



Celebrate

Third Sunday after Epiphany

January 24, 2021

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.

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 Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

The book of Jonah is a comedy starring a reluctant prophet who is given a one-sentence message: Nineveh will be destroyed in forty days. Much to Jonah's dismay, the people of Nineveh repent. The point of the story is to get the reader to wrestle with the question "On whom should God have mercy?"

The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying, ²"Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." ³So 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. ⁴Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall

be overthrown!" ⁵And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

¹⁰When 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

Psalm 62:5-12; refrain, Ps. 62:6



God a - lone is my rock and my sal - va - tion.

For God alone I¹ wait in silence;
truly, my hope¹ is in God.

**⁶God alone is my rock and¹ my salvation,
my stronghold, so that I shall nev-¹ er be shaken.**

⁷In God is my deliverance¹ and my honor;
God is my strong rock¹ and my refuge.

**⁸Put your trust in God al-¹ ways, O people,
pour out your hearts before the one who¹ is our refuge. R**

⁹Those of high degree are but a fleeting breath;
those of low estate can-¹ not be trusted.

Placed on the scales together they weigh even less¹ than a breath.

**¹⁰Put no trust in extortion; in robbery take no¹ empty pride;
though wealth increase, set not your¹ heart upon it.**

¹¹God has spoken once, twice¹ have I heard it,
that power be-¹ longs to God.

**¹²Steadfast love belongs to¹ you, O Lord,
for you repay all according¹ to their deeds. R**

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Paul does not disapprove of marriage or other human social institutions. He does, however, want Christians to live in the present in fervent anticipation of God's future, which even now has dawned through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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

Before Jesus calls his first disciples, he proclaims a message that becomes known as "the gospel" or good news from God. God is ready to rule our lives. Those who realize this will respond with repentance and faith.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God,¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near, repent, and believe in the good news."

¹⁶As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen.

¹⁷And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people."

¹⁸And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets.

²⁰Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

A brief silence.

For the church throughout the world, for pastors and teachers, for deacons and deaconesses, and for musicians and servers, that all proclaim the good news of God's reconciling love, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For skies and seas, for birds and fish, for favorable weather and clean water, and for the well-being of creation, that God raise up advocates and scientists to guide our care for all the earth, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For those who provide leadership in our cities and around the world, for nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations, for planning commissions and homeless advocates, that God inspire all people in the just use of wealth, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (Conversion of Paul; Week of Prayer for Christian Unity ends) Galatians 1:11-24. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Timothy, Titus, and Silas, missionaries) Genesis 45:25—46:7. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Lydia, Dorcas, and Phoebe, witnesses to the faith) Proverbs 8:1-21. **Thursday** (commemoration of Thomas Aquinas, teacher, 1274) Psalm 111. **Friday** Deuteronomy 12:28-32. **Saturday** Deuteronomy 13:1-5. **Fourth Sunday after Epiphany** Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28.

CELEBRATE January 24, 2021

Volume 52, Number 1

CELEBRATE (ISSN 1083-3242, USPS 763-460) is published quarterly by Augsburg Fortress, 510 Marquette Ave, Suite 800, Minneapolis, MN, 55402. Periodicals postage paid in Twin Cities, MN and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Celebrate, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, P.O. Box 1663, Minneapolis, MN 55440-8730. Printed in U.S.A. Price per weekly part \$4.90 per 100 copies; price in Canada subject to exchange rates. Minimum order 50 copies of each issue; all orders must be in multiples of 50. Copyright © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced. Revised Common Lectionary © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts. Readings from New Revised Standard Version Bible with Apocrypha © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Prayer of the day, psalm, and readings during the week from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* © 2006, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Refrain music by Robert A. Hobby. Refrain accompaniment is in *Psalter for Worship, Year B* (Augsburg Fortress, 2008). Please visit our Web site at augsburgfortress.org. Lectionary year B.

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Tracks 1 and 2

For those who are sick, distressed, or grieving; for the outcast and all who await relief (*especially*), that in the midst of suffering, God's peace and mercy surround them, let us pray.
Have mercy, O God.

For our congregation and community, for families big and small, and for the organizations that meet here during the week, that God's steadfast love serve as a model for all relationships, let us pray.
Have mercy, O God.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

In thanksgiving for our ancestors in the faith whose lives serve as an example of gospel living, that they point us to salvation through Christ, let us pray.
Have mercy, O God.

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.