

Epiphany in a Pandemic! January 26th 2021 Mailout!

Holy Cross is a place. Holy Cross is people. Holy Cross is a purpose. I believe each of these phrases. In the days ahead, I believe we will move forward, with vision and courage, and even with worship and study opportunities (some of them even in person!) Here's a few things to keep on your heart (and your prayers)

Our **Annual Meeting is this Sunday, January 31st, at 10:15 am**, immediately following our socially distanced worship in the gym. We will vote on our budget, which is an essential part of keeping our lights on and our employees paid Thanks for picking up an annual report, and giving your opinion to a council member even if you can't be there.

Your Nominating Committee is working hard to make contact with individuals whose names have emerged as we have prayed for leadership going forward. If they call you, pray, and maybe even say yes, won't you? (we will hold a **Congregational meeting March 14, 2021 for elections, and a conversation**).

Then, beginning February 1, Black History month is upon us. In this turbulent year which has awakened racial awareness, may we also be aware.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February has been designated as National Black History Month to celebrate the rich history of African Americans in this country. Oregon's African Americans also have a rich history. To learn more about that history, and keep informed about upcoming lectures, exhibits and events ; go to here: www.oregonblackpioneers.org.

A few reading selections

- [African Americans of Portland](#) by Oregon Black Pioneers
- [Breaking Chains: Slavery on Trial in the Oregon Territory](#) by R. Gregory Nokes
- [Dangerous Subjects](#) by Kenneth R. Coleman

- Perseverance: A History of African Americans in Oregon's Marion and Polk Counties by Oregon Black Pioneers

Did You Know?

- African Americans make up approximately 2% of Oregon's current population
- The earliest documented evidence of a person of African heritage in Oregon was 1788.
- There are over 40 black pioneers buried at Salem's Pioneer Cemetery, on Commercial St.
- There have been four segregated schools for black children in Oregon. Salem's school was established in 1867 and was located at the current site of Macy's downtown.
- During the 1920s Oregon was noted to have the largest Klavern of the KKK west of the Mississippi River
- In 1851, a black man named Jacob Vanderpool was legally expelled from Oregon based on the state's Black Exclusion Laws.
- Reuben Shipley an ex-slave, in 1861 donated two acres of his land in Philomath to Benton County to be used as a cemetery (now called Mount Union Cemetery) on the condition that blacks could be buried there.

On Wednesday, February 10, at 6 pm our 3 ELCA Churches will gather together - Better Together Racial Justice Zoom Group

Topic: The Uncomfortable Truth Video (46 minutes long)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86532600817?pwd=VVkxY2VUaE9uYlZuQ3lZRm8vY0FQdz09>

Meeting ID: 865 3260 0817 Passcode: 607605

Put this event on your calendar, to join us for an enlightening Video event! – Bless you all and Happy Epiphany time – Pastor Patricia+-

Sermon for the Oregon Synod Third Sunday after Epiphany January 24, 2021 Rev. Melissa O. Reed When I gave birth, twice, it was tension that both caused pain and also brought forth new life. I cannot say that I like tension. But, I have come to respect it as both a tell tale sign of when in Love we feel something is amiss in our lives or the world and the catalyst, the energy to move another possibility into reality. Tension can feel like many things, internally. Heartbreak, guilt, grief, yes pain, anger. My son struggles to complete his online homework, too many overwhelming steps, feeling isolated schooling from home in his first year of middle school, and I watch him struggle. And I feel tension. The love and dignity I feel and know for my child, and the way the world is, tools too few, resources scarce, teachers overworked, heartbroken themselves and far away. His brain, learning process neglected by the circumstances of these times. I am moved by Love's tension to drop my own work to come alongside him and wade through fractions and "new math." No, MOM. That is not how they taught us to do that. And, an hour later, and some tears, I've learned something and so has he.

Can you feel the tension in the first line of Mark's gospel story for this morning which comes sandwiched in the middle of chapter one? Now, 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, believe in the good news. The incarceration of a loved one pressed up against the good news of the reign of love! Mark doesn't drop that little nugget -- "Now after John was arrested" -- as a random detail. No details are random in scripture, to be sure. Mark doesn't drop that bit to make the Jesus community he writes to comfortable. Complacent. No, Mark, drops that bit to tell the truth of the matter. THIS is the part of our story into which the kin-dom of God comes near. Into THESE histories Jesus' energy of Love troubles. To some listening ears in Mark's community in their own Galilees, they hear their own story of oppression -- they themselves shackled by empire, family members painted as criminal by their identities and/or their rabble rousing. To some, they wake up to their own story buried beneath the noise of distraction or privilege. And, to some ancestors, many many years later, there is a not so subtle or polite invitation to NOT neglect, negate, bury or dismiss any part of our stories as too far gone for Love to touch, and in that tension...for a new story to be born. For when love comes close pressing in and exposing what is antithetical to her, the energy is created for repentance, or in the Greek, metanoia...meaning change. In fact, it is not an invitation or a question at all. But the verbs there -- believe or better, trusting in God's love, the covenant God has made will all humanity, all creation, so God loved the cosmos, the whole damn thing -- and repent, change -- are imperatives! When love presses in and reveals what is wrong, she has an energy all her own to birth that new story, that new reality, that new kin-dom, that new world our hearts know to be true. I remember among Salt and Light Lutheran and Leaven Community -- when our members bravely shared their housing insecurities and we discovered that one of our core leaders needed housing, alongside a lot of others members and neighbors needing more affordable housing -- the tension of our love for one another and the brokenness of a system where humans are not dignified with good housing created tension that caused metanoia -- changed our way of thinking, opened up creativity... so we organized: someone had a tiny house to offer up, another had land to put it on, and we got our city commissioners to put a stay on the eviction of people in tiny homes and RV's on private property in the city of Portland. The Spirit of Love touched our pain and moved our bodies...and Our community got to come home! The kin-dom of God came near touching the very part of our story that seemed too far gone! You all, did you hear that gospel writer-poet-truth-weaver-new-world doula, Amanda Gorman on Inauguration Day?! Did you hear this prophet?! She dropped truth left and right, deftly building tension alongside the way our hearts know it should be, must be, how it truly is... She didn't let us off the hook. She named it. When day comes we ask ourselves where can we find light in the never-ending shade? She said. The loss we carry a sea we must wade

She said. We've braved the belly of the beast We've learned that quiet isn't always peace She said. And the norms and notions of what just is Isn't always just-ice She said And yet the dawn is ours she also said before we knew it somehow we do it she said Somehow we've weathered and witnessed a nation that isn't broken she said but simply unfinished. she said.

Now after John was arrested, they said the kingdom of God has come near, they said Truth doesn't let us off the hook, but it does, in love, propel us forward in new ways, world birthing ways. Later in the poem she says that America "is the past we step into and how we repair it." This past three months I have had the privilege of engaging a process with many of you -- with congregations across our state and our Synod -- of various background and denominations -- including about ten of our own, and a team from our Synod itself, as we have stepped into our collective past in order to repair it. We are listening and unearthing and sharing the hidden histories of communities within our state -- how BIPOC communities have been historically enslaved, displaced, and white communities, including many church communities, have benefited from -- perpetrating and perpetuating this violence. As we have dug into the stories of the land and the peoples that lived there, how the earth became property and started benefiting some and neglecting others, I have wondered about my own familial land story. Land as property is how many families built and build wealth. And, thanks to my very curious brother, I learned that on my maternal great grandmother's side: one side of that family line owned people of African descent as slaves. And, the other side were abolitionists. They do not cancel one another out. But they press together in paradox. My family's wealth and privilege came from the enslavement of my black siblings' bodies and that truth still maims black siblings. That is the truth. When love touches that truth I experience deep tension that trusts, loves, believes that there must be another way... What if we continue to step into our collective past and weave these hidden histories of ours, particularly as people catalyzed by our faith. How much tension might we experience together until we must push? How much metanoia might come? What world might we birth? I look forward to catching the baby with you all. +Amen

**Praying together at Holy Cross – January 31, 2021- 4th
Sunday of Epiphany**



Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need. For all who share the gospel and throughout the world: prophets, teachers, pastors, deacons, and lay leaders; for Holy Cross church and its ministries, as we prepare for our Annual Meeting,

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For all God's works in creation: plants and animals, water and soil, forests and farms; and for those tasked with protecting our natural resources and all that exists,

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For government and leaders: cities and nations, rescue professionals and legal aid attorneys, elected officials and grassroots organizers; for all responsible for the well-being and health of civil society.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For those who suffer in mind, body, or spirit: those who are sick and hospitalized, those living with HIV/AIDS, those struggling with mental illness, those who are hungry or homeless, and all in any need: for caregivers, hospice workers, and home health aides,

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For the concerns of this congregation: those who travel, those absent from worship, those celebrating birthdays or anniversaries; for the people of God in this place and for the continuing wildfire recovery needs in our community

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For the covenant God made with us in the waters of baptism, in thanksgiving for the baptized who have died in the faith. Comfort all of us in our grief over the global pandemic.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

they went to

CAPERNAUM;

-AND-



when the **SABBATH** came,



-Jesus entered the-

SYNAGOGUE
AND TAUGHT.

they were **ASTOUNDED** at HIS

TEACHING,

FOR HE TAUGHT
T H E M

As one WITH
AUTHORITY | ^{HE} AND NOT AS
SCRIBES

WORSHIPPING AT HOME WITH HOLY CROSS
Fourth Sunday of Epiphany
January 31, 2021

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
whose voice is upon the waters,
whose mercy is poured out upon all people,
whose goodness cascades over all creation.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the abundant grace of God.
Holy God,

you search us and know us.

You are acquainted with all our ways.

**We confess that our hearts are burdened by sin—
our own sins and the broken systems that bind us.**

**We turn inward, failing to follow
your outward way of love.**

We distrust those who are not like us.

**We exploit the earth and its resources
and fail to consider generations to come.**

Forgive us, gracious God,

for all we have done and left undone.

**Even before the words are on our tongues,
you know them;**

receive them in your divine mercy.

Amen.

How vast is God's grace!

Through the power and promise of † Christ Jesus,
our sins are washed away

and we are claimed as God's own beloved.

Indeed, we are forgiven.

In the wake of God's forgiveness,

we are called to be the beloved community

living out Christ's justice

and the Spirit's reconciling peace.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN – ELW 310 “Songs of Thankfulness and Praise”

- 1 Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus, Lord, to thee we raise;
manifested by the star
to the sages from afar,
branch of royal David's stem
in thy birth at Bethlehem:
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in flesh made manifest.

- 2 Manifest at Jordan's stream,
prophet, priest, and king supreme;
and at Cana wedding guest
in thy Godhead manifest;
manifest in pow'r divine,
changing water into wine;
anthems be to thee addressed,
God in flesh made manifest.

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Almighty God, by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service.
Strengthen us by your Spirit, and make us worthy of your call, through Jesus
Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

READINGS AND PSALM

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

The prophet speaks with God's authority

Psalms 111

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. (Ps. 111:10)

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Limits to liberty: the case of food offered to idols

Mark 1:21-28

The healing of one with an unclean spirit

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,

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,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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**

THE PRAYERS of Intercession (see attached prayers)

OFFERING PRAYER

O God,
receive these gifts as you receive us:
like a mother receives her child, with arms open wide.
Nourish us anew in your tender care,
and empower us in faithful service
to tend to others with this same love,
through Jesus Christ, our saving grace. **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

When our congregation gathered for the celebration of Holy Communion, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and of the love shown us in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With thanksgiving we remembered that "in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

The people of our congregation were given assurance of our Lord's presence through the gift of his Holy Spirit. Now we bring to you this same bread of life and this same cup of blessing, that you may be strengthened through your participation in the body of Christ.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

At this time, you may remember the gift of holy communion with your own bread and cup.

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace. **Amen**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Christ Jesus,
at this table we have feasted on your very life
and are strengthened for our journey.
Send us forth from this banquet
nourished in body and in spirit
to proclaim your good news
and serve others in your name.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

BLESSING

God the creator strengthen you;
Jesus the beloved fill you;
and the Holy Spirit the comforter † keep you in peace.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.
Thanks be to God.