

## THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN EPIPHANY

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my  
heart be acceptable in your sight, \*  
O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.

The subject of my talk this morning is to examine the mission of the church and where we fit in. I want to start with Matt. 28: 16-20, Jesus commissions his disciples,

*“Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.*

*<sup>17</sup>When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted.*

*<sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*

*<sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

*<sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’\**

But let’s go back a few years before that with the baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3: 16-17

*<sup>16</sup>And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.*

*<sup>17</sup>And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved,\* with whom I am well pleased.’*

At this point in time there was not a Christian, church the followers of Jesus was a sect within Judaism; but, the basic mission of the church was established. Jesus was spreading the “Good News”. After the crucifixion and resurrection the disciples continued spreading the “Good News”. The basic mission has

been established by Jesus and the disciples, spreading the “Good News”.... However, the mission of the church must be more than “preaching the gospel “, there has to be something bring humanity together. Katharine Jefferts Schori, our Presiding Bishop from 2006 to 2015, sought to do this with the Anglican “five marks of mission”. These marks are:

- 1) To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- 2) To teach, baptize, and nurture new believers
- 3) To respond to human need with loving service
- 4) To seek to transform unjust structures with loving service
- 5) To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

These are hefty marks to meet. Let’s see how Grace Church’s mission statement stacks up to the five marks. Here is our mission statement:

### ***GRACE MISSION***

**As a welcoming congregation,  
we share the transformational power of God by building up each other  
through worship and spiritual formation;  
we glorify God by building up community through caring and outreach.**

Do we meet all five marks that Bishop Schori laid out? Does it matter if we meet all 5 marks? I think not, but if you look most mission statements in Episcopal churches or any denomination, most would not meet all five marks. What is important is, are we living up to our mission statement.

**Are we a welcoming congregation, do  
we share the transformational power of God by building up each other  
through worship and spiritual formation; do we  
we glorify God by building up community through caring and outreach.**

When we examine the works of our church, who is responsible for our living up to our mission statement? Is it the priest or spiritual leader? Is it the vestry or governing board? Who is responsible for the mission of any church? In our Book of Common Prayer on page 834 in the Catechism under **The Church** **Q. What is the Church? A. The Church is the community of the New Covenant.... The community, that is US.** On the next page, 855 under **The Ministry** **Q. Who are the ministers of the Church? A. The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons....** That's pretty a powerful statement, laity of the Church comes first. We are charged to be first in spreading the "word" and completing the mission. Just as Jesus charged his disciples to carry out his mission....Spread the "Good News".... We are charged with carrying out our, Grace Church's mission.

And where do we get the power and authority do this great task? Well, at the conclusion on our Sunday Eucharist we pray in part "...**And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love, and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. ...**", and you must realize , we all have something within our nature to contribute to our mission, Paul tells us this in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11:

<sup>7</sup>*To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

<sup>8</sup>*To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,*

<sup>9</sup>*to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,*

<sup>10</sup>*to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.*

<sup>11</sup>*All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.*

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Each individual gift we have, contributes to the churches' mission. It is our individual responsibility to recognize these gifts in ourselves and each other and affirm and encourage the use of the gifts;..... after all didn't God affirm Jesus when he was baptized? "... 'This is my Son, the Beloved,\* with whom I am well pleased.'

When you use your gifts you then form your own personal mission which shapes and molds the parish's mission which helps form the diocesan mission which helps the mission of the Anglican Church and so on. Do you have a personal mission? I have a personal mission..."I am to give grace whenever I can so that I may receive grace"... grace being the unconditional love of God. There are gifts in all of you. I see gifts in all of you: In Fr. Perry I see the gift of wisdom; in Gregg I see the gift of compassion and leadership; in Lynne I see the gift of music and the teaching of music; in Fr. David I see the gift of faith and knowledge; In Ron I see the gift of caring; in Carolyn I see the gift of teaching, especially small children, and I see the same gift in my daughter-in-law Laurie; in my good friend David Bell I see the gift of peacemaker.

*5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*5:4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

*5:5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

*5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

*5:7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.*

*5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

*5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

*5:10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*5:11 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.*

**Blessed are you who use your gifts in your mission for His sake.**

Amen

Preached by Jim Klopstock

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Grace Episcopal Church, Fairfield