

PRIEST-IN-CHARGE REPORT

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. **All of us also** lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. **Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.** But BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE FOR US, GOD, WHO IS RICH IN MERCY, MADE US ALIVE WITH CHRIST even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. ^{Ephesian 2}

I begin my comments to remind us all that we are all by nature born with misdirection as part of the fabric of our being, and because that is true, several obligations are consigned to us:

1. To be ever **thankful** to God that though death and dire consequences SEEM to loom over us, we ARE rescued, and He has done that. Done deal.
2. We should remember that as we realize and thank God for His place in our lives, surrounding us are friends, family, and a community that do not know that invaluable confidence and hope, and they are our **mission field**.
3. We were all once living outside of the grace of God by our own fault, and we should therefore be **patient** in our love and sympathy as God is, was, and ever shall be with us.

The Episcopal Church has entered a season in which those who take God at His Word and view human history with as unbiased an eye as possible must find trying. These are the days which try men’s souls, and the world is becoming a more dangerous place day by day in a way that it has not been in a very long time. This parish must, to please and serve God, stand as a beacon of hope and truth. Many and commendable are the ministries of Messiah Parish, but even so, as the world around us grows darker, our light must burn brighter.

I, therefore, call you and myself to repentance for not doing more, while often not even exactly sure what that should have been but knowing there is always more that can by God’s Grace be done. I exhort you to keep up your good work, and praise God for the means and motivation to do it. Make gratitude your daily fare. I exhort you to make no excuse not to determine to know the Lord better, to read and revere His Words more, and devote your life, and the lives you love (as well as those you don’t), to Him. And I both encourage and admonish you to trust your God and determine to live by a godly perspective. For thus you, we, and the world will be truly the blessing that He has designed us to be. GOD AND YOU TOGETHER HAVE WELL AND WILL WELL STRIVE FOR THIS HOLY PURPOSE.

Therefore, never neglect to pray for the life of the world, this parish, this diocese, this society, because all need healing, and that is as available as it is obvious. Our national church has taken a course of which I implore you to apprise yourselves and pray, because we are One Body, and that One Body is responsible to our Lord, for every good and every remiss thing. Nonetheless, our joy should be fully confident that He will bring all to His truth and joy and peace.

Jess L. Reeves 2019, January Priest-in-charge