

*Officiant:* The Churches of our Diocese stand on the traditional territories of the Algonquin Nation.

*People:* **May we dwell on these lands always with respect and peace.**

*Officiant:* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with you all.

*People:* **And also with you.**

### **The Collect of the Day**

Almighty God,  
you sent your Holy Spirit  
to be the life and light of your Church.  
Open our hearts to the riches of your grace,  
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit  
in love, joy, and peace;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### **The Proclamation of the Word**

**SCRIPTURE READINGS:** GENESIS 37:1-4, 12-28; PSALM 105:1-6, 16-22, 45c;  
ROMANS 10:5-15; MATTHEW 14:22-33

*(You may use your own Bible, or click on this link:  
<https://lectionary.anglican.ca/nrsv/?date=2020-08-09> )*

### **Sermon**

There was story going around a few years ago about a small country parish (NOT Holy Trinity Metcalfe)

Whenever the Parish got a new Rector, the Parish Committee (Wardens and Synod Members) would invite the prospective new Rector to spend a day with them fishing. The day came when, for the first time, the Bishop presented them with the name of a woman. Would they invite her to join them for a day of fishing? They decided they would, and she agreed, and so a date was set for them to meet at a nearby lake, where they had a boat. And all was going well. In the afternoon, it started to cool down a bit, and the priest said, "I'm feeling a bit chilly. But I've got a sweater in my car, I'll go and get it." And she stepped out of the boat, walked across the water to the shore, got her

sweater, and walked back across the water. She got into the boat; and no-body said a word!

The next day, the word went out into the community:

"There are three things about our new Rector:

1 We have a new Rector.

2 Our new Rector is a woman.

3 She can't swim!"

Every woman who hears that story knows immediately what that story is saying. It usually takes most men a little longer to catch on and get it.

Gospel – Jesus walks on water – very easy “not to get it”

It is a Miracle – and the fact of the “miracle” – the spectacle – can so easily distract us.

We must ask "What does the story mean?" vs "What happened?" was there really a suspension of laws of physics? Our usual experience is laws of nature are precise, and dependable, and not suspended; so we ask "did this really happen?"

And the explanations of the old modernists: Jesus walking on the shore or a sandbank – these are all distractions

The story is still true, even if it didn't happen.

Real wild card is human nature, where things are unpredictable, and many things are possible (miracles are possible).

A person sets aside concern for his or her individual needs in order to extend a hand of friendship and hospitality to an outsider. Given our natural tendency toward selfishness, is this nothing short of a supernatural occurrence?

Are not random acts of kindness a miracle?

Miracle is Grace interrupting the patterns of human nature, human behaviour, and people are changed.

So what's the miracle in this story?

It's reassuring that some in the early Church understood this story metaphorically.

St Augustine of Hippo – a great theologian (4th/5th Century).

He preach a sermon on this gospel story.

“Meanwhile, the boat carrying the disciples – that is, the church – is rocking and shaking amid the storms and temptation while the adverse wind rages on. That is to say, its enemy the devil strives to keep the wind from calming down. But greater is he who is persistent on our behalf, for amid the vicissitudes of our life he gives us confidence. ...

Therefore, stay inside the boat and call upon God. When all good advice fails and the rudder is useless and the spread of the sails presents more of a danger than an advantage... the only recourse left for the sailors is to cry out to God.”

Put your trust in God to rescue you. Steer the boat towards Jesus, welcome Jesus on board, and you will be safe (the storm will calm).

Attitudes in the Church like this would have encouraged Matthew to include this story in his Gospel.

But there's something more – more than exhortation to trust in God.

Jesus does what we'd expect God to do:

He walks on water. Compare that to the Holy Spirit moving over the face of the water in the beginning of creation (Genesis 1:2)

And Jesus also says what God says: "It is I" Compare that to God speaking to Moses (the burning bush), when Moses asks "What is your name?" God says to Moses "I am". "It is I." "I am."

Jesus does and says what is divine – divine disclosure. Then miracle:

Disciples recognize Jesus as God. ... worshipped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." That's miracle!

But we're not done.

Matthew could have left it like that (as Mark does in his version of this same story),

but Matthew adds the part about Peter daring to walk on water;

and what at first appears to be Jesus's rebuke to Peter that he doesn't have enough faith – "You of little faith ..."

What did Jesus mean?

Was that "not enough faith"?

Or a description of the faith Peter had?

After all, Jesus talks about what "little faith can do":

"if you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you"

Real miracle is not in the messiah who walks through the stormy sea to his disciples; rather in Peter – realized that the Church is not called to sit in the boat frightened, waiting for the storm to pass, or Jesus to come along and rescue them, the Church is called to take a step of faith, to get out of the boat and step into the very waters that threaten.

Only there can the Church be the Church, and join Jesus doing what Jesus does.

The Gospel in 2 weeks time, Confession of Peter: "You are the Messiah" and Jesus says "you are Peter, the Rock on which I will build my Church".

We automatically assume Church founded primarily on Peter "You are the Messiah"; and in part it is that: but it's more than that, and founded much more on Peter's willingness to take the risk of stepping out of the boat, and trying to walk on water.

That's what the Church is supposed to be like!

That's Peter's "little faith"; he dared to try and walk on water;

and that's the Rock on which we, the Church, are founded.

That "little faith", that makes so much possible!

– it's like when you fall in love, and you take the risk of saying to the other person for the first time "I love you"

– not because of what the response will be,

but because of the possibilities that open up when you do say "I love you".

Peter's "little faith" is something like that. It opens up possibilities.

Discipleship: it is of the nature of discipleship that it takes risks; that it gets out of the boat to walk on water.

Maybe it's a case of Fishermen rush in where ordinary saints fear to tread.

Fishermen get out of the boat and walk on water where ordinary saints huddle together in the boat, and wait to be rescued.

I know that sounds like I'm taking issue with the great St Augustine "stay inside the boat and call upon God"; I'm not questioning the trust in God's love for us that Augustine calls for. But I think, with some fear and trepidation I'd say to him "I think there's more". (Maybe in the hereafter, Augustine and I will have a conversation about this!)

Peter got it right! Peter and the disciples didn't have it all together, they weren't consistent, and they didn't fully understand what they would eventually proclaim.

But the steps they took, however clueless, however clumsy, gave space to encountering God's mercy;

so that others too would take risks, and so allow faith to rise.

We, the Church, are founded on Peter's risk and Peter's faith.

And that's the miracle, not that God suspended the laws of physics, but that grace interrupted the weaknesses of our human nature.

It is not enough to know that Jesus walked on water;

as Jesus's disciples, we need to join him:

we need to get out of the boat and dare to walk on water!

### **Apostles' Creed**

*Officiant:* Let us confess the faith of our baptism as we say,

*All:* **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.**



## **Intercessions and Thanksgivings**

Lord, in the storms of life, bid us come to you,  
that we, who are aware of our weakness,  
may be made strong,  
and join with you in doing your work.  
When we are in danger of being overwhelmed,  
increase our faith.  
When troubles beset us, let us hear you say,  
"Take heart, it is I: do not be afraid."  
Show us your mercy, O Lord,  
**and grant us your salvation.**

Give to your Church a new vision of yourself and of your saving power.  
Go with us as we proclaim your love.  
We pray for L'Eglise Anglicane au Rwanda; The Most Revd Laurent Mbanda -  
Archbishop of L'Eglise Episcopale au Rwanda & Bishop of Shyira.  
We pray for Shane our Bishop;  
St. Clare's, North Dundas, The Reverend John Wilcox  
St. Mary the Virgin, Blackburn, St. Mary's, Navan, Holy Trinity, Bearbrook, The  
Reverend Chung Yan (JoAnne) Lam  
For the residents, staff and chaplains of the Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre, and The  
Reverend Deacon Caroline Ducros, Anglican Chaplain  
We pray for places where the Church is struggling or being overwhelmed,  
for all clergy who are overworked or in danger.  
We pray for all who reach out in faith towards you.  
Show us your mercy, O Lord,  
**and grant us your salvation.**

We pray for areas of the world where there have been floods or other natural disasters;  
for all who are swamped by poverty or hunger,  
for all who are battered by wave after wave of oppression or violence,  
for those who have no freedom,  
for all who are sinking beneath a load of care and anxiety.  
Show us your mercy, O Lord,  
**and grant us your salvation.**

We give thanks for all who have supported us in times of trouble or distress.  
We pray for friends who are in need at this time.  
We pray that we will not be a burden to any, but a strength.  
We remember all who are at risk of losing their homes.  
Show us your mercy, O Lord,  
**and grant us your salvation.**

We pray for all who are down,  
the fearful, the weary, the sick, the despairing.

We pray for those who have invited our prayers, especially Zachariah, Marjorie, Cheryl, Roy, Jeanette, Emerson;  
those affected by the COVID 19 pandemic;  
and those who are on each of our hearts and minds this morning.  
We pray for all who help; for carers, home helps, social workers.  
We remember those who are suffering in their care of another.  
Show us your mercy, O Lord,  
**and grant us your salvation.**

We give thanks for those who are beyond the storms of this world  
and have come to the haven of rest.  
Though our faith is weak, we reach out to you,  
for you are almighty.  
Grant that we may come to be with your saints in life eternal.  
Show us your mercy, O Lord,  
**and grant us your salvation.**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*Officiant* Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray as our Saviour taught us,

**All: 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,  
the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

*Officiant:* The Lord keep you safe in his grasp;  
know that you can never fall out of the everlasting arms.  
The Lord deliver you from all evil;  
and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you, now and always. **Amen**

*Officiant:* Go in peace, and embrace the adventure of loving and serving the Lord.  
**All: Thanks be to God.**