


# Epiphany 3

January 27, 2013 • Luke 4: 14-21

The Anglican-Lutheran International Commission is a body of pastors and theologians appointed jointly by the Lutheran World Federation and the Anglican Consultative Council. Meeting yearly in various venues around the globe, ALIC fosters relationships of full communion where they exist and where they do not, promotes cooperative mission. ALIC has produced two major documents: *The Hanover Report: Diaconate : Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity* (1996) and *To Love and Serve the Lord — the Church's Diakonia* (2012).




**I**MAGINE A STORY IN Monday's newspaper. A headline grabs us: *Hometown Preacher Stuns Congregation with Agenda*. Since we were there, we follow the story though the week. By Tuesday the police deny any plans to release convicts into the community prior to end of terms. Wednesday the business pages indicate that housing will continue to be a problem for the growing numbers of poverty-level people. By Thursday two irate letters to the editor appear: one man denounces the preacher's distortion of a personal religion rooted in a work ethic, while the other decries what she calls "his thinly veiled call for universal health care – that was a real eye-opener!" Both are shocked that the preacher is locally born and bred. A calmer Saturday "Living" article celebrates our life in a country no longer beset by any oppression. Assured that nothing has changed, we prepare again for regular week-end services.

In the season after Epiphany the Evangelists invite us to perceive ever more clearly who is this person, Jesus: the one we acknowledge as God Incarnate. In today's Gospel we see Jesus at the start of his public ministry. We've already seen hints about the character of

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God's reign in the Song of Mary (Luke 1: 45-55), but now "full of the Spirit," Jesus takes Isaiah's message as his own agenda, an agenda demonstrated in his public ministry and sealed by his death, and resurrection.

At the heart of this reading are transforming words: "Then he *began* to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'" If we hear this truly as a *beginning* addressed to us, then we can hear it also as a call to participate in the epiphany, the manifestation of God's reign in this world. Next week? Well, it could be different!

*Gracious God, you gave your law that righteousness might abound: Put it into our hearts to love justice for others as much as we desire it for ourselves, so that we may welcome your reign as it is manifested through Jesus Christ our savior; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be dominion and praise for ever and ever. Amen.*

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*William H. Petersen* (Rochester, New York), Emeritus Dean & Professor of Bexley Hall (Episcopal) Seminary, served as a member of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission from 1993-2011.

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