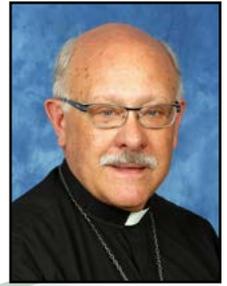




# Hear the Word

from Pastor James N. McEachran



Gather... Encourage... Equip... Send...

## Epiphany of Our Lord

January 6, 2019

### Sowing and Growing on the Way

Mark 4:1-9

I love Epiphany ... in the midst of darkness, literally and figuratively, we are called to see that the gift of God in the birth of Jesus is about the mercy of God which forgives and leads us to live in the light and the love of Christ.

I love being a Pastor ... two congregations ... 8 years to the day in one and now 35+ here in this place where Word and Sacrament are the very center of our lives in mission.

In the first sermon at the first worship service (December 18, 1955) at Hill-Top Inn {I was nine years old ☺}, Pastor Clinton said: "So now we begin. Two months of planning and working and calling ... and now we begin. I hope that you share with me the joy of this day."

Not just that some people are gathering together to start a church - that's not it. Rather, that God's will is being done here in Eastgate - that He has called us and we have responded. So now we begin ... in the only way that a Christian congregation can begin - by looking to Jesus."

Things have not changed much ... for even today, we look to Jesus who is the WAY into the TRUTH that is LIFE!

So today we continue even as new beginnings are before us in a different, and some would say, difficult and even dark time. Yet, the call is the same "Arise, shine; for your light has come, (is here) and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you." And that is our foundation! Jesus who is the LIGHT of the world in every time and place.

This is the day of new beginnings, as is every Lord's Day when the faithful worship as "the communion of saints; "the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church." Bound as ONE in the LOVE of Christ.

Here are a few thoughts towards the future. (By the way, let me remind you that I live in three tenses: PRESENT. FUTURE. FOREVER. Past has been stunning, but that is not where we are as the forward living saints of God in Christ who witness boldly in the world; who serve boldly to the ends of the earth until He comes again.

I love the image of The Sower, seed scattering one, who is just so generous in the broadcasting but never hovering over in anxiety wondering if it will be growing into a harvest. Just sowing is the calling to be growing into the next chapters of life in mission,

It is clear in the story that soils will receive one way or another. That is beyond our control or it would become idolatry. As in “look what I/we have done.” This is not your church, or my church, it is God’s Church which is gifted beyond number with folk like each of you who look out for one another and for the communities we touch every single day.

Paul got it: “we have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and share in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel ... This was/is in accordance with the eternal purpose that God has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in BOLDNESS and CONFIDENCE through faith in him.”

Did you catch that? BOLDNESS. CONFIDENCE. So, what does that mean for you in your witness to Jesus? How does that change you all of your days ... from today ... forward?

So, beloved, I hope you share with me the joy of this day ... amidst all of our days, this is the first day of our living Sabbath-forward until we are with the Lord forever.

So, let me run it by you one more time:

✠ Cross---our GPS---Gospel Positioning System.

✠ Bath---Font---Womb of the Church. In this, we rise each day to forgiveness. ✠✠✠

✠ Table---banquet of grace; fed by the Bread of Life. (Take and eat; take and drink; grace fed, love lived in hope.) Never miss the words “FOR YOU.”

✠ The Sacred Circle --- Space of Graciousness. The Huddle of the Beloved that we might be courageous out there.

Do you know the true mystery this place? It is in a circle. We come from the world, through the COMMONS (Want to honor our work? Never call it ‘narthex’ again.”)

For through the COMMONS we come to the place of worship, which you can call “SANCTUARY,” where God meets us anew before guiding us back in the world.

For it is here that we have a sacred launching pad to sow love, with joy, in hope, by living shalom, the peace of God which truly passes all human understanding. Keep on sowing and growing and knowing that this simple prayer can be answered every moment in the power of the Spirit.

*“Lord, let my heart be good soil open to the seed of your word.*

*Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace be understood.”*

So here we end, to begin again. This is the day the Lord has made, let us be at peace and rejoice in Jesus’ name, Amen.