



Have You Not Known?

February 7, 2021: The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

The Rev. Nicholas M. Morris-Kliment

Christ Episcopal Church, Needham, MA

Oh Lord, to whom the dark and the light are both alike: take our minds and think through them; take our mouths and speak through them; take our hearts and set them on fire. Amen.

Have you not known?! Have you not heard?! The Lord rebuilds Jerusalem and gathers the exiles of Jerusalem!

The Prophet Isaiah and the Psalmist remind the Israelites of this promise of God at one of lowest points in their history: the Exile...when the Babylonians swept through and leveled the Temple, left Jerusalem in a smoking ruin, and carted the learned classes off to Babylon.

It's not a stretch. As we gather for our Annual Meeting, we are in our own kind of exile, as a Church and a people. Exiled from what once was, exiled from patterns of worship, fellowship, and Church life with which we had become comfortable and perhaps even complacent. More broadly, exiled from carefree incarnational gathering in our communities, from health and contentment; and, joining in exile those in our communities who for a long time have been exiled from safety, justice, and equity.

And we are tired. Today is blursday. Enough.

And yet God's promise is the same to us as it was to the Israelites. God gathers and rebuilds!

Have we not known?! Have we not heard? Lift up our eyes and see: This is our God, who heals the brokenhearted and binds up our wounds! Who counts the number of the stars and calls them all by their names! Who is mighty in power! Who lifts up the lowly! Who covers the heavens with clouds and prepares rain for the earth! Who makes grass to grow upon the mountains and green plants to serve humankind! Who provides food for flocks and herds and for the young ravens when they cry!

What a word of encouragement to us as we gather together for our Annual Meeting! Can we read through the Annual Reports and get a sense of what God has been doing through us and for us, and for others? Can we see and hear, and give thanks to God?

We gather in this new way and give thanks to God for the strength and courage that we have been given to keep imagining how to be the Church, how to be Christ's Body, in a strange land at a strange time.

To help us reflect on what God has been doing in us in this last year, and to help us discern where we are being called to go, during our Annual Meeting time will have an opportunity to reflect on three questions:

What have we lost that we need to mourn?

What have we found that we must celebrate?

What is our essence that we want the world to know?



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Surely, we have lost much. Surely there is much to grieve: the loss of treasured practices and habits and especially certainties; we'll have time to recognize and share those losses.

And just as surely, we have gained much. Surely there is much about which to rejoice: creativities, powers, capabilities and resilience that we had not imagined. We'll have time to recognize and share those joys.

And surely, there is an essence, a charism, a gift that we have to offer the world. What is that for you? What do we want the world to know about us? We'll have time to share with one another what we want to share with the world about Christ Church.

Have we not known?! Have we not heard?!

Those who wait for the Lord *shall renew their strength*, shall mount up with wings like eagles, shall run and not grow weary, shall walk and not faint!

Amen.