

## **Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany Sunday, February 03, 2019**

**The Collect:** Almighty and everlasting God, you govern all things both in heaven and on earth: Mercifully hear the supplications of your people, and in our time grant us your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **Old Testament: Jeremiah 1:4-10 read from the New American Standard Bible**

4 Now the word of the Lord came to me saying,

5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,

And before you were born I consecrated you;

I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

6 Then I said, “Alas, Lord God!

Behold, I do not know how to speak,

Because I am a youth.”

7 But the Lord said to me,

“Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’

Because everywhere I send you, you shall go,

And all that I command you, you shall speak.

8 “Do not be afraid of them,

For I am with you to deliver you,” declares the Lord.

9 Then the Lord stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me,

“Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.

10 “See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms,

To pluck up and to break down,

To destroy and to overthrow,

To build and to plant.”

### **Psalms 71:1-6 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer**

1 In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge; \*

- let me never be ashamed.
- 2 In your righteousness, deliver me and set me free; \*  
incline your ear to me and save me.
- 3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe; \*  
you are my crag and my stronghold.
- 4 Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked, \*  
from the clutches of the evildoer and the oppressor.
- 5 For you are my hope, O Lord God, \*  
my confidence since I was young.
- 6 I have been sustained by you ever since I was born;  
from my mother's womb you have been my strength; \*  
my praise shall be always of you.

**Epistle: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 read from the New Century Version Bible**

I may speak in different languages of people or even angels. But if I do not have love, I am only a noisy bell or a crashing cymbal. 2 I may have the gift of prophecy. I may understand all the secret things of God and have all knowledge, and I may have faith so great I can move mountains. But even with all these things, if I do not have love, then I am nothing. 3 I may give away everything I have, and I may even give my body as an offering to be burned. But I gain nothing if I do not have love.

4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, and it is not proud. 5 Love is not rude, is not selfish, and does not get upset with others. Love does not count up wrongs that have been done. 6 Love takes no pleasure in evil but rejoices over the truth. 7 Love patiently accepts all things. It always trusts, always hopes, and always endures.

8 Love never ends. There are gifts of prophecy, but they will be ended. There are gifts of speaking in different languages, but those gifts will stop. There is the gift of knowledge, but it will come to an end. 9 The reason is that our knowledge and our ability to prophesy are not perfect. 10 But when perfection comes, the things that are not perfect will end. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a

man, I stopped those childish ways. 12 It is the same with us. Now we see a dim reflection, as if we were looking into a mirror, but then we shall see clearly. Now I know only a part, but then I will know fully, as God has known me. 13 So these three things continue forever: faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love.

### **The Word of the Lord**

#### **Gospel: Luke 4:21-30 read from the New International Version Bible**

21 He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked.

23 Jesus said to them, “Surely you will quote this proverb to me: ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ And you will tell me, ‘Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.’”

24 “Truly I tell you,” he continued, “no prophet is accepted in his hometown. 25 I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. 26 Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. 27 And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.”

28 All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. 29 They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. 30 But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

### **The Gospel of the Lord**

**Closing Prayer: On February 3rd we remember the Dorchester Chaplains Lt. George Fox, Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Lt. Clark V. Poling, and Lt. John P. Washington. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.**

On January 23rd, 1943, the United States Army Transport Dorchester, a converted cruise ship, set sail with a troop convoy from New York City for Greenland with 902 persons on board. Among them were four U.S. Army chaplains, Lt. George L. Fox, (Methodist), Lt.

Alexander D. Good (Jewish), Lt. Clark V. Poling (Dutch Reformed), and Lt. John P. Washington (Roman Catholic).

George Fox had served as a medical corps assistant in World War I, where he was decorated for heroism. Alexander Good joined the National Guard while he was studying for the rabbinate. Clark Poling's father told him that chaplains had a high mortality rate. He prayed for strength, courage, and understanding, then joined the Army Chaplains Corps. John Washington was a gang leader in Newark, New Jersey, when he was called to the priesthood.

On February 3rd, one day from their destination, a German U-boat fired torpedoes, striking the boiler room of the Dorchester. Even though everyone was sleeping with their life jackets, many of the soldiers left them behind as they clambered topside to seek escape and safety. Unfortunately, only two of the fourteen lifeboats were successfully lowered into the water, making it necessary for most men to dive into the nineteen degree water.

The four chaplains moved among the men, assisting, calming, and passing out life jackets from the ship's store to those forced to jump into the freezing ocean. Having given up their own life vests to save the lives of the soldiers, the chaplains remained on the aft deck, arms linked in prayer until the ship sank, claiming their lives. Two hundred thirty men were rescued from the icy waters by other ships in the convoy. Many survived because of the selflessness and heroism of the four chaplains. The memory of the self-sacrifice of those chaplains is maintained today within the United States military chaplains corps.

Chaplains Fox, Goode, Poling, and Washington responded to a high calling to represent God's love among men of war. On the day they died, they personified the words of Jesus found in John 15:13, "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

**Let us pray:** Holy God, you inspired the Dorchester chaplains to be models of steadfast sacrificial love in a tragic and terrifying time: Help us to follow their example, that their courageous ministry may inspire chaplains and all who serve, to recognize your presence in the midst of peril; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**