

THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

A close-up photograph of a person's hands writing on a white document with a black pen. The person is wearing a light blue shirt. The background is blurred.

JANUARY 21, 2024

BELIEVE

an active verb

by Drew Downs

To believe the Good News is a central part of being a Christian. Yet we usually treat it like a noun. Something that can be observed, quantified, or qualified.

We ask ourselves and one another: *Do you believe the right things?* Often the things spelled out in traditional doctrine or modern practice. The sort of thing I call “believing *that* rather than believing *in*.” Which means the only action required is agreement.

The message Jesus inherits from John the Baptizer is a message of activity. Turn away from the stuff that holds us back and believe in this Good News. That God’s dream for all of creation is freedom for everyone.

To believe the Good News is to understand what is asked of us. All of us. To live in ways that bring health to our neighbors, joy to our hearts, and hope for all. To live out our belief in the world.

EPIPHANY

2024

WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

Annual Meeting

As we enter the middle of January, many of us are hard at work preparing reports, the budget, and presentations for the congregation's annual meeting.

By canons and custom, we gather at least once per year as the whole congregation to do the work of the church. It is a time most often marked with elections to key positions, the presentation of the year's budget as affirmed by the vestry, and the rector's address.

This is holy, joyous work.

We are again following the pattern of the Diocese by offering an opportunity to see the budget *before* the meeting, with a special preview this coming Sunday, **January 21, 2024** after the 10:00 service. This is our opportunity to go through the budget more thoroughly and we can take more time for questions.

In two weeks, on **January 28, 2024**, we will gather for our annual meeting at approximately 11:30 am.

Please plan to join us. And bring with you joyous and hopeful hearts. For this neighborhood needs our love and we need you!

With love,
Drew

EPIPHANY

2024

FOR SUNDAY

Epiphany 3B

January 21, 2024

Collect

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.

Reading

Mark 1:14-20

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.

EPIPHANY

Reflection

It is a clever invitation from Jesus. He's speaking to people whose livelihood is to fish. And he offers them the chance to fish for people.

Whenever I hear people quote Jesus on this one, however, I don't get all that excited.

For one, I'm not into fishing. I find the the experience kind of boring. And then, when it gets exciting, I have to contend with the possibility of causing death.

Another reason I'm less than enthused is that fishing for fish, well, often leads to...our cooking up our catch. So...I'm sure you can connect the dots.

In this way, Jesus's message to *fishermen* doesn't really work for me. A non-fisherman. And I think that is a big part of why the message is clever, not universal.

When I try to make that message universal, it takes away what Jesus is communicating to people who *enjoy* that activity.

Imagine, instead, if Jesus came across an artist group and said "I will make you painters of community". Or joined a reading group and said "I will make you writers of new life." That hits me where I live.

What makes your heart sing?

Do you like to build things? Play games? Or even share memes?

Jesus calls us to share our love like that.

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