**nvma mediated service for the 3rd sunday of epiphany**

**January 24th , 2021**

Welcome to our NVMA Mediated worship service today on this 3rd Sunday of Epiphany. My name is Leanne Darlington, and I am the pastor here at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Philipsburg.

As Pastor Bonnie mentioned last week, our worship services here in the NVMA will look a little different since Ontario is in stay-at-home mode. Please know that all health and safety protocols are being followed, it is just Pastor Dick and I recording together today. Trevor Wagler is our musician, and he recorded our hymns from his home.

We will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion this morning, if you have not already done so, I invite you to gather some wine or juice and bread.

Again, welcome to worship this morning, let us take a moment to prepare our hearts and minds for worship.

**GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**GATHERING SONG: *You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore*(ELW 817)**

1 You have come down to the lakeshore  
seeking neither the wise nor the wealthy,  
but only asking for me to follow.  
  
Refrain  
Sweet Lord, you have looked into my eyes;  
kindly smiling, you've called out my name.  
On the sand I have abandoned my small boat;  
now with you, I will seek other seas.  
  
2 You know full well what I have, Lord:  
neither treasure nor weapons for conquest,  
just these my fish nets and will for working. Refrain  
  
3 You need my hands, my exhaustion,  
working love for the rest of the weary--  
a love that's willing to go on loving. Refrain  
  
4 You who have fished other waters;  
you, the longing of souls that are yearning:  
O loving Friend, you have come to call me. Refrain

**GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

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.**

**WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**FIRST READING: Jonah 3:1-5, 10**

A reading from Jonah.

1The 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**

5For God alone I wait in silence; truly, my hope is in God.  
 6**God alone is my rock and  my salvation,** **my stronghold, so that I shall never be shaken.**  
 7In God is my deliverance  and my honor; God is my strong rock and my refuge.  
 8**Put your trust in God always, O people,** **pour out your hearts before the one who is our refuge.**  
 9Those of high degree are but a fleeting breath; those of low estate cannot be trusted.  
  Placed on the scales together they weigh even less than a breath.  
 10**Put no trust in extortion; in robbery take no empty pride;** **though wealth increase, set not your heart upon it.**  
 11God has spoken once, twice have I heard it, that power belongs to God.  
 12**Steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord,** **for you repay all according  to their deeds.**

**SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31**

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

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

The holy gospel according to Mark.

14Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, 15and 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.

The gospel of the Lord.

**SERMON**

         My husband Greg always used to make fun of me when we were first married. You see I would never go to bed before 11:00…I was afraid that I would miss something, that something exciting might happen and I would miss out. If it was 11:01, all was good! As I have grown older and maybe a little wiser, I realized how much emphasis I (and we) put on time…the hours, minutes, and seconds in a day and the days, weeks, and months in a year. Our lives are seemingly ruled by a clock or calendar. We get up at a specific time. We eat our meals at certain times. We go to work, and we go to bed all at certain times. We sometimes let time hold us back or use it as an excuse saying, I would get into shape, but I do not have time, or I would eat better, but I do not have time to make home-cooked meals. There is a country song by Canadian country singer Dean Brody[[1]](#footnote-1), that aptly explains our relationship with time. The refrain goes like this,

*The trouble is*

*You think you have time,*

*you think tomorrows always coming down the line,*

*And then one day*

*You wake up and you find*

*The trouble is you thought you had time.*

Time, we think we have lots of it, and we always want more if it.

     Our gospel reading from Mark today speaks of time when Jesus states, “the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe in the good news." The ancient Greeks used two different words for time. The times we live by are called *Chronos.* This time is sequential or chronological in nature and is measured in seconds and hours, weeks, and years. The time that Jesus spoke of was not Chronos time. The time that he spoke of is *Kairos.*Kairos time is a time of action that has no beginning or ending, there are no boundaries. Kairos time is now; it is God’s time of action and activity in the world. It is a call for transformation and new opportunities!

     There has been much discussion about the immediacy or timing of Jesus’ call to the disciples in our gospel reading today. For years theologians and readers of scripture believed that Jesus was a stranger who just showed up at the Sea of Galilee one day and asked the men to drop their nets and follow him. But I wonder if that is the way it really happened? Jesus was probably not a stranger to the men; the area around the Sea of Galilee and Capernaum was not large. The men would have known and heard his teachings and Jesus may have even been an acquaintance of theirs. He may have been preaching the good news for a while, but on that day, and in that moment something changed. On that day there was a call for action and a need for transformation into something new.

     Times were not easy in antiquity; Roman power was oppressive, there was substantial greed and poverty prevalent in society. Jesus had recently been baptized and identified and named a beloved child of God. After his baptism, he was possessed by the Holy Spirit and driven into the wilderness where he was tempted by Satan for forty days. Jesus relied on his faith and he trusted in God, knowing that the good news would outweigh the sin and evil of the world. But then word came that John the Baptist had been arrested. John, the one who was thought to be a prophet, the one who proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins and a friend and relative of Jesus. Was this the breaking point? Was this the moment where enough was enough! The time was fulfilled. Now was the time for Jesus to act, now was the time for the reign of God to take place in a world that was in such need of change. Now was the time to be called, now was the time for the disciples to say yes!

     Matt Skinner in his column Dear Working Preacher on the website Working Preacher offers this view of the calling of the disciples where he states “It’s time. Time to move from preparation to action. Time to stop hoping for change and start labouring for it. Time to enlist help in a ministry that was about proclaiming repentance, urging people to adopt a new outlook on their world and their place in it.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Perhaps there was an urgency in Jesus’ voice that day. Perhaps there was a look in his eyes that spoke to the disciples that equipped them for the call that lay ahead of them, a call that was filled with uncertainty and risk for the future. Now was the time for them to say yes, just as Jonah too had finally said yes to God. Enough was enough; the time was fulfilled; the time of God was upon them.

     Our world nowadays certainly seems to have had enough. We are entrenched in a pandemic with millions of people left sick, with families grieving the death of loved ones. Hospital and Long-Term Care workers are exhausted. There is political strife both within our own country and our neighbours to the South. Our world is full of oppression, racism, and poverty. What is our call in our communities and in the world as disciples of Jesus Christ? When do we finally speak up and say enough is enough?

When do we realize that the time is now, that the kingdom is here, and that the reign of God is present in our lives? Does that call us into God’s action? Does that call us into God’s activity in the world?

     Each of us has a call in life. Some of us are called as pastors, some are called as doctors or nurses, plumbers, accountants, farmers, homemakers, truck drivers, teachers, and the other thousands of jobs that are in the world. We are called as wives and husbands, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, sisters, and brothers. We all have a role to play in the world. We all have a role to play in society as a collective community where we look out for one another and help one another, where we forgive one another, where we love our neighbour just as we are so fully and completely loved by God. Like the disciples, our future is also uncertain, we do not know what tomorrow will bring, we do not know how much time we have, but we can rest in the certainty of God’s reign in the world, that God is active and that we are not alone. This is the good news that Jesus spoke of and it is more important than any clock or calendar can provide. Let it be so! Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY*Will You Come and Follow Me: The Summons* (ELW 798)**

1 "Will you come and follow me  
if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know  
and never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown,  
will you let my name be known,  
will you let my life be grown  
in you and you in me?  
  
2 "Will you leave yourself behind  
if I but call your name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind  
and never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare,  
should your life attract or scare?  
Will you let me answer pray'r  
in you and you in me?  
  
3 "Will you let the blinded see  
if I but call your name?  
Will you set the pris'ners free  
and never be the same?  
Will you kiss the leper clean,  
and do such as this unseen,  
and admit to what I mean  
in you and you in me?  
  
4 "Will you love the you you hide  
if I but call your name?  
Will you quell the fear inside  
and never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you've found  
to reshape the world around,  
through my sight and touch and sound  
in you and you in me?"  
  
5 Lord, your summons echoes true  
when you but call my name.  
Let me turn and follow you  
and never be the same.  
In your company I'll go  
where your love and footsteps show.  
Thus I'll move and live and grow  
in you and you in me.

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

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 Bishops, for pastors and teachers, for deacons and deaconesses, and for musicians and servers, that all proclaim the good news of God’s reconciling love. Help us to remember this week of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, may your love and Word unite us in one common purpose, 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.**

For those who are sick, injured, distressed, or grieving; for the outcast and all who await relief , that in the midst of suffering, God’s peace and mercy surround them. We especially remember those we name in the stillness of our hearts, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For all who are suffering the repercussions of Covid, for all who work in hospitals, for LTC and Retirement Home residents and their staff, for Homes in outbreak, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For our congregations and communities, for families big and small, that God’s steadfast love serve as a model for all relationships, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

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.**

**PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**MEAL**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray,

O God, receive these gifts as you receive us: like a mother receives her child, with arms open wide. Nourish us anew in your tender care and empower us in faithful service to tend to others with this same love, through Jesus Christ, our saving grace. **Amen**

**THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,

who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,

who preached good news to the poor,

and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed,

our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,

and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,

we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,

and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,

the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;

to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,

be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

**COMMUNION**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have united us with Christ, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

**SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**BLESSING**

May God the creator strengthen you: Jesus the beloved fill you; and the Holy Spirit the comforter + keep you in peace. **Amen**

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

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1. Dean Brody, Lyrics from *Time*, accessed January 19, 2021, <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/deanbrody/time.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Matt Skinner, “When It's Time,” Working Preacher from Luther Seminary, January 17, 2021, <https://www.workingpreacher.org/dear-working-preacher/when-its-time>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)