

Home Service for January 24, 2021

Welcome and Announcements

You might notice a few changes. You may also find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship.

God is our rock and our salvation, whom shall we fear?

Call to Worship:

The God of all creation calls us. We come, knowing that our deliverance and honor rest in God. Power and steadfast love belong to God. We come to sing and pray, celebrating the presence of this mighty, loving God. Amen.

Opening Prayer:

O God, you are our light and our salvation. Living in your presence, we have nothing to fear. Open our hearts to your word this day. As we hear the story of the call of the first disciples, make us ready to follow Jesus on whatever path he leads us. Cast aside our fears and doubts, and teach us to trust wholly in you. For we ask this in Jesus' Name, AMEN.

Prayer of Confession:

Mighty God, the words of your Son echo in our ears: "The kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." How we long to set aside the advice of others and put our trust firmly in you. How we yearn for the faithfulness of James and John, who immediately left their boats to follow Jesus. We know our fearful hearts, O God. We know how far we are from being able to trust a complete stranger; especially with our very lives. We hope to one day have their devotion, even as we cannot find the nerve to leave familiar paths behind. Renew us, Holy One, and bless us with your steadfast love, that we might truly live as people who have seen your kingdom draw near. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Just as God forgave the people of Nineveh when they repented and turned from their ways, so God will forgive us also, when we turn to walk in the paths of life. Pour out your hearts before God, our refuge and our strength. Pour out your hearts and find peace.

Read Psalm 32:5-12

Yes, my soul, find rest in God;
my hope comes from him.
⁶ Truly he is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.
⁷ My salvation and my honor depend on God^[a];
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.
⁸ Trust in him at all times, you people;
pour out your hearts to him,
for God is our refuge.
⁹ Surely the lowborn are but a breath,
the highborn are but a lie.
If weighed on a balance, they are nothing;
together they are only a breath.
¹⁰ Do not trust in extortion
or put vain hope in stolen goods;
though your riches increase,
do not set your heart on them.
¹¹ One thing God has spoken,
two things I have heard:
“Power belongs to you, God,
¹² and with you, Lord, is unfailing love”;
and, “You reward everyone
according to what they have done.”

Prayers of the People:

"Lord, you have come to the lakeshore, looking neither for wealthy nor wise ones. You only ask us to follow humbly, just like the hard-working people, going about their daily tasks when they are confronted by Jesus so long ago. This same Jesus, who long ago called to those first disciples, calls to us each today. Our "lakeshores" are different. They are the places where we work and where we live. Yet in this song, Jesus is coming for each one of us, just as we are and inviting us to follow him humbly. We have lifted the names of loved ones today in prayerful petition for God's healing love. We have uttered in our hearts names and situations that it would break our hearts to speak. And God hears all our cries and responds in love. This is one of the faithful works of the church; the work of prayer, asking for God's healing mercy and blessings. As we have offered our prayers, let us also

offer our lives, trusting in God's love and call to us, responding with confidence. For it is in Jesus' Name we pray. AMEN.

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

Read the Lesson: Jonah 3:1-5

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: ²“Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.”

³Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. ⁴Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” ⁵The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

Read the Epistle Lesson: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

²⁹ What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; ³⁰ those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; ³¹ those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Mark 1:14-20

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

¹⁶ As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Message

This morning God's call is clear: "Follow me!" When we are awake to God's call, we can be led into surprising, unconventional places; we can even turn away from what our culture labels truth. With the realm of God is close at hand, the Holy One invites us to be part of the solution. The call is clear and urgent: We are to be ready to turn to this new, unexpected Way.

Today we read in Mark, how Jesus called four more common men, who believed in Him, into a new and different life. We will see how in faith, they followed Jesus, and how we, the church, in and by faith follow Him also. Jesus is just beginning His public ministry, and He came into Galilee and passing along by the Sea of Galilee He called these fishermen to become fisher of men.

Jesus is walking along the shore of the sea of Galilee. This was a busy place for fisherman and merchants and the like. And He sees Simon and Andrew, and says "Come Here, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." And right away, they do. They put down their nets, and follow him.

Just down the shore there was a boat. In it was a man, Zebedee, with his two sons, James and John. They had finished fishing and were mending their nets. Jesus called out to James and John, and they too, stopped what they were doing, and came and followed Jesus.

We see that Simon, Andrew, James, and John followed Jesus. What does it mean to be a follower? The follower must be willing to surrender the right to make his own decisions over to the leader. Following is an act of trust. Following is faith in action. To be a follower, one must trust the decision-making to the leader. And to be a follower, one must trust the decision the leader has made. The follower follows because he trusts the leader. Following and trust are tied together. The follower has faith in the leader.

When Jesus called these fishermen, they didn't question His call, they didn't think about it, they didn't consult their families, they didn't see if anything better would come along, they followed him. When Jesus through His Holy Spirit calls us today to follow Him and let Him be the Lord of our lives, He does not want us to think

about it, to weigh it, to study the pros and cons, to talk to our family and friends, to wait and see if something better will come along, or the situation in which we find ourselves will improve.

But when Jesus calls us there is a sense of urgency, there is a sense that Jesus is erupting into our lives with such a strong force that we have no choice but to decide now, not tomorrow or the next day, but now, now while He encounters us; while His presence is with us, while we have Him besides us to encourage us in our decision.

In today's society the convictions, the integrity that early Christians had for their God is missing. Many people have the opinion that they believe in God only when it is convenient, or when there is nothing better to do, or when it is socially acceptable, or when they sense they need a favor from God. There is no conviction to give ones all, ones whole self, ones whole life over to him. When Jesus encounters us, He does not want our opinions about him, He wants our conviction that He is the Lord of life, that we are His servants and He is the master, He is the leader. We are His followers, we are His children, He is the father provider.

When Jesus calls us, when He encounters us, He does so with a sense of urgency, with a sense of immediacy, with a sense of conviction, with a sense of commitment, with a sense that we will turn our entire lives over to him. Not only does Jesus call us to a life of urgency and conviction, but He calls us to a task, He calls us to a job, He calls us to do something with what He has given us. He calls us to share, He calls us to give to others what He has first given to us, His love, His caring, His forgiveness.

Christians are those who shares with another, who knows how to share because he or she has been sharing the gospel message while they lived their pilgrimage on this earth. Sharing is the call word, the sign that marks the life of a follower of Jesus. Sharing our faith, sharing our resources, sharing a part of ourselves with others is what this life is all about as we follow the master. Jesus calls us to a life of conviction, to a life of urgency, to a live of sharing, to a live of proclaiming His good news to others.

Jesus calls us to love the ones in this world that nobody else will love. Jesus calls us to reach out to the lonely, to the hungry, to the sick, to the ones in prison, to the disabled, to the forsaken, to the needy, to all of those people who need to hear that someone indeed does love them and that someone is Jesus Christ.

Jesus call to us creates the faith to follow Him. Following Jesus is our faith in action. As followers we are not in charge, and cannot see the future. We follow Christ because we trust Him with our lives now and in His kingdom forever. Because of Christ we share His love and grace with others. Amen.

Benediction:

As the disciples walked with Christ so long ago, walk with Christ in your hearts and spirits. Feel the power of the Holy Spirit guiding your path. Know the love of God which is poured out for you and rejoice. Go in peace and may God's peace go with you. AMEN.