

**Fifth Sunday after Epiphany**

**February 7, 2010**

**ISAIAH 6: 1-8**

**Psalm 138**

**1 Corinthians 15: 1-11**

**Luke 5: 1-11**

**Lord may the words that I speak, be the words that you would want spoken. Amen**

It is time to fish or cut bait. I wonder if those fishermen on the shores of Lake Gennesaret said this to each other; as sometimes the things that we think are new sayings, are actually old sayings. Jesus turned to them and requested that they put their nets out the other side of the boat and at first, they thought, how dumb can this be, “We have fished all night and caught nothing, what good will this do?” They knew full well that if they cast those nets out again, they would have to spend several hours getting the nets ready for the next night. But they went on and did what Jesus asked of them, and you know the rest of the story.

I come to you this morning to explain to you the importance of this year’s Annual Giving Campaign. We are in the process of funding God’s call for a new priest who will become the rector of this church. I don’t know how many of you realize that this is one of the finest churches in this diocese and probably in the dioceses of the entire state, as well as the states that border ours. We have a longstanding reputation of always paying our asking of the diocese, which is the money asked by the diocese, to carry out the programs, outreach, and staff of the diocese as well as some to fund the national church. We also have a great reputation of knowledge and stable clergy, an outreach program that is an example to many churches in the diocese, and programs that have begun in this church and now stretch across the diocese. We are a debt-free parish, and when we have a debt, we have a history of paying that debt off in a very timely manner. There are clergy in this country that are giving their names to our search committee to be considered to be our next rector because of our fine history over the last 104 years. You need to be proud of yourselves for being part of this great history due to your time and talents.

The people who sat in the very seat you are sitting in this morning were no different than you, and they made sure this church continued to be healthy

and beautiful as it is now. These wonderful stained glass windows are admired by many people, especially the Tiffany window over the altar. Some of the woodworking in this church was made by a former rector, and all of this was done because people loved the Lord and wanted this place to always be set aside as a loving place to give praise to God. It was no easier for them to fill out a pledge card than it is for you, and they cared just like you do. If you did not make out your pledge card either at the annual meeting or mailed it in; I would ask that you get one from the end of your pew and fill it out so that you might put it in the alms basin. Then when it comes forward at the offertory, all the pledges receive God's blessing to give you the courage to do what you are asked to do by God.

Jesus asked Simon to put out the nets on the other side of the boat, and all the men were astonished at the amount of fish that were caught. You also will be astonished how much your life will change by being a giving part of this parish. Enough said about that; it is up to you to decide which programs and staff will be here to do God's work in 2010.

One of the greatest outreach programs that this parish has ever done was to begin Boy Scout Troop 1 and Cub Pack 1. This was the beginning of scouting in this city, and due to the hard efforts and devotion to do what God calls you to do, it has spread to many different areas. These are both organizations that take young boys and begin to form their lives into grown men who know the value of doing the right thing and doing it well. Boys grow into men, and they take with them many examples of men whom they admired as they grew up. Better a boy witness a man who leads a life of devotion to God and Country and not one of drugs and killing. Those young men who have gained the rank of Eagle Scout in this troop and others should be very proud of themselves for all of their hard work. We should be proud that the people before us and ourselves gave them an opportunity to be an Eagle Scout, and we honor them.

Let us pray.

Lord we give you thanks for all the opportunities that you have given us and the ability to get them done as you asked. Be with us now as we begin another year asking your help in all that we do, and the courage to do some things that seem impossible. Be present with all we do, encouraging us to do more than we think possible because of your love and grace that gives us our strength.

Amen