

**HOLY TRINITY ANGLICAN CHURCH METCALFE, ON.**

**FEBRUARY 13, 2022 Epiphany 6**

**Reverend Michael Fleming**

Fr. Michael: As we gather this day to remember how blessed we are to be given time and space in which to gather in God's presence, we acknowledge that where we live and where we worship are found on the unceded territory of the Ashanabee Algonquin peoples.

People: **May we share the blessings of this good earth and live together in trust, hope and harmony.**

Fr. Michael: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

People: **We are each a child of God; no matter who we are, or where we are on life's journey, we are blessed.**

Fr. Michael: Blessed are you who are hungry now for you will be filled.

People: **We come today to worship the God who feeds us, who fills us and who blesses us.**

Fr. Michael: Blessed are you who weep now for you will laugh.

People: **Let us rejoice in the love of God and worship our God together in prayer, song and praise.**

Fr. Michael: O God of many blessings, be with us in our joy and in our sorrow. Help us to reach out with your love to those who are in need, that we may not be satisfied until everyone is fed. Bless each of us here and those who cannot be present with us today. Shower your blessings on our worship as we pray all this in the name of Jesus Christ, our teacher and our guide. Amen

(Invitation to Worship written by Debbie Gline Allen, The United Church of Christ 2022)

Fr. Michael: Almighty and everliving God, whose Son Jesus healed the sick and restored them to wholeness of life, look with your compassion on the anguish of our world and by your power make whole all peoples and nations; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.

Amen.

Reader: A Reading from the Prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 17: 5-10) This is what the Lord says:

"Cursed is the one who trusts in man,  
who draws strength from mere flesh  
and whose heart turns away from the Lord.

That person will be like a bush in the wastelands; they will not see prosperity when it comes.

They will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives.

“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.

They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream.

It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green.

It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.

Who can understand it?

“I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind,

to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve.”

The Word of the Lord People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: Heavenly Father, thank you that you are the God who never changes. Thank you that your love and grace is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. Forgive us for the times when we have wandered away from you and drunk from the broken cisterns of the world. May we never place our trust in humankind nor put our confidence in our own abilities by depending on our own strength. Let us not be swayed away from your Word of truth and help us to keep the eyes of our hearts and the meditations of our minds on Jesus alone, in whose name we pray. Amen

PSALM 1

Fr. Michael: Blessed is the one who ignores the

advice of the wicked, who avoids all the ways of sinners, who refuses to sit with the scornful.

Reader: **She delights in the will of God and muses upon God’s Word day and night.**

Fr. Michael: He is like a tree planted by rivers of water, fruitful in season with unwithered leaves, prospering in everything he does.

Reader: **But the wicked are nothing like them. They are like chaff which the wind blows away. They cannot stand in the face of judgment; they cannot remain among the righteous. God establishes the ways of the just, but the way of the unjust shall surely perish.**

**(adapted from Swallow’s Nest by Marciene Vroon Rienstra)**

Reader: A reading from the first letter of Paul to the people of Corinth (Corinthians 15: 12-20)

But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been

raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: God of all goodness and mercy, carry us gently in your heart that we may be stirred to follow your Word. Bless this worship and us that we might continue to love you with all our hearts, minds, bodies and strength. Amen

(from Liturgy and Hymns by Stephen Fearing 2022)

### Holy Gospel

Fr. Michael: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ according to the blessed St. Luke (St. Luke 6: 17-26)

People: **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil,

because of the Son of Man.

“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

“But woe to you who are rich,

for you have already received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now,

for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now,

for you will mourn and weep.

Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.

Fr. Michael: The Gospel of Christ.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Homily - February 13, 2022

For a long time, they knew that there was something not quite right with what they were doing or how they were doing it. Their product seemed to no longer appeal to the general public: much of what they offered just sat on the store shelves, gathering dust; their sales figures were tanking, their profit-margins were razor-thin and they knew that unless something happened and happened soon, what they had been offering for such a long time would disappear from the shelves and their product would be one of those of which people said, “Oh yes, I remember that... when I was young Whatever happened to it?”

All the execs were called to a special meeting of the board. When the CEO entered, everyone stood to attention and looked nervously at one another – who was going to be blamed, who would be the scapegoat for the dilemma the company now found itself in; whose chair would be empty at the end of the meeting? When the boss sat, everyone followed suit, waiting for the axe to drop.

“Ladies, gentlemen” the CEO began, “we have a problem and it’s one which needs our immediate attention. The figures are in and they’re not good – fewer and fewer people are picking up our product and something has to be done and right quick or we will have to close the factory and bid farewell to what once the crowning achievement of our company. If that happens, there will be a gap created which someone else will fill; in addition, if we close, we will no longer be able to run all those programmes we have started in the city to help the homeless and the abused and the users, the kids and the seniors and...and...and. Who would take all of that over for us? I have called you here today so we can deal with this before it’s too late and hopefully find a way out of this downhill spiral we seem to find ourselves riding.”

And with that, she stopped, looked at the assembled “brains of the operation” and said, “Well?”

They almost choked on the silence and everyone looked wherever they could to avoid eye contact with “she who must be obeyed”. Would would bell the cat, who would be the first off the mark and possibly the first to be subjected to the wrath of the power that be?

She said, “Come on folks; I’m not going to fire anyone or blame anyone – what is is for a reason and we need to get to the bottom of it before it’s a dead deal for us. I need your brains, your ideas, your concerns, your thoughts and I need them now - what do you say?”

Finally, Dave spoke up: “I think the problem is that our packaging is old and stale. Maybe we should change the colour of the box – you know – make it leap off the shelf and into the customers cart.”

Bryan, now emboldened by Dave’s initial idea added, “And as we do that. let’s create a new image for ourselves – some character which will appeal to the masses and become instantly recognizable – that seems to have worked for Geiko and Kelloggs and Coca-Cola...remember Snap and Crackle and Pop, huh?”

There was general head nodding around the table and now Ralph spoke up: “One thing we could do is the make the box smaller but charge the same price as we now do for a larger container. That would solve our margins problem - seems to work for bacon!” At this, there was general agreement and everyone hoped that that was that – problem solved.

Until....

Until Lorraine quietly said, “What if it’s just not the packaging but the content that needs our attention too? What if, even with new branding and logos and stuff like that, no one comes back for a second purchase after sampling our new and improved? What is what we are offering doesn’t meet either the needs or desires of the people we want to reach?”

As she finished, Marty wondered out loud, “Have we tried to find out what our customers want and whether what we offer meets the needs and desires of the folk out there? It seems to me that the demographics have shifted in the last twenty years and we haven’t seen the reality that what worked thirty years ago just ain’t gonna hold water today.”

The CEO looked up. “Now”, she thought to herself, “we’re getting somewhere.” And with that, she grabbed a white board and they brainstormed for an hour about the strategy they would employ to revive the company and re-establish it as a leader in the marketplace. Each member of the board was assigned a task - Dave and Bryan would work with their advertising company on the branding; Ralph was charged with discovering both the feasibility and acceptability of smaller container, less product or larger box, more content; Marty was given the oversight of surveying the public about how the company was seen and whether what they were offering had any place in the

lives of both their old customers and potential newcomers to the brand; and Lorraine became head of the group tasked with re-evaluating the appeal and value of the product to the general public.

I call this a cautionary tale for a reason: as all of you know, the bishop has invited all parishes to engage in a process of discernment concerning who we are and where we are going as individual communities and as a corporate entity called the Diocese of Ottawa. We have been tasked with looking prayerfully AND carefully at our life here at Holy Trinity Metcalfe. We have already begun the work and the group assembled is hard at it. The statistics have been gathered and assessed and we are now in Stage Two in which we have been asked to look at these facts and figures and make evaluations based on both the hard numbers and the heart numbers in order to form a pathway into the future both for ourselves and for the diocese as a whole. Karen, Erik, Kay, Steve and Meredith need your prayer support and your reflections about what once was, what is and what could be for this family called Holy Trinity Metcalfe. To be honest with you, we are not interested in determining whose to blame for stuff, nor engaging in personality clashes – our concern is for the health and wholeness of our parish family.

Next week, after our service, we will engage in the second meaning of the word liturgy – the work of the people of God as we meet in Vestry. While we will review the past year and offer a way forward for the next year, I would like us to begin to think and pray with intention and commitment to not only the process outlined and developed by the diocese, but also to begin a period of honest self-examination and reflection on the reasons for our existence in the community of Metcalfe and its environs. I speak and write this today so that you will have some time to think and pray about this before next Sunday and that when we meet as sisters and brothers of Christ, we will see our life together in new ways and with new vision.

Please pray especially for Holy Trinity this week – help us to celebrate our past, enliven our present and forge our future as ones who have been called and sent to be good news.

Fr. Michael: Faith means betting your life that something is true. We, the Church, have been given an affirmation which we have shared for nearly two thousand years, as we say,

**People: I believe in one 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**

Fr. Michael: Loving God, we gather as your people today seeking your presence, your comfort and your love. In this Epiphany season of light, shine your light upon us, into the very recesses of our spirits, those places where we experience anxiety, depression, fear and despair. This morning Lord, we lift up to you in our silent place our dark moments and ask that you shed your light into the deepest corners and give us peace and hope.

**People: Flood this world with your light and love, O Lord.**

Fr. Michael: God of grace and healing. Shine your light upon us – into those places of conflict and tension in our families, in our friendships, in our work and community relationships. May your light be a healing balm, bringing with it healing and reconciliation.

**People: Flood this world with your light and love, O Lord.**

Fr. Michael: God of connection. Shine your light among us – onto the common human ties that bind all of your people together – neighbour and stranger, friend and enemy alike. Be with those institutions that strive for the betterment of the human condition – our homeless shelters, refuges for battered women and children, community day programmes, our healing lodges, our churches, remembering especially today in our diocese the Director General of Community Ministries The Reverend Canon Dr. Peter John Hobbs and members of the Community Ministries Committee. We pray for Resurrection Lutheran Church and all who minister there. We pray for all called to vocations in the diaconate, priesthood, and religious life. In your light, remind us that you have created all of us in your image, unique and beloved of you and you call us to love our neighbours as we strive to love ourselves.

**People: Flood with world with your light and love, O Lord.**

Fr. Michael: God of power and mercy, shine your light upon our nation and its leaders that they may govern wisely and justly, taking into account the needs and concerns not just of the wealthy and powerful but especially those who are poor, those who struggle with mental and physical illness, members of the LGBTQ community who must fight each day to simply be themselves, those who fear for their families because of financial hardship, immigration status, COVID stressors and all those who are forgotten or forsaken. We ask your light particularly on those for whom we pray; for those whose names lies in your heart and our hearts in silence and for those of our parish family who have asked us to pray for them, beginning within the silence of our hearts ... and

remembering Sarah, Marjorie, Irene, Howard, Kirsten, Roy, Zachariah, Jeanette, and Cheryl.

People: **Flood this world with your light and love, O Lord.**

Fr. Michael: God of all compassion and peace, shine your light in all the places around the world where violence, war and discord are found: in the Middle East, in central Europe, in our own country and province and in places we do not know of where race is pitted against race, where families are torn apart by division and hatred. Bring peace and light to all who live in fear, violence and despair.

People: **Flood this world with your light and love, O Lord.**

Fr. Michael: God of all goodness, we thank you for your light that shines – the glories and wonders of your creation, the light that we see and experience each day in icy peaks and snow-white meadows. Thank you for the light which shines through the people of this village and our neighbours young and old who remind us of your presence with tears and laughter, in teaching and learning, in order and disruption, in work and play.

Fr. Michael: Shine your light upon us and around us and within us, that we too may be light to this world.

People: **We are the light of the world – let our light shine and shine. Amen.**

(adapted from Worship Words by Tandiwe Dale – Ferguson [worshipwords.co.uk](http://worshipwords.co.uk))

Fr. Michael: There in that level place just outside the village, Jesus looked at his disciples and said, “Woe to you who are rich”.

People: **Remove from us the lust for power and let greed not enter our hearts.**

Fr. Michael: woe to you who are full now

People: **remind us that our frail pantries offer no guarantees and make us aware of just how vulnerable we truly are, Lord**

Fr. Michael: Woe to you who are laughing now

People: **Forgive us for every sarcastic remark we make and words that hurt others. Remove our snarkiness, Lord.**

Fr. Michael: Woe to all those who speak well of you.

People: **O Christ, heal us of our arrogance and call to us with your words of healing and blessing.**

Fr. Michael: Here in this level place, Jesus heals us saying, “Blessed are you who are hungry now.”

People: **Blessed are you who believe justice has not yet come for we will all be filled.**

Fr. Michael: Blessed are you who weep now.

People: **Blessed are we when life just feels much too hard for we have a place and a heart to turn towards.**



Fr. Michael: Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you, revile you, defame you and spit on you.

People: **Blessed are we who feel that we haven't done enough and know we could do more for our world. Blessed are we no matter what names we have been called, for here in this level place, this plain, there is healing.**

Fr. Michael: There is one reason to leap for joy. We have all been healed and the darkness is receding. We have been touched with the gracious light and love of the Lord. We are children raised in blessing who delight to pray,

(adapted from Cooking with Elsa, United Christian Church, Austin Texas 2021)

Fr. Michael: God knows our minds and our hearts. God forgives those who seek forgiveness with sincere hearts and minds. God offers the grace of hope and the courage to change our ways and confront injustice. Blessed are all those who trust in God and whose trust is in the Lord. My sisters and brothers, know that you are loved and forgiven by God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

(from Liturgy and Hymns by Stephen M. Fearing)

Fr. Michael: We are a people called to prayer. Jesus gifted to his friends the model for all prayer and with the Church for nearly two thousand years we pray,

People: **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.**

Fr. Michael: Lord, we come tired, weary and worn. We have already done so much work, so much heavy lifting; we long to hear assurances or even maybe a few "well dones", but instead we are invited again to roll up our sleeves and haul out our boats, put in another hour or maybe longer. There is more to be done – there is always more to be done. So we wade together into deep water, dragging our boat along the sand until it reaches the lapping waves, wondering what could change, what will one more hour of work do? So, we let down our nets just as we are asked to: we wait for what will catch us. O Holy One, catch our tired bodies today and hold us to your breast.

Amen

People: **O God, Father and Mother of all, Creator of all that is seen and hidden – we thank you for all the possibilities of this week which now dawns before us; for those moments when you will break through the hardness of our hearts with your power of love and compassionate care. Thank you for the new community which you are forming in the hollow of your hands each day – may we receive all your gifts with open hearts and voices of praise. Let us be your light today, tonight and all our tomorrows. Amen**

Fr. Michael: May the living waters of Christ cleanse us; may the Spirit descend upon us and may the blessings of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit shine upon us and within us this week and always.

(Blessing from the Knollbrook Community)

Announcements, and Celebrations

Holy Trinity Vestry Meeting - February 20, 11:30 am over Zoom. Please register in advance.

February 27 Sunday Service will be back in Holy Trinity at 10:30 am

**Worship follows the Holy Eucharist in the Book of Alternative Services.**

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