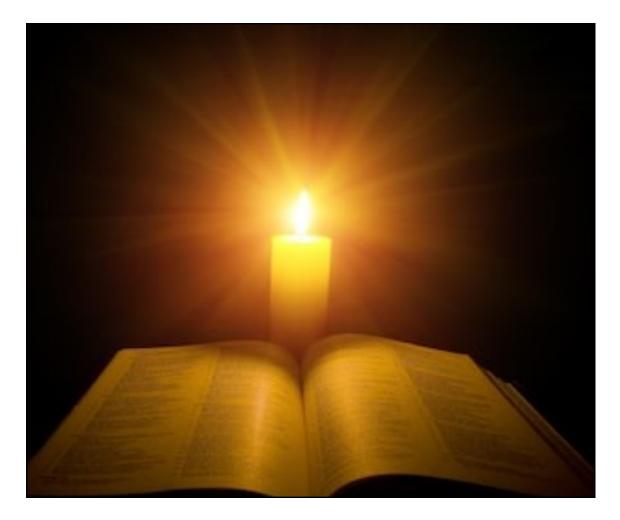


Of Epiphany



January 17, 2021

10:30. A.M.

## The Liturgy of the Word



*Christ, whose glory fills the skies* Words: Charles Wesley; Music: William Henry Havergal

Please stand and sing.



## Introduction and Penitential Order

*Celebrant:* Welcome to Grace Episcopal Church in Muskogee and to a difficult time in our national life. The events of January 6 horrified many people around the world. We look forward to January 20 this week with fear and trepidation. Almost 3,000 years ago, the people of Israel believed that God would not bless the people with prosperity unless everyone turned their hearts to the creator of us all. This was the context in which the early prophet Joel led the people to a solemn assembly. And this is the context in which we begin our worship today with what is called "The Penitential Order."

#### Joel 1:14

*Reader:* A reading from the book of Joel.

Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God and cry out to the Lord.

- Celebrant: Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.
- People: His mercy endures for ever.

## Decalogue

Celebrant: Hear the commandments of God to his people: I am the Lord your God who brought you out of bondage. You shall have no other gods but me. People: Amen. Lord have mercy. You shall not make for yourself any idol. Celebrant: People: Amen. Lord have mercy. Celebrant: You shall not invoke with malice the Name of the Lord your God. People: Amen. Lord have mercy. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Celebrant: People: Amen. Lord have mercy. Celebrant: Honor your father and your mother. People: Amen. Lord have mercy. Celebrant: You shall not commit murder. People: Amen. Lord have mercy. Celebrant: You shall not commit adultery. People: Amen. Lord have mercy. You shall not steal. Celebrant: People: Amen. Lord have mercy. Celebrant: You shall not be a false witness. People: Amen. Lord have mercy. Celebrant: You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

People: Amen. Lord have mercy.

Celebrant: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:8.9

#### General Confession

All: Almighty and most merciful father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against thy holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.

> But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare thou those who confess their faults, restore thou those who are penitent, according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

The Priest, stands and says.

The Almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, true Celebrant: repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit. Amen.

## Collect of the Day

The collect prayer "collects" the themes from the various readings for the day.

- Celebrant: The Lord be with you.
- People: And also with you.
- Celebrant: Let us pray. Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

## First Lesson: 1 Samuel 3:1-10(11-20)

Please be seated.

*Reader:* A reading from the first book of Samuel.

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening." So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." Then the LORD said to Samuel, "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle. On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever."

Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." He said, "Here I am." Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you." So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, "It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him."

As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the LORD.

*Reader:* The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

## Psalm 139:1-5, 12-17

Reader:	LORD, you have searched me out and known me; *
People:	<b>you know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar.</b>
Reader: People:	You trace my journeys and my resting-places * and are acquainted with all my ways.
Reader:	Indeed, there is not a word on my lips, *
People:	<b>but you, O Lorp, know it altogether.</b>
Reader:	You press upon me behind and before *
People:	and lay your hand upon me.
Reader:	Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; *
People:	it is so high that I cannot attain to it.
Reader:	For you yourself created my inmost parts; *
People:	<b>you knit me together in my mother's womb</b> .
Reader:	I will thank you because I am marvelously made; *
People:	your works are wonderful, and I know it well.
Reader:	My body was not hidden from you, *
People:	while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.
Reader: People:	Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb; all of them were written in your book;* <b>they were fashioned day by day, when as yet there was none of them.</b>
Reader:	How deep I find your thoughts, O God! *
People:	how great is the sum of them!

*Reader:* If I were to count them, they would be more in number than the sand; \*

*People:* to count them all, my life span would need to be like yours.

#### Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

*Reader:* A reading from the first book of Corinthians.

"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food," and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, "The two shall be one flesh." But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

*Reader:* The word of the Lord.

### People: Thanks be to God.



## Gospel: John 1:43-51

*Reader:* The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to John.

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Reader:The Gospel of the Lord.People:Praise to you, Lord Christ

#### Sermon

### The Rev. Bob Wickizer

#### Come and See

This has been one of the darkest weeks in my life. Maybe because I am twenty years older than 9/11/2001, but this feels worse. Worse than the time I stared at the end of a gun and heard the firing pin go off on a bullet that misfired and never took me out. Worse than the haze of my teenage years. Absolutely the worst ever.

People on all sides of the political spectrum shake their heads in various stages of shock and grief. If COVID weren't unsettling enough, we have angry mobs threatening elected officials and public buildings boarded up for fear of the mobs. It is not over, so I took a perfectly good Epiphany sermon for today and started over again because the weight of the events this past week is on my heart and on everyone's heart.

#### How did we get in such a mess?

The church is part of the problem. For over a century, the dominant form of church in America has elevated the bible to infallible status, established the local pastor as the only authority and taught people that being Christian is about judging others and personally going to heaven. The ascendancy of this historical aberration took place while mainline churches remained silent. Today the majority of American Christians believe that their faith is purely personal and that they are required to judge others.

There is no longer any sense of "WE" in American Christianity, no longer any notion of collective guilt as in the Episcopal general confession – "We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are heartily sorry and we humbly repent." Finally, the scientific community has disenfranchised religion because the majority of American evangelicals insist on views contrary to scientific understandings. Christianity has been shoved to the sideline because mainline Christianity eroded its own standing, and nobody said anything.

When there is no "WE" in society, replaced only by "ME," bad things happen. Instead of a herd of sheep gathered as a flock and protected by a shepherd as Jesus referred to us repeatedly, we become scattered and lost sheep wandering in the wilderness, vulnerable to wolves and dangerous things we know nothing about. Those wolves assaulted the nation's capital last week and they are still out there. We have become a fearful nation full of individuals deluded by a wrongheaded autocracy of ideals asserting one person's opinion to be the only and most important opinion even when overwhelming facts and science state otherwise.

God help us. We have erred and strayed like lost sheep. And there is no health in us.

Commerce is part of the problem. Ingenious American marketing has learned how to make people feel isolated and anxious in order to induce people to buy things they don't need. Ironically, the combination of marketing with personalized American Christianity has been a perfect storm designed to make people feel vulnerable, isolated, lonely and ready to forward that unverified, terrible piece of Internet junk information, or to press that SHOP NOW button.

#### Where do we go from here?

Perhaps the roots of our crisis point the way forward. The church needs to throw away its membership list. The focus of pastoral care and concern for others is not directed inward at members but outward on the parish. If we recover the notion of parish as a geographical boundary, we will discover that we could fill this church five times over every Sunday with people who need to hear the Word of God, experience the love of Christ, and enjoy the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Our parish boundary folks is Muskogee county.

Mainline churches need to get out there and spread the good news -1. <u>Jesus never wants you to feel</u> <u>guilty</u>. You are to experience true freedom because you are part of a flock gathered and protected by the Shepherd. People have security and freedom because they are in the flock held together by love and mutual respect. This is not a church of like-minded people, but it IS a church committed to love.

2. Jesus never wants you to judge others. In place of judging and condemning, we are to invite, welcome, accept, eat with, listen to, and have compassion for others – especially those who are very different from ourselves. This is the kind of church Jesus wants us to be. Doors wide open, accepting and welcoming everyone. Beyond passively opening our doors though, Jesus SENDS us out into the world, two-by-two spreading the good news that there is a church in town the simply shares the love of Christ and YOU are welcome, no matter what.

What happened at the capital was caused by a crisis we created – a crisis of loneliness and isolation. And we are faced with a decision: We can choose to continue the present course which will lead to a nation where religion and politics are indistinguishable much *like* the way in which the Taliban with their fundamentalist views rules regions of the Middle East. OR we can choose to get back to our original project of becoming a church, a city and a nation guided by love, respect, acceptance, civility, understanding and a commitment to truth.

This was the aim of the original democratic experiment launched so long ago on these shores. It has never been a perfect project. God knows and we know that white Europeans committed and continue to commit atrocities against the natives of this continent and against Africans. This is why we desperately need a God of forgiveness and mercy. This is why we need a God who forgives US and who forgives ME.

It is time for a religious revival folks. It is time for another Great Awakening. If we depend only on government and evangelical churches to fix the mess we have created, mainline churches will die, and our nation will become a Christian version of the Taliban. This parish in Muskogee and the Episcopal Church nationally have enormous resources and gifts to offer the nation and the world. But we must turn our thinking inside out. There are 80,000 people in our parish who need to attend this church. How are we going to make that happen?

Looking back over the years I have served as a priest, I asked myself recently, "When did I feel the very best about being a priest and serving the people?" I love Sunday mornings. I love visiting people in their homes. I love doing baptisms, weddings, even funerals. I love teaching. But a year ago when COVID was getting ugly, I was asked to serve as a replacement driver for one of our Meals On Wings drivers. I loved delivering those meals to people. Thank you, Pat, for the opportunity.

Later, when we had the food program delivering 800 boxes of food every week, I would take eight to twelve boxes out west with me around where I lived in the county. I delivered those boxes of food to poor people in my area. I introduced myself and told them I was the pastor of Grace Episcopal Church downtown. We wanted them to have the food. We were doing the work of Christ in our community and it felt very good to me.

When we are doing the work of Christ in our parish which is Muskogee County, we need to add one sentence that comes from our Gospel today. I will paraphrase. "Jesus walks up to the door carrying a box of free food to deliver and says, 'Hello, I am Sam Smith from Grace Episcopal Church in Muskogee. We want you to have this food.' The recipient looks astonished and asks, 'Can anything good come from Muskogee?' Jesus, posing as Sam Smith smiles and replies, 'Come and see.'"

Silence for reflection after the sermon.

#### Nicene Creed

#### Please stand as you are able.

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come Amen.

#### Prayers of the People

Please kneel, sit or stand.

- *Reader:* Bound together in Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit, let us pray with one heart and mind to God our Father.
- *Reader:* For peace from things that separate us from one another and for our salvation.
- People: Lord, have mercy.
- *Reader:* For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, especially...
- *People:* St. Mary's, Edmond, St. Mary's School, Edmond; Diocese of Arizona; The Church of Bangladesh.
- *Reader:* For this holy gathering and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and fear of God.
- People: Lord, have mercy.
- Reader: For...
- People: Michael, our Presiding Bishop; Poulson, our Bishop; Bob & Tom, our clergy; Tim & Jennifer, our wardens; vestry, delegates, all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God. Lord, have mercy.
- *Reader:* For the world and its leaders, our nation and its people. We pray for our leaders, especially...
- People: Donald, our President; Mike, our Vice-president; Joe our President-Elect; Kamala our Vice-President-Elect; Markwayne, our Congressman; James & Jim, our Senators; Kevin, our Governor; and Marlon, our Mayor. Lord, have mercy.
- *Reader:* For prisoners, the oppressed, all those in need or suffering, especially...
- *People:* Barbara & Family, Blackwell Family, Brad, Brewer Family, James & Shirley, Judy, Sherri, Bea, Eathen, Linda, John, Angie, Brian, Glen, Dante, Marilyn, Gary, Ann, Connie, Jan, Thomas, Cedric, Mary-Margaret, Jean, Barry, Cliff, Gabriella, Esther, Ann, Ronald, Michael, all those affected by the pandemic, all the front line workers involved with patient care, all first responders, law enforcement, all fire and safety personnel, all United States Military serving at home and abroad, and those whose suffering is known only to God.
- *Reader:* We pray for those in the armed services. We pray for those who have died (*especially...*)
- People: Lord, have mercy.
- *Reader:* For ourselves, our families, and those we love. We pray for those in our parish, especially ...
- People: Flora, Deborah, Frank, Petra, Michael.
- Reader: Also those who are traveling, especially...
- People: Lord, have mercy.
- *Reader:* Remembering our most blessed Mary and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.
- People: To you, O Lord.
- *Reader:* Heavenly Father, you have promised to hear what we ask in the Name of your Son: Accept and fulfill our petitions, we pray, not as we ask in our ignorance, nor as we deserve in our sinfulness, but as you know and love us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**
- *Celebrant:* Almighty God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage: We humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favor and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds

and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that, through obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** 

#### Peace

Please stand as you are able.

*Celebrant:* Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

# People: And also with you.

## Announcements, Birthdays & Anniversary Blessings

*Celebrant:* Ascribe to the Lord the honor due his Name; bring offerings and come into his courts with thanksgiving

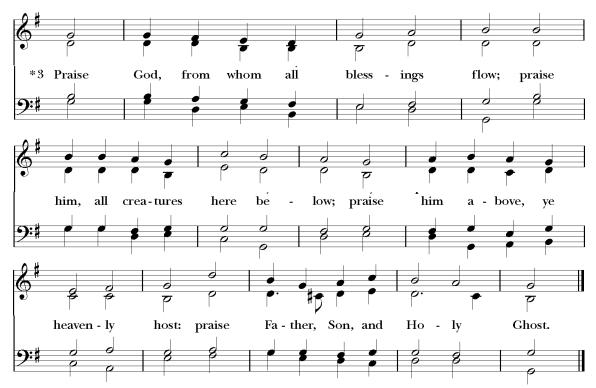
## Offertory Hymn: #371

#### *Thou, whose almighty word (Vs. 2,3,4)* Words: John Marriot; Music: Lowell Mason

Congregation

Please be seated.



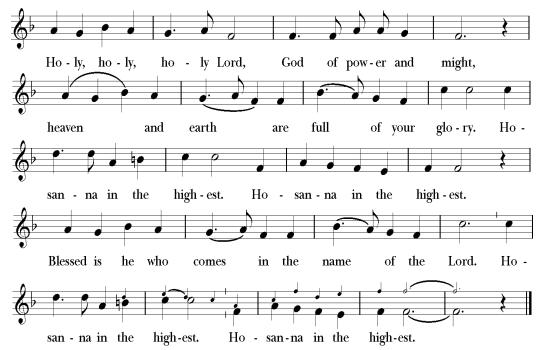


## The Great Thanksgiving

## Sursum Corda

- *Celebrant:* The Lord be with you.
- People: And also with you
- *Celebrant:* Lift up your hearts.
- People: We lift them to the Lord
- Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- *People:* It is right to give him thanks and praise.

## Sanctus:#S-125



## Lord's Prayer

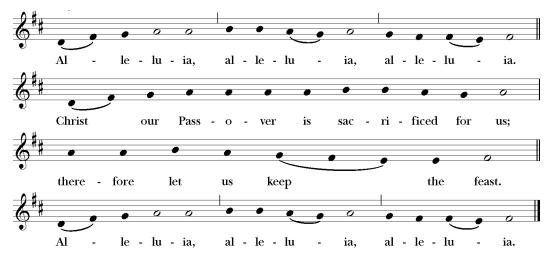
Celebrant: And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray,

People and Celebrant: 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, for ever and ever. Amen

## Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

#### Fraction Anthem: #S-154



#### Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

*Celebrant:* The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

#### **Communion Anthem**

Ken Yadon

## We Go Out To Do Our Work

#### Prayer of Thanksgiving

Celebrant & People:

Celebrant:

Let us pray.

Gracious God, giver of every good gift, thank you for teaching me to be generous as you have been generous with me. Thank you for showing me all that I am and all that I have are gifts from you and that these gifts from you, Lord are meant to be shared.

Show me the joys of generosity and help me understand that others who may be unknown to me, depend upon me for help. Remind me that in my world of community, parish, family and friends, we need Good Samaritans to heal the wounds inflicted by the world. Lord, make me a gift to others in your name. Amen.

#### Blessing

*Celebrant:* And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.** 

*Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates (vs. 1,2,3)* Words: George Weissel; Music: Lowell Mason

Please stand as you are able.



## Sending

Celebrant: Go in pe People: Thanks

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



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