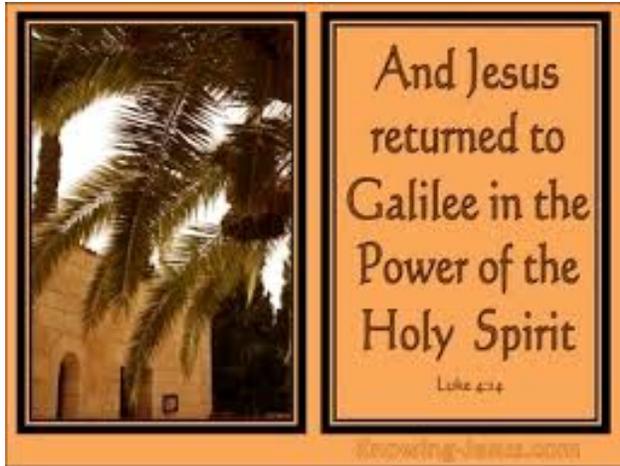




Church of the Epiphany

FROM THE MOUNTAIN TOP

Epiphany 4 • Cloudcroft, New Mexico • February 2, 2025



Collect for Epiphany 4

O God, you know that we are set in the midst of many grave dangers, and because of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright: Grant that your strength and protection may support us in all dangers and carry us through every temptation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings for the Epiphany 4

- Jeremiah 1:4-10
- Psalm 71:11-20
- 1 Corinthians 14:12-25
- Luke 4:21-32

An interesting comparison can be made here at the first of the year. We are engineered by the press to watch Trump's first 100 days in action as we see the new administration get to work. Our own priorities get started with enthusiasm in the new year. And here in our gospel reading we have Jesus begin his ministry. He has been baptized and called his disciples. We witnessed his first sign of turning water into wine at the marriage in Cana. And last Sunday and again on this Sunday we have Jesus begin his work in his hometowns of Nazareth and Capernaum. It seems to go well at first and then the people are not interested in a Messiah of his sort. What they want is the King David warrior who will be aggressive and kick those Roman invaders out of the country.

Each year in the three cycles of Lectionary readings the time of Epiphany is spent on introducing this new light to the world being the manifestation of the Son of God coming with light and even some dark colors. The teaching of Jesus and the narrative about him begin the campaign of the oppositional threat. The reading assigned for today is the second part of his reading in the hometown synagogue and the acceptance of the reading and then the beginning annoyance to his preaching of the subject. This visiting rabbi had to go!

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, help us to be attentive to the Word today. May we take from the Old Testament, the Psalm, the New Testament and the Gospel the words that will be a guide to us.

As we follow the Gospel of Luke through this year C may the Words be a continuing

inspiration to us as we follow our Lord Jesus from his hometown to the conclusion in Jerusalem.

We pray that this process will be spiritually beneficial to our walk with you.

In Jesus name we pray.

Amen.

The assigned OT reading for this Sunday is from Jeremiah 1:4-10. This account with dialogue between Jeremiah and God is about the call for this young man to be YHWH's prophet. He is called to speak the Word of the LORD to "kingdoms and nations." This call comes with a promise. "For I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD."

Psalms 71 is a strong pep talk to those who need to deliver the Word of God to those who may be hostile like the frenzied crowd in the synagogue in Nazareth. "Go not far from me, O God, my God, make haste to help me." Adversaries and those who rebel will be silenced.

In the New Testament reading today we hear the words of Paul as to the appropriate way to worship. This may be an Anglican thing that we must keep in mind as we spread the gospel. Are we too much sounding like foreigners to the outside population for our own good? The liturgical worship in our church is familiar to us and pleasing historically in the denomination. But is it a sell to others? Paul wants it to be both and preaches that way. The Anglican church is flexible but also tied to the traditions of the faith. Soon I want to preach on what Anglicanism means to us today.

May we continue to be faithful followers of our Lord Jesus.

In the Gospel reading we continue the story we began last week. Jesus comes to his hometown Nazareth and on the sabbath he attends the synagogue. We know this town to be the childhood home of Jesus and the place of his development. These folks know him and he was likely to have done work for many of them. As a learned visitor he is invited to read from the Prophet. The usual synagogue order of service is an opening prayer. Then a reading from the Law and next a reading from the prophets and ending

with a sermon. Jesus is handed the scroll of Isaiah, and he turns to chapter 61 and reads from the Prophet with the beginning words, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me." The teaching would have been that the one speaking these words was the anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ. This anointed one is to preach the five healings of the damages of sin; "To proclaim the gospel to the poor. To heal the brokenhearted. To proclaim liberty to the captives. Recovery of sight to the blind. And to set at liberty those who are oppressed." We can be thankful that Jesus came to set us free from sin. Jesus closed the book and sat down rather than return to his seat in the congregation. All the eyes of the synagogue were on him. And he began, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." He is telling the congregation that Isaiah was writing about him and the time is today. We can gather from this scripture that as Jesus continued to preach on the subject; his words were "full of grace." The people sense the goodness and grace of God in the words of Jesus and his ministry now in progress.

After their initial thoughts and amazement, the crowd began to think. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" How could he speak with so much grace and claim to be the fulfillment of this remarkable prophecy?

Jesus in his wisdom understood the thoughts of the crowd. "You will say to me, 'Physician heal yourself.'" They wanted him to do some healing that reportedly he had done in Capernaum. Again, he said, "No prophet is accepted in his own country." Jesus then goes on to remind them of Elijah and the widow in Zarephath and the leprosy of Naaman the Syrian. Jesus understood that it is easy to doubt the power and work of God among those most familiar to us. It was easier for those in Nazareth to doubt and reject Jesus because he seemed so normal and familiar to them. Jesus makes two points. First, they did not receive him and had nothing to do with him as they were focused on themselves. Second, it showed that God's

miraculous power can operate in unexpected and sovereign ways. People who might seem undeserving and even strange are many times recipients of God's miraculous power.

The result of this distrust was to hustle him out of the synagogue and to the top of the hill that the town was built on. There was not a cliff but a slope of rocky terrain where they hoped to shove him and then finish the job with stones. Here Luke sets the tone for the whole story of Jesus' life. Jesus came sinless and doing nothing but good for all and they wanted to kill him. Here is where they wanted a miracle and Jesus did the unexpected thing. "But passing through their midst, he went away."

From Nazareth he went down to Capernaum, his second home town, and "taught them on the Sabbath and they were astonished at his teachings."

In this story from Luke, we have Jesus preaching in two different towns. In Nazareth they "all spoke well of him and marveled at his glorious teachings."

In Capernaum we hear that, "He spoke well and they were astonished at his word that had authority". The people in Nazareth were people impressed by the speaker while the people in Capernaum confessed his authority. The results were very different.

We can learn from these examples to seriously take Jesus into our hearts and keep him there. We may weaken at times, but the Spirit of our faith will be there to remedy the weakness.

Let us bless the Lord.

Amen.

Pastor Fred



From the Mountain Top

Prayer List - 2/2/25

Emmanuel Anglican Church, Albuquerque
Revs. Greg & Noel Pfeiffer
Bishop Steven and Tricia

For all the souls who have perished in this week's tragedies and their families they grieve. And for those injured in Philadelphia.

Those who need your healing care and strength:

Donya Conine
Wayne Conine Jr.
Frank & Carolyn Wilson
Ellie
Rev. Shelby Moon
Esther & Joel Fyock
Cheeta Mc Murray
Rev. Elias Rosales Mendes
Mary Espinosa

Those in the Armed Forces:

Dominick Rankin, US Army, Ft. Bliss, TX
Gabriella Murley, Ft. Bliss, TX
Mason Gregg, Camp Courtney, Okinawa
Creed Napier, US Air Force,
J.W. Grove, US Navy
Nicholas Tran, Joint Base Lewis-McChord
Shawn Zima, Hong Kong
Wyatt Green, US Navy

We pray for our Epiphany family:

J.R. Hester
Machele Lackey
Susie Sims
Aliene Gainey
Tom and Fran Gregg
Nancy Knowles

Lessons for Epiphany 4

February 2, 2025

Anglican Lectionary

year C

Old Testament Reading

Jeremiah 1:4-10

4 Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying,
5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you; I
appointed you a prophet to the nations."

6 Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not
know how to speak, for I am only a youth." **7** But
the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a
youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go,
and whatever I command you, you shall speak.
8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to
deliver you, declares the Lord."

9 Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my
mouth. And the Lord said to me, "Behold, I have
put my words in your mouth. **10** See, I have set
you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to
pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to
overthrow, to build and to plant."

Psalms 71:11-20

11 Go not far from me, O God; *
my God, make haste to help me.

12 Let those who are my adversaries be
confounded and perish;
let those who seek to do me evil be covered
with shame and dishonor.

13 As for me, I will always patiently abide, *
and will praise you more and more.

14 My mouth shall speak daily of your
righteousness and salvation*
for I know not the end of them.

15 I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God,
*

and will make mention of your
righteousness, yours alone.

16 You, O God, have taught me from my youth; *
even to this day I am telling of your
wondrous works.

17 Forsake me not, O God, in my old age, when
I am gray-headed, *
until I have proclaimed your strength to this
generation, and your power to all those
who are yet to come.

18 Your righteousness, O God, reaches to the
heavens; *
you have done great things. Who is like you,
O God?

19 Oh, what great troubles and adversities you
have shown me! And yet you have turned
and refreshed me; *
indeed, you have brought me again from
the depths of the earth.

20 You have brought me to great honor *
and comforted me on every side;

BEFORE
I Formed YOU IN THE WOMB
I KNEW YOU
BEFORE YOU
were born
I SET YOU APART
JEREMIAH 1:5

New Testament Reading

1 Corinthians 14:12-25

12 So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church. **13** Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. **14** For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. **15** What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. **16** Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? **17** For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. **18** I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

19 Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

20 Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature. **21** In the Law it is written, "By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." **22** Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. **23** If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? **24** But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, **25** the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

The Holy Gospel

Luke 4:21-32

21 And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

22 And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

23 And he said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, "'Physician, heal yourself.'" What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well."

24 And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. **25** But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, **26** and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. **27** And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." **28** When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. **29** And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.

30 But passing through their midst, he went away.

31 And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, **32** and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority.



Jesus said
The Spirit of
The Lord is
upon Me