

Dear Christ Church members and friends:

I write this in front of a fire with a thermometer which reads -6!!! As yesterday's storm and cancellation of worship service would indicate, David and I are now officially New Englanders! And we love it! Though I will admit I was uncomfortable with not worshipping together and so assure you that I set aside significant time to pray for each of you by name as God calls us to do! I pray your hearts were warmed by the knowledge and love of God.

I also write this on the day we remember Martin Luther King. It has been my habit on this day, and many others, to read his letter from Birmingham Jail. While not considered holy scripture, it rings with prophecy and truth which are so consistent with our Lord and with the Mission of God. It rings particularly poignantly in today's world.

Each time I revisit this epistle something new strikes me and this time it was these words: *We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.*

Why is that? God's freedom is voluntarily given, abundantly so. But then God is not the oppressor.

Sometimes we are; sometimes we are not. Yet it strikes me that always and everywhere there is a liberation flowing from the Source of all that is which we are to recognize, cherish, and share! If we are in the position to extend freedom, we must do so! Even if it is hard; even if it means speaking truth to power!

This Sunday we will not only celebrate the life of one of our own flock, Cassie Latimer, but also hear the timeless sermon which Jesus preached in his hometown:

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Luke*

Beloved children of God, there is prophetic joy in these words, the joy which comes from the knowledge and love of God, not because he came on earth for some chronological period of time, but because he commissions us to put on the mantle of light and to feed, clothe and care for. Each and every one of us, in our Baptism, has been so anointed; each and every one of us are called to let the oppressed go free! When we do, we know joy!

I hope to see you Sunday where we will proclaim the glory of God and move ever closer toward the fulfillment of which Jesus preaches! Bless you, Martha

