ELW # 677 This little light of mine

## Prayer of the day

Almighty God, by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service. Strengthen us by your Spirit, and make us worthy of your call, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

AMEN

## First Reading: Jonah 3: 1-5, 10

<sup>1</sup> The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.” <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, “Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” <sup>5</sup>And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

<sup>10</sup>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 62:5-12

<sup>5</sup>For God alone I | wait in silence;  
truly, my hope | is in God.

<sup>6</sup>**God alone is my rock and | my  
salvation,  
my stronghold, so that I shall  
nev- | er be shaken.**

<sup>7</sup>In God is my deliverance | and my

honor;

God is my strong rock | and my  
refuge.

<sup>8</sup>**Put your trust in God al- | ways, O  
people,**

**pour out your hearts before the  
one who | is our refuge.**

<sup>9</sup>Those of high degree are but a  
fleeting breath; those of low estate  
can- | not be trusted.

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

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

<sup>11</sup>God has spoken once, twice | have I  
heard it,

that power be- | longs to God.

<sup>12</sup>**Steadfast love belongs to | you, O  
Lord,**

**for you repay all according | to  
their deeds.**

## Second reading:

### 1 Corinthians 7: 29-31

<sup>29</sup>Brothers and sisters, the appointed  
time has grown short; from now on, let  
even those who have wives be as  
though they had none, <sup>30</sup>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, <sup>31</sup>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**

<sup>14</sup>Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, <sup>15</sup>and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” <sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” <sup>18</sup>And immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>19</sup>As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. <sup>20</sup>Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

### **Sermon**

I have a question for you. Raise your hand if you, your spouse, your parents or grandparents came to Canada from somewhere else. It is amazing that so many of us have this similar story in our family history.

What would make someone drop everything and pursue an entirely new life? A great job offer? A marriage proposal? The chance to make a new start in another part of the world? For whatever reason, it would certainly take some advance planning wouldn't it!

What do you think about this, what would prompt you to take leave of everything you know for something entirely different and at a moment's notice? What if it was an invitation from a former carpenter and itinerant preacher talking about the kingdom of God come near? That's essentially the scene that Mark describes, and most of us have a hard time imagining doing what the future disciples do.

The details, as is customary with Mark, are few, which means there's a lot more we don't know than we do. Mark tells us that after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee and started proclaiming the kingdom of God. We don't know how long this is after His baptism and time in the wilderness. And we don't know if the connection to John's arrest is a coincidence, or if there is something deeper at stake.

We do know is as he passes along the Sea of Galilee, Jesus calls out to several fishermen and bids them to

follow and, without any other urging or pressure, they do. We really don't know much about the details, but what we do know is there was something compelling enough about Jesus and His message that prompted these four- and later many others - to follow him, to become his disciples, students, and servants of His mission.

Two words come to mind from today's lesson, urgency and immediacy. In this short passage the word immediately is used twice! In a moment, lives are changed and plans altered. It's funny how God's call tends to work like that. I've heard folks pooh-pooh the whole dropping nets thing, to follow Jesus immediately, making all kinds of justifications about how that can't be realistic. Surely those wise fishermen and business fellows tidied up their affairs before running all over the countryside following a radical rabbi. But, to worry about the nit-picky details is to miss the point. When God calls and people answer that call, everything changes!

My friends, change is the most reliable constant in our world, isn't it? From the weather, to clothing styles, and even new Pastors— eventually change happens. One can either embrace the change or stubbornly resist it.

Both individuals and institutions resist change. In North America the tides of culture have changed and will continue to change, sometimes drastically. Mainline churches have by and large resisted these changes, and the result is aging congregations, emptier pews, and



dated approaches to worship and ministry.

Meanwhile, life goes on outside our doors, as Paul said, "...the present form of this world is passing away." I am not suggesting that we change our message. The good news of Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. It is timeless, relevant, and compelling. Jesus is way ahead of us! Unfortunately, we cling to the hem of his first century garment and try to package him in clothes that are comfortable and familiar to us. We forget that Jesus calls us in the here and now, just as he did those folks beside the Sea of Galilee so long ago.

Jonah from our first lesson and the four fishermen of Mark are reminders to us, that the call of God on our own lives might mean some suffering. God does demand a willingness to sacrifice our personal agendas and comfort. A willingness to sacrifice reputations, and an openness to be called into situations where people turning back to God will confront the hardness of our heart and

expose the extent of God's mercy and forgiveness.

Dear friends, maybe it's time we let the gospel out of our safe, carefully constructed container and quit trying to domesticate and manage it. Perhaps it is time to change from being keepers of the aquarium and return to being fishers of people.

Imagine the possibilities that might result from hearing this week's gospel lesson with fresh ears, hearing not just a call to some men a long time ago, but to us — right now, right here! Now is the time to turn from whatever stands between us and our Lord and act like we really do believe in this powerful message.

Perhaps God is calling you to go to some modern-day Nineveh. Maybe Jesus wants you to drop what you are doing and follow him down a new road in a different direction. It could be, that it's simply time for us to wake from our slumber and realize that there is more to life as a disciple of Christ. Whatever and wherever God leads you, the time to heed that call and follow that leading, is right now.

AMEN

***Rev. Sylvia Swiatoschik,  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Guest presider / preacher***

### **Lord's Prayer**

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

### **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



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