

Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. Christopher by the Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland, January 19, 2025.

Today is the 2nd Sunday of Epiphany , which is the Season of sharing the Christ Child with the world.

The word Epiphany means **to show forth**. That's what we're supposed to do during this Season and every Season. Not only do we recognize the birth of the Jesus, we share the adult Jesus as the Savior.

Yes, we're not waiting any more. We have a job to do. The Savior has arrived and is expecting you and me to share Him with others. And so we put our training to work.

And just how do we do that? Well we model behavior. In word and deed, visible and invisible. And we want others to wonder, what on earth, in going on with him or her. Something is happening. And when Christ hears that observation, the Risen Christ smiles. A seed has not only been planted, it is beginning to sprout.

Just as there are stages in the development of a plant, so there are stages in the development of faith. One stage leads to another. The recognition of which encourages us to examine our own faith. Is our faith fully developed? Probably not. But is our faith partially developed? That would be a yes. We're here after all. Eager to learn more, accept more, share more. And, as our faith grows, the curiosity of others grows.

When this curiosity and faith expand beyond ourselves, the Lord smiles. And we then respond to the smile. And eventually others respond and more smiles occur. And a community develops. It's called the Church. Curious people learning from others, and becoming teachers themselves.

That's who we are right here. Intrigued by a Story that simply won't go away. And eager to learn more and share more. The Church at work, and we are the workers. And the Bible is our lunch box and the Holy Spirit is our server. Thank you, St. Paul for this reminder. "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are

varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.”

Where do **we** fall in this picture? How do we fit? To whom do we listen? And also very important: with whom do **we** share? These are all the concerns, the questions, the opportunities that we have. And responding to these concerns is the candle on the cake. We get to help. God helps us in Christ. We help others in Christ’s Name.

It’s a journey, isn’t it? But it is a stimulating journey. Tough to get used to, but really satisfying over time. And here we are. Praising God, enjoying one another’s company, and sharing one another’s challenges. Some bumps along the way, but overall very satisfying. We like it here. And others will too. After all, certainly the Greatest Story ever told is worth sharing.

Today’s Psalm has a wonderful verse: “For with you is the well of life, and in your light we see light.” In **our** light? Can this be true? Can we even be light? “Yes” to both questions.

Never shortchange the impact that your faith, our faith, has for others. The light that emanates from us might be dim at times, but it can be clear as a bell at other times. And in that light is an invitation from the Lord, through us, to help others.

We might not even be aware of the Light that shines through us. Little old us. Really? Yes, really!

Today’s passage from First Corinthians identifies all sorts of avenues for communicating God’s Love and Forgiveness. And often we do so without knowing it. But sometimes we do know it. And is there a better feeling in all the world than knowing that we have helped someone get acquainted with the Lord?

Well, perhaps. That will vary from person to person. And all these variations are blessings in themselves. Because no one is left out. Because a response to the Risen Christ can come at any time. It’s not something we plan. It’s something we grow into. Which means that there is a Seed (capital S) and lots of little seeds.

You and I are the little seeds. Called by the Big Seed to share the Good News. And here we are. In our own way conveying God's Saving Love in Christ. Not just in weekly worship, but in daily examples of faith and trust and caring. Loving care for neighbors, including those neighbors who aren't quite sure what we, as little seeds, are up to. They're curious, which means that there just might be a next step for us. Maybe an invitation to a worship service or to a moving book or to honoring a special day in the calendar.

Tomorrow is such a special day. We remember Dr. King and the sacrifices he made – including his own life - to remind us that we too can be seeds who contribute to the welfare of others. There is no shortage of opportunity to help. As God's children, we are born to help. Indeed, it is in helping that we find satisfaction.

And that's not an accident. It's by design. A design that we fulfill every time we gather as a community to help others. God the Father is the designer. God the Son is the craftsman. And God the Holy Spirit is the One who moves you and me to fulfill God's promise.

Being a seed for Christ is a pretty special assignment. Our homework, as it were. We're not in charge of grading the homework. We're in charge of doing the homework. God will grade. Indeed, in Christ, God has already graded. And we have passed. Good for us, and Great for the Lord.

And guess what. There are new assignments. So grab your tool kit. In Christ's Name we pray and in Christ's Name we do. Amen.

Holy Communion – Second Sunday of Epiphany – January 19, 2025

Hymn 8 – Morning has broken

Morning has broken like the first morning,
black-bird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,
like the first dew fall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
sprung in completeness where his feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning
born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning,
God's recreation of the new day!

BCP - Page 355 – Greeting

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever.

BCP – Pages 356 – Song of Praise

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us.
you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect for Epiphany 2

Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshiped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Isaiah 62:1-5 - leaflet

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God, You shall no more be termed forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 36:5-10

Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens,
and your faithfulness to the clouds.

Your righteousness is like the strong mountains, your justice like the great deep;
you save both man and beast, O Lord.

How priceless is your love, O God!

your people take refuge under the shadow of your wings.

They feasts upon the abundance of your house;

You give them drink from the river of your delights.

For with you is the well of life,

and in your light we see light.

Continue your loving kindness to those who know you,

and your favor to those who are true of heart.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sister, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of miracles, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Hymn 279 – For thy dear saints

For thy dear saints O Lord, who strove in thee to live,
who followed thee, obeyed, adored our grateful hymn receive.

They all in life and death, with thee their Lord in view,
learned from the Holy Spirit's breath to suffer and to do.

Thine earthly members fit to join thy saints above,
in one communion ever knit, one fellowship of love.

Jesus, thy Name we bless, and humbly pray that we
may follow in holiness, who lived and died for thee.

Gospel: John 2:1-11

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
Glory to you, Lord Christ.

On the third day here was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her,

“Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come. His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.” So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew) the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone one serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus did this, the first of his signs in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

The Gospel of the Lord. *Praise to you, Lord Christ.*

Sermon

The Rev. Charles Rowins

BCP – page 358 - The Nicene Creed - standing

We believe in one God, the Father 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 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
and the son.

With the Father and the Son he is worshipped 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.

Prayers of the People – page 388 – Form IV

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

Page 360 - Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

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; and 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.

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.

The Peace

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

Announcements and Preparation of Table

BCP – page 361 – Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you. *And also with you.*

Lift up your hearts. *We lift them to the Lord.*

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. *It is right to give him thanks and praise.*

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

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:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Kneeling or sitting

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:
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.

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say...

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy Name, thy kingdom come, they 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.

BCP – page 364 - Breaking of the Bread

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

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.

The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven.
The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.

Dismissal Prayer – page 834

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the words which we have heard this day with our outward ears, may, through thy grace, be so grafted inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living, to the honor and praise of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Hymn 595 – God of grace and God of glory

God, of grace and God of glory, on thy people pour thy power;
crown thine ancient Church's story; bring her bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the facing of this hour.

Lo! the hosts of evil round us scorn thy Christ, assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound, us free our hearts to faith and praise;
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the living of these days.

Cure thy children's waring madness, bend our pride to thy control;
shame out wanton, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.
grant us wisdom, grant us courage, lest we miss thy kingdom's goal.

Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore;
let thy gift of thy salvation be our glory ever more.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, serving thee whom we adore.

Dismissal

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!