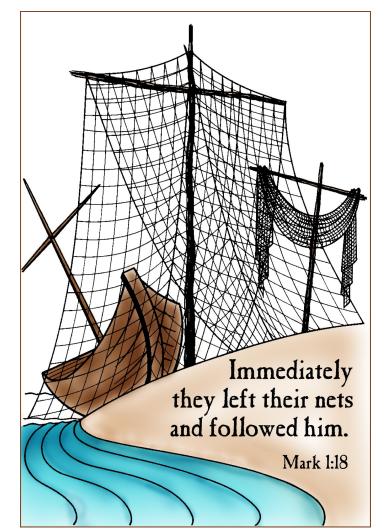
The Third Sunday after the Epiphany



January 24, 2021 10:30AM

The Liturgy of the Word



Please stand as you are able.



Introduction:

Celebrant: Welcome to Grace Episcopal Church in Muskogee, Oklahoma on this third Sunday in Epiphany.

I welcome our growing group of online followers as well as the handful of people with us in church today.

We look forward to a full re-opening of the church for in-person worship in the weeks ahead.

Meanwhile, we hear more stories about God's call and our response. Today we find ourselves on the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee near the fishing village of Capernaum. Jesus will call four fishermen to get into a new boat for a new mission.

Opening Acclamation

Celebrant: Blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. *People:* And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

Collect for Purity

Celebrant: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Collect of the Day

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Let us pray. Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**

First Lesson: Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Please be seated.

Reader: A reading from the book of Jonah.

The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying, "Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." So 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. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

When 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.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 62:6-14

- Reader: For God alone my soul in silence waits; *
- People: truly, my hope is in him.
- Reader: He alone is my rock and my salvation, *
- People: my stronghold, so that I shall not be shaken.
- Reader: In God is my safety and my honor; *
- People: God is my strong rock and my refuge.
- Reader: Put your trust in him always, O people, *
- People: pour out your hearts before him, for God is our refuge.
- Reader: Those of high degree are but a fleeting breath, *
- People: even those of low estate cannot be trusted.
- Reader: On the scales they are lighter than a breath, *
- People: all of them together.
- *Reader:* Put no trust in extortion; in robbery take no empty pride; *
- People: though wealth increase, set not your heart upon it.
- Reader: God has spoken once, twice have I heard it, *
- People: that power belongs to God.
- Reader: Steadfast love is yours, O Lord, *
- *People:* for you repay everyone according to his deeds.

Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Reader: A reading from the first book of Corinthians.

I mean, brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, 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, 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.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn: #470 There's a wideness in God's mercy

Words: Frederick William Faber; Music: John Zundel

Please stand as you are able.



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

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

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

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

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

Sermon

Who wants to be a millionaire?

The Rev. Bob Wickizer

Celebrant: Joan and I were driving through a nice area of Tulsa the other day admiring the peaceful neighborhoods with tree-lined streets, children playing safely, beautiful houses, each with a four-car garage. The houses were enormous, and the German and Italian cars in the driveway indicated a life of wealth and privilege. Simultaneously, we remarked how that was a life we never really desired, and we were glad to live simply right where we are.

That feeling came back to me as I thought about our life in Silicon Valley in the 1980s. We attended a wedding at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. The groom was the VP of sales in the company that had acquired mine. The reception for three-hundred guests, was at their home in the city. The first-floor featured chamber music from the San Francisco Symphony. The second floor had a jazz quartet. The third floor had a rock band. All with open bars and more cocaine than you could put in an ice chest. Such was the immense drive for money, power, and market domination. It continues to this day.

Sadly, I have seen the same dynamics at play in the church and academia. The rewards of success are not as great, but the games are all the same. I would be willing to bet that if you put a hundred people in a big room, met their basic needs for food, shelter, clothing and security, that within a week, they would all be playing the same game of "Who wants to be a Millionaire?" That is the modernized version of the stone age behavior where the guy with the most strength and the best fighting skills ruled the clan. It is the way of the world.

Into the world of "Who wants to be a millionaire" a peasant rabbi named Jeshua appears out of nowhere. He doesn't make his first appearance in the big, important metropolitan areas of Jerusalem, Sepphoris, or Rome. Instead, he comes to a backwater fishing village in the hillbilly province of Galilee. It is a place of no importance to the real world of Jerusalem. No power brokers would set foot in Galilee. The temple priests would never go there – a day's journey away from the city with no security and nothing to do. There is no benefit in going to Galilee. Nothing good comes from there anyway.

Last week the good rabbi called Nathanael after seeing him under the fig tree. This week, he calls four smelly fishermen. How can this rag tag band of followers make a difference in the world? These people are common folk. They are nobodies. They have no money, no education, no political connections, few social skills. Jeshua calls them and they immediately leave everything behind – families, friends, neighbors, a

difficult but comfortable, familiar life. Jeshua tells them that they must turn their thinking about themselves and the world inside out. This is the call to repentance.

If they are living a righteous life in their village and following the commandments of God, why do they need to repent, to change their thinking about things? Why do we need to repent before we can truly follow Jesus?

In popular thought, repentance often means feeling guilty and saying you are sorry for something you did. Even an English dictionary is not helpful. Repentance is defined as "the action of repenting, sincere regret or remorse." We are led to believe that repentance is done once and it's over. Nothing could be further from the original words in the bible.

Rather than give you a lesson in Greek about the word "metanoia" and how it means a complete change in how we think about things, a change of mind followed by a changed life, I thought a well-known literary figure might help. Scrooge. Yes, Charles Dickens' character, Ebenezer Scrooge, in "A Christmas Carol" is possibly the best example of repentance we can find.

Throughout most of the story, Scrooge is a first-class jerk, interested only in building up his own wealth at the expense of others. He hates the joy of Christmas and the spirit of giving. Victorian London at the time was filled with crime, poverty, and pollution. Christmas was often the only bright spot of the year for common people. Only after Scrooge is terrified by the visit of three angels in his dreams, and he is shown the harsh realities of other peoples' lives, does he repent. He changes his thinking about himself, others, and the need for us to be joyful, celebrating the only life we have been given.

In his new-found, redeemed life, Scrooge becomes a giver instead of the taker that defined his former life. He joyfully gives from what he has to other people. The concluding scenes tell us that Mr. Scrooge will likely live out his years as a changed man. This is an example of the kind of repentance needed for us to follow Jesus.

Much of the world plays the game "Who wants to be a millionaire?" or billionaire nowadays. We are often frantic in our quest for more income, better housing, better schools for our children, and all the trappings of success. The Romantic poet, William Wordsworth, summed up this quest in the opening lines of "The World is Too Much With Us."

The world is too much with us; Late and soon, Getting and spending, we lay Waste our powers; ...

Yes, we lay waste our God-given powers playing the wrong game and chasing the wrong dreams. The call of Jesus requires dying to our former self, discarding the dreams of worldly power, and entering the kingdom of God. The call of Jesus requires us to reject taking more than we need. The call of Jesus demands that we give what we can. When we answer that call in whatever our life leads us to do, whether it is banker, schoolteacher, doctor, mechanic, nurse or retiree, our soul moves from fear to love, from taker to giver.

When you repent and follow Jesus, you will know the peace of God that passes all understanding. You will know the joy that comes in the morning.

Silence for reflection after the sermon.

Nicene Creed

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:* Trinity, Guthrie; Diocese of Arkansas; The Episcopal Church of Brazil.
- *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:* Joe, our President; Kamala, our Vice-president; 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: Jane, Criss, Jean, Ken, Rhonda.

- 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.**

Confession and Absolution

Celebrant: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbors.

Silence is observed.

- Celebrant & People: 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 not 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.
- *Celebrant:* 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.**

Peace

Please stand as you are able.

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you. *People:* **And also with you.**

Announcements, Birthdays & Anniversary Blessings

Please be seated.

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

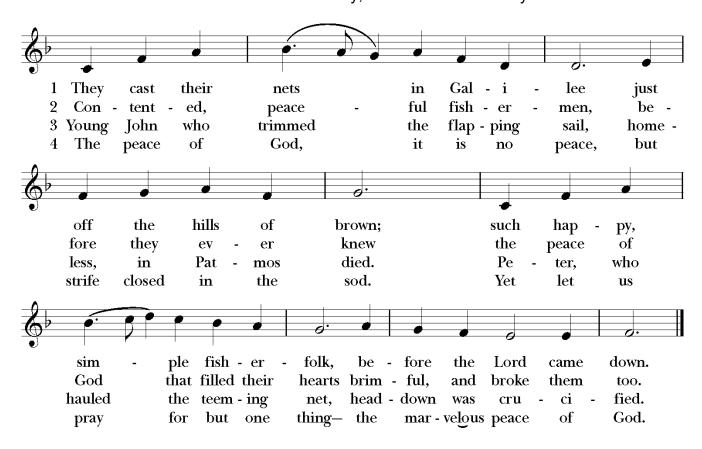
Offertory

Please be seated

Congregation

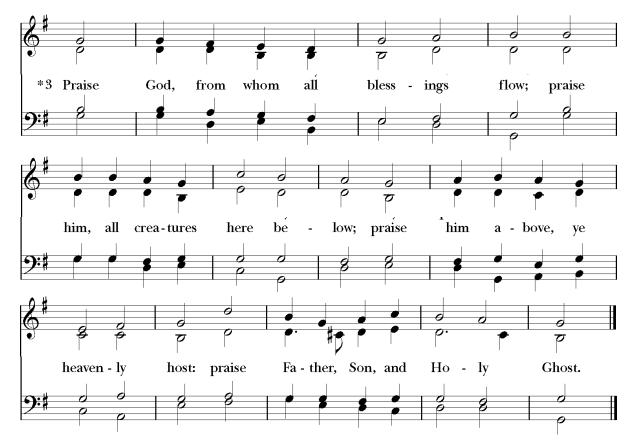
Offertory Hymn:# 661

661 *They cast their nets in Galilee* Words: William Alexander Percy; Music: David McKinley



Doxology:

Please stand and sing as you are able.



Celebrant: O gracious God

People: We offer you these gifts which you have given us; this bread and this wine. With them we offer ourselves, our lives, and our work, to become through your Holy Spirit a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice. Amen

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.

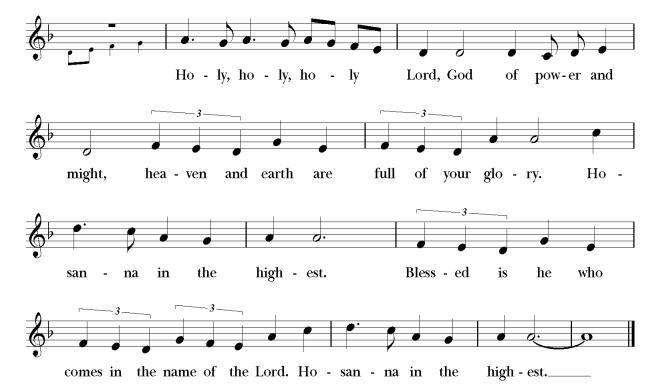
People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds

Celebrant: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Because in the mystery of the Word made flesh, thou hast caused a new light to shine in our hearts, to give the knowledge of thy glory in the face of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:



Sanctus:#S-125

Celebrant: [†] Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all. He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." ^{†††}

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."^{†††}

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith."

Celebrant & People: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again;

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and Ascension, we offer you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN**.

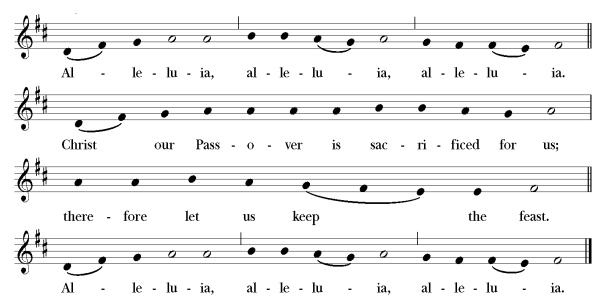
Lord's Prayer

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

A moment of silence is kept following the breaking of the bread.



Celebrant: These are 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.

At Grace Episcopal Church, **all are welcome to receive Holy Communion**. Please tell the usher if you need the bread and wine brought to you at your seat. At the altar there are several ways to receive the bread, and wine: you may hold your palms upward, receive and consume the bread. To drink from the chalice, it is helpful if you guide the cup to your mouth. If you wish to receive the bread dipped in wine from the chalice bearer, leave the bread on the palm of your hand, and they will dip the bread for you and place it in your mouth. **OR** you may dip the bread into the chalice yourself, and consume it. **IF** you wish to receive the bread only, hold your palms upward, consume the bread, and cross your arms over your chest when the chalice bearer approaches.

The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants with these words "The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven" [**Amen**] "The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation" [**Amen**]

Those who do **not** wish to receive Holy Communion are invited to come to the altar rail to receive a Blessing, indicate this by crossing your arms over your chest when the priest approaches

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 Solo:

Ken Yadon

We Go Out To Do Our Work

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Celebrant & People: 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.

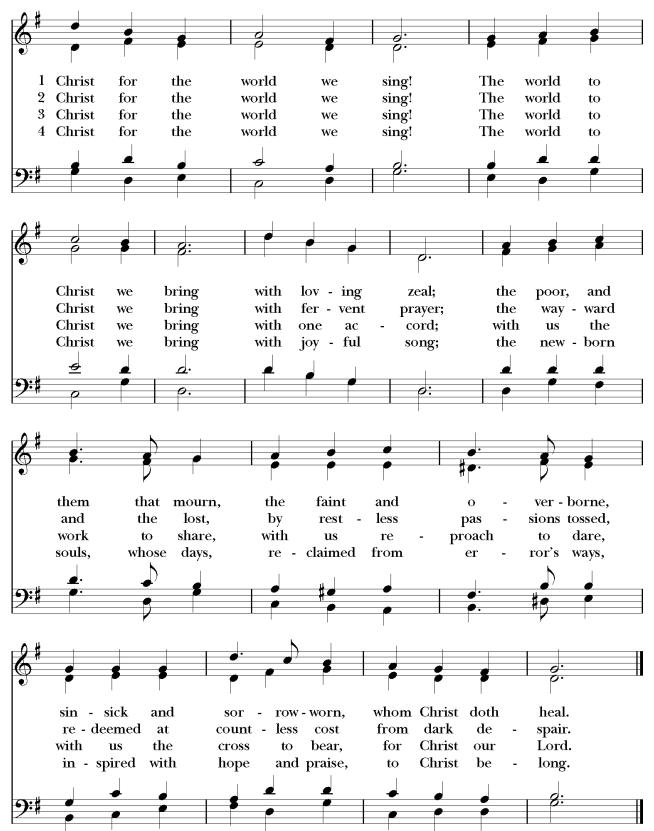
Blessing

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.**



Christ for the world we sing (vs. 1,4) Words: Samuel Wolcott; Music: Lowell Mason

Please stand as you are able.



Sending

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

Questions to Ponder

- What is your calling? (vocation) Is it your weekday job? Is it volunteer work you do? Is it something you do at home?
- How do other people benefit from what you do?
- Is your calling connected to any ministries or activities of the church? If not, should it be?
- What has surprised you about your calling?
- Has it been easy or difficult to follow your calling?

Grace Update

Monitoring COVID

We are monitoring the COVID statistics in Muskogee County carefully. As soon as we see two weeks in a row of declining statistics, we will fling open our doors for in-person worship. Of course, we will continue to wear masks and take recommended precautions.

Ash Wednesday February 17 at 6 pm

We will be open for regular Ash Wednesday service and imposition of ashes. You may attend the service in-person or pull into the driveway on 6th Street from 11:00AM –2:00PM or 6:45PM -7:15PM for "Ashes to go"

Lent

February 17 – March 21

Whether we are open for in-person worship during Lent remains to be determined from health statistics.

Palm Sunday & Easter Sunday March 28 & April 4

We are praying for a glorious Palm Sunday and Easter. When regular Sunday worship resumes, we will have 8:30 and 10:30 worship in the main church. Remember to bring a friend to church.



218 N. 6th Street Muskogee, OK 74401 Phone/Fax: (918) 687-5416 Email: Office@GraceMuskogee.org; Website: www.GraceMuskogee.org Ministers: All the People of God (BCP p. 855) Rector: The Rev. Bob Wickizer Deacon: The Rev. Bob Wickizer Deacon: The Rev. Thomas A. Harrington Music Director: Ken Yadon Rector's Email: bob@gracemuskogee.org Youth & Children's Director: Nancy Scott

