

**Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. Christopher-by-the-Sea,
Trinity Sunday, May 26, 2024.**

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ And I said, “Here am I; send me!”

Have you ever had one of these moments? “Any volunteers? Step right up.” Knowing you all, you have raised your hand with these words: “I’ll go.”

We’re not talking about military service. We’re talking about “open-ended” service on behalf of the Lord. “Who’s with me in this adventure of proclaiming the Good News?”

By our presence today, we have raised our hand. Or at least, we are considering raising our hand. We’re not sure what’s in store for us. What is it exactly that the Lord wants us to do?

Feed the hungry?
Challenge the oppressor?
Look out for our neighbor?
Share our blessings?
Turn our life around in a better direction?
Put a smile on someone’s face?
Seek forgiveness?
All of the above?

Well, if we have asked ourselves any of these questions, never mind all of them, we are on the track that God wants us to be on.

“Stay open” God says. “I’m not sure what I want you to do right now, but I’ll find something for you. Not to worry. And, if you know right now what you would like to do, you’re on! Saddle up!”

And what is special about this congregation, and others like it, is that we are already doing the Lord’s work. For example, the agencies that we support are varied, and the support you bring to these communities through service and support are varied. Yes, we are doing what God expects and appreciates.

Which prompts God to say “Thank you.” Followed quickly by “Please keep it up. And don’t worry about whether you can deliver fully on this offer.” From today’s Psalm: “The Lord shall give strength to his people; the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.” **(Psalm 29:11)**

Now, sometimes these assurances seem empty. Sometimes our offers of help go unappreciated. Sometimes we’re ready to turn in our baptism promises and go down some other avenue.

But guess what. God is also in charge of those “other avenues.” And, with God’s help, we will find a niche to satisfy our potential as servants of the Lord. That’s His promise to us. Today’s Gospel captures this promise. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish, but may have eternal life.” **(John 3:16)**

And here’s what is really special. We are already on the winning team. What’s not to like. Oh yes, we will have our share of disappointments with the Lord and the Lord with us. That’s in our job description: a share of disappointments. But contrast that share with the benefits of being on the Lord’s team. Of saying “Coach, I’m ready. Tell me what to do.”

It doesn’t matter how long is our list of disappointments with the Lord, and the Lord’s disappointments with us. We’re still on the team, with a great manager and wonderful teammates. From John’s gospel: “For God so loved the world ...” **(John 3:16)** Yes, we are agents of the Lord, and we are proud of it.

That’s what we proclaim in this wonderful chapel, and it’s what we proclaim beyond this chapel. And what’s really neat is that these proclamations themselves make a positive difference for us and those around us. Add up all the plus-es and minus-es, and the plus-es win. Sometimes by just a nose. Other times by many laps. We give thanks for both decisions, made possible by a Loving God.

In his letter to the Romans **(Romans 8:14)**, St. Paul contrasts “a spirit of slavery” with “a spirit of adoption.” Both options are available to us. But only one has - at its center and at its edges - a loving, forgiving, challenging, assuring God. It was touch and go for a while – can you say “crucifixion”? But in the end “adoption” wins. **He is risen!**

And, more to the point, so are we! Our final hymn today – He is risen! -contains this very clear instruction for you and me. “Tell it out with joyful voice.”

Note that this is a command from God. “Do it! That’s all I ask of you in thanksgiving for my Son. Tell it out, not with threats, but with gratitude. It will make a difference. You will make a difference. Pick your ‘difference making’ option, and give it your best.”

That’s a description of St. Christopher-by-the-Sea. And it’s a description of all the support you give to your various communities. More power to you.

Any volunteers? Yes, indeed, Lord. A whole bunch of them.

Amen.

Morning Prayer –Trinity Sunday – May 26, 2024

Hymn 362 – Holy, holy, holy

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee:
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the sinful human eye thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy Name, in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.

BCP - Page 77 –Trinity Sunday Greeting

Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come!

BCP – Pages 79 – Invitation to Confession

Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of Almighty God our heavenly Father, to set forth his praise, to hear his holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and our salvation. And so that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind to worship him, let us kneel or sit in silence, and, with penitent and obedient hearts, confess our sins that we may obtain forgiveness by his infinite goodness and mercy.

BCP – Pages 79-80 – Confession and Absolution

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. *Amen.*

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

BCP – Page 80 - Gloria

O Lord, open thou our lips.
And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.*

BCP – Page 44 – Venite

O come, let us sing unto the Lord;
 let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving
 and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great God,
 and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are all the corners of the earth,
 and the strength of the hills is his also.
The sea is his, and he made it,
 and his hands prepared the dry land.
O come, let us worship and fall down
 and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is the Lord our God,
 and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.
O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
 let the whole earth stand in awe of him.
For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth,
 and with righteousness to judge the world and the peoples with his truth.

First Reading – Isaiah 6:1-8

Psalm 29

Ascribe to the Lord, you gods,

ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his Name;

worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders;

the Lord is upon the mighty waters.

The voice of the Lord is a powerful voice;

the voice of the Lord is a voice of splendor.

The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees;

The Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,

and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.

The voice of the Lord splits the flames of fire; the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;

the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe

and strips the forests bare.

And in the temple of the Lord

all are crying, "Glory!"

The Lord sits enthroned above the flood;

the Lord sits enthroned as King for evermore.

The Lord shall give strength to his people;

the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

Second Reading – Romans 8:12-17

Hymn 707 – Take my life, and let it be

Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee;

take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of thy love,

take my heart, it is thine own; it shall be thy royal throne.

Take my voice, and let me sing always, only, for my King:

take my intellect, and use every power as thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it thine; it shall be no longer mine.

Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee.

Gospel – John 15:1-8

Sermon – The Rev. Charles Rowins

BCP – page 96 - The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

BCP – page 97 – the Lord's Prayer

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.
Let us pray.

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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, for ever and ever. Amen.*

BCP – page 97-98 – Suffrages A

Show us your mercy, O Lord;

And grant us your salvation.

Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

Let you people sing with joy.

Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

For only in you can we live in safety.

Lord, keep this nation under thy care;

And guide us in the way of justice and truth.

Let your way be known upon earth;

Your saving health among all nations.

Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Create in us clean hearts, O God;

And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

Collect for Trinity Sunday

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given to us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and being us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

BCP – page 816 – Prayer for Mission

Gracious Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ thy son our Savior. *Amen.*

BCP – page 817 – Prayer for the Parish

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

BCP – page 101 - The General Thanksgiving

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants
give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.*

*We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by
our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.*

*And, we, pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly
thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips,
but in our lives, by giving up our selves to your service, and by walking
before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ
our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory
throughout all ages. Amen.*

Announcements

Hymn 717 - America – portions of stanzas 1 and 3

*My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;
Long my our land be bright with freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might, great God, our King.*

BCP – page 59 – Prayer of St. Chrysostom

*Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our
common supplication unto thee, and hast promised through thy well-beloved Son
that when two or three are gathered together in his Name thou wilt be in the
midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants as may
be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to
come life everlasting. Amen.*

BCP – page 59 – The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

Hymn 618 – Ye watchers and ye holy ones

*Ye watchers and ye holy ones, bright seraphs, cherubim, and thrones,
raise the glad strain, Alleluia!*

*Cry out, dominions, principedoms, powers, virtues, archangels, angels' choirs,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

*O higher than the cherubim, more glorious than the seraphim,
lead their praises, Alleluia!*

*Thou bearer of the eternal Word, most gracious, magnify the Lord,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

*Respond, ye souls in endless rest, ye patriarchs and prophets blest,
Alleluia, alleluia!*

*Ye holy twelve, ye martyrs strong, all saints triumphant raise the song,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

*O friends, in gladness let us sing, supernal anthems echoing,
Alleluia, alleluia!*

*To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, Three in One.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

Dismissal

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Lessons for Trinity Sunday, May 26, 2024

Collect: Almighty and everlasting God, you have given to us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings; with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called and the house filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 29

Ascribe to the Lord, you gods,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his Name;
worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders;
the Lord is upon the mighty waters.

The voice of the Lord is a powerful voice;
the voice of the Lord is a voice of splendor.

The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees;
the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.

The voice of the Lord splits the flames of fire; the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;
the lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe
and strips the forest bare.

And in the temple of the Lord
all are crying, "Glory!"

The Lord sits enthroned above the flood;
the Lord sits enthroned as King for evermore.

The Lord shall give strength to his people;
the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

Second Reading: Romans 8:12-17

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh – for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption when we cry, "Aba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ – if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel: John 3:1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb, and be born?" Jesus answered "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Very truly, I tell you we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish, but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

The Gospel of the Lord. *Praise be thee, O Christ.*