

Third Sunday after The Epiphany
Sermon by Barb Marshall
January 21, 2018

Psalms 62:6-14
Jonah 3:1-5,10

I Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20

Introduction (involving Church School children)
Sing with motions: Did you ever go a fishing on a
bright and sunny day
And see the little fishies swimming in and out the
bay
With their hands in their pockets and their pickets in
their pants
And all the little fishies do the hoochie, koochie
dance?

(Continue including the children hoping for response
from them and others in the congregation.)

How do you communicate with a fish? A: Drop in a
line!

Where does a fish keep his money? A: In the River
Bank?

Where do fish sleep? A: In a river bed.

What is the difference between a fish and a piano?

A: You can't tuna fish.

Which fish can perform operations? A: A Sturgeon!

If fish lived on land, in which country would they live?

A: Finland.

Thank you for all your participation. Now let's figure out why all this talk about fish.

In today's Gospel lesson Jesus moves to the Sea of Galilee. He connects with the fishing communities in the region. Fish were the central part of the economy of the world at that time. In order to fish in the first century, you needed to have a license. The same is true today. Fishermen were often taken advantage of and barely made a living. Their work hours were long. The environment they worked in was strenuous. They were often separated from families and friends.

Jesus met four of his soon-to-be disciples in the area they were working to catch fish. The disciples were Simon, Andrew, James, and John.

When Jesus approached Simon, Andrew, James, and John and said "Follow me," they responded willingly and immediately. They put aside their jobs of fishing and committed to the Jesus movement leaving behind family and friends. They gave up their jobs for an uncertain future with no work or

trade to bring an income. Rather than using their skills to catch fish to eat, they began to fish for men.

Jesus had knowledge of the fishing world and could relate to those he was serving. He was no stranger to the problems of this world. He understood completely who he was calling.

Our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry reminds us that Jesus came to continue a movement started by John the Baptist. John was part of a movement born out of prophets like Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. The prophetic movement was rooted in Moses, who went up to the mountaintop. The movement was calling God's people to serve. Now it is often referred to as the Jesus Movement. The Episcopal Church, Bishop Curry says, is a part of the Jesus Movement.

When Jesus called his first followers he did it with two simple words "Follow me." Just like the disciples, Jesus calls us to serve in our community. He understands who he is calling and why. We are to grow in numbers as we include men, women, young and old, rich and poor. Our community begins right here at St. Patrick's. Our work is to share the Good News, encourage discipleship, seek

and serve Christ in all persons, help build a just world, and care for the earth.

The way of Jesus can turn the world upside down, which is really turning it right side up!

We come to church to learn all we can about Jesus and how to follow his teachings. St. Patrick's offers a variety of activities such as -

- Sunday Worship services at 10 A.M. and 6 P.M. which offer prayer, praise and worship, sermons and musical inspiration.
- Christian Education classes for our young people.
- Book studies and bible studies for adults
- Lenten soup suppers, and programs
- Dinner, Drinks, and Discussion evenings in the summer.

As a Total Ministry Church we recognize and encourage the use of our God-given gifts and talents which enable us to serve God within our families, with friends and neighbors, at work, in the community and the world. Every member of St. Patrick's is given the opportunity to recognize their call and encouraged to serve following the ways and examples set by Jesus.

St. Patrick's has an active prayer ministry which includes prayers for parishioners and friends for both short term and long term needs. We have a military prayer list. There is a community prayer box at the entrance of our church driveway, where anyone can place a prayer request using the form provided in the tube below the mailbox. Our church secretary is faithful in placing names of individuals who call the church for assistance. She always asks them for permission to do so.

Every Sunday, our intercessions also include praying for:

- The Diocesan and Anglican Cycle of Prayer
- St. Patrick's Family Cycle of Prayer
- St. Patrick's Outreach programs
- Thanksgivings for parishioners who have various gifts they use such as lectors, coffee hour hosts, sexton, greeters, etc.
- For the departed
- Blessings

Healing prayers are offered each Sunday at the back of the sanctuary. Vigil lights can be lit for those you are praying for, in memory of a loved one, or for your own needs.

Our Mission Outreach Programs give us many opportunities to serve others beyond our church walls. When we bring in food for the food pantry, put money in the Angel Jar or Dimes for Disaster container, and the Mission Envelope in our pledge boxes, we are making a difference. Mariner's Inn, The Oakland Country Jail Ministry Program, our Syrian Refugee family, Open Hands, Episcopal Relief and Development, Wycliffe Bible Translators and numerous needy families have benefitted from items and or monies we have provided to improve their situation.

We are called to go into the world as agents and instruments of God's reconciliation. To go into the world means we let those we meet know that God loves all people. Our actions and words are ways to get the message across. That is the Jesus Movement!

Our work as disciples is crucial. God's work is never done. My heart tells me that St. Patrick's disciples will continue to follow the examples of our Lord Jesus Christ as we

- Proclaim the good news
- Teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- Respond to human need with loving service

- Transform unjust structures and challenge violence of every kind
- And safeguard God's creation.

With God's help, we will walk together witnessing to his love by serving the church, our communities, and world. Amen!

Resources for this sermon:

- Lectionary Levity – The use of Humor in Preaching by Ian S. Markham and Samantha R.E. Gottlich
- A Journey with Mark by Marek P. Zabriskie
- St. Patrick's Tri fold pamphlet put in visitor gift bags
- Forward Movement Pamphlet The Jesus Movement by Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry
- Forward Movement Pamphlet – The Five Marks of Mission