

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sunday, January 31, 2021
4th Sunday after the Epiphany

Introduction to the day

In Deuteronomy God promises to raise up a prophet like Moses, who will speak for God; in Psalm 111 God shows the people the power of God's works. For the church these are ways of pointing to the unique authority people sensed in Jesus' actions and words. We encounter that authority in God's word, around which we gather, the word that prevails over any lesser spirit that would claim power over us, freeing us to follow Jesus.

PRELUDE

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose voice is upon the waters,
whose mercy is poured out upon all people, whose goodness cascades over all creation.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin, trusting in the abundant grace of God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Holy God,

C: you search us and know us.

You are acquainted with all our ways.

**We confess that our hearts are burdened by sin—
our own sins and the broken systems that bind us.**

We turn inward, failing to follow your outward way of love.

We distrust those who are not like us.

We exploit the earth and its resources and fail to consider generations to come.

Forgive us, gracious God, for all we have done and left undone.

Even before the words are on our tongues,

you know them; receive them in your divine mercy. Amen.

P: How vast is God's grace!

Through the power and promise of † Christ Jesus, our sins are washed away
and we are claimed as God's own beloved. Indeed, we are forgiven.

In the wake of God's forgiveness, we are called to be the beloved community
living out Christ's justice and the Spirit's reconciling peace.

C: Amen.

GATHERING SONG: *Hail to the Lord's Anointed* (ELW 311)

1 Hail to the Lord's anointed,
great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
your reign on earth begun!
You come to break oppression,
to set the captive free,
to take away transgression
and rule in equity.

2 You come with rescue speedy
to those who suffer wrong,
to help the poor and needy,
and bid the weak be strong;
to give them songs for sighing,
their darkness turn to light,
whose souls, condemned and dying,
are precious in your sight.

3 You shall come down like showers
upon the fruitful earth;
love, joy, and hope, like flowers,
spring in your path to birth.
Before you on the mountains
shall peace, the herald, go;
and righteousness in fountains
from hill to valley flow.

GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

C: Compassionate God, you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Bring wholeness to all that is broken and speak truth to us in our confusion, that all creation will see and know your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 18:15-20

L: A reading from Deuteronomy.

Today's reading is part of a longer discourse in Deuteronomy, an updating of the law for the Israelite community as the people wait to enter the promised land. Here Moses assures the people that God will continue to guide them through prophets who will proclaim the divine word.

[Moses said:] ¹⁵The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. ¹⁶This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: "If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die." ¹⁷Then the LORD replied to me: "They are right in what they have said. ¹⁸I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. ¹⁹Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. ²⁰But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die."

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: 111 read responsively

¹Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,
in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.

²**Great are your works, O LORD,
pondered by all who delight in them.**

³Majesty and splendor mark your deeds,
and your righteousness endures forever.

⁴**You cause your wonders to be remembered;
you are gracious and full of compassion.**

⁵You give food to those who fear you,
remembering forever your covenant.

⁶**You have shown your people the power of your works
in giving them the lands of the nations.**

⁷The works of your hands are faithfulness and justice;
all of your precepts are sure.

⁸**They stand fast forever and ever,
because they are done in truth and equity.**

⁹You sent redemption to your people and commanded your covenant forever;
holy and awesome is your name.

¹⁰**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all who practice this have a good understanding. God's praise endures forever.**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

L: A reading from 1 Corinthians.

Paul is concerned about the way some Corinthian Christians use their freedom in Christ as license to engage in non-Christian behavior that sets a damaging example to other, impressionable believers. Christians have a responsibility to each other that their behavior does not cause another to sin.

¹Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ²Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; ³but anyone who loves God is known by him.

⁴Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists,” and that “there is no God but one.” ⁵Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—⁶yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

⁷It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸“Food will not bring us close to God.” We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. ⁹But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? ¹¹So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. ¹²But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia. Alleluia.*

GOSPEL: Mark 1:21-28

P: The holy gospel according to Mark.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Forces that would bring death and disease have taken hold of a man, yet they recognize Jesus and know what his power means for them. Jesus commands these forces to leave and people are amazed at his authority.

²¹[Jesus and his disciples] went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught.²²They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." ²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" ²⁶And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." ²⁸At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Silence for meditation

HYMN OF THE DAY: *Where Charity and Love Prevail* (ELW 359)

1 Where charity and love prevail,
there God is ever found;
brought here together by Christ's love,
by love we thus are bound.

2 With grateful joy and holy fear,
God's charity we learn;
let us with heart and mind and soul
now love God in return.

3 Let us recall that in our midst
dwells Christ, God's holy Son;
as members of each body joined,
in him we are made one.

CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A: Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

A brief silence.

A: For all who share the gospel and proclaim freedom in Christ throughout the world: prophets, teachers, pastors, deacons, and lay leaders; for the church and its ministries, let us pray.

C: Have mercy, O God.

A: For all God's works in creation: plants and animals, water and soil, forests and farms; and for those tasked with protecting our natural resources and all that exists, let us pray.

C: Have mercy, O God.

A: For government and leaders: cities and nations, rescue professionals and legal aid attorneys, elected officials and grassroots organizers; for all responsible for the well-being of civil society, let us pray.

C: Have mercy, O God.

A: For those who suffer in mind, body, or spirit: those who are sick and hospitalized, those living with HIV/AIDS, those struggling with mental illness, those who are hungry or homeless, and all in any need (*especially*); for caregivers, hospice workers, and home health aides, let us pray.

C: Have mercy, O God.

A: For the concerns of this congregation: those who travel, those absent from worship, those celebrating birthdays or anniversaries; for the people of God in this place and for other needs in our community (*especially*), let us pray.

C: Have mercy, O God.

A: For the covenant God made with us in the waters of baptism, in thanksgiving for the baptized who have died in the Lord, let us pray.

C: Have mercy, O God.

P: Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior.

C: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

P: God the creator strengthen you;
Jesus the beloved fill you;
and the Holy Spirit the comforter ✝ keep you in peace.

C: Amen.

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Announcements

Remember in prayer: Rowen Aldridge, Betty and Jim Allen, Luke Antolick, Bob Braucht, Dawn Hauser, Dave Kuehl, Ralph Lehman, Sara Leighow, David Mitchell, Bob and Phyllis Moriarity, Kathy Neal, Rev. Donald and Ruth Nice, Jack Rishel, Joann Rishel, Ben Saar, Jane Shaffer, John Truax, Jillian Waldman, and all of our shut-ins; the safety of our military troops around the world (Mark Baier, Isaac Boring, Jade Cordrey, Paul Laidacker, Kenny Leitch, Maddison Myers, Tyler O'Neal, Adam Shaffer, Aaron Stabley, Paul St. James, Jenna White); Everyone affected by the fires on the West Coast; Family Promise and the homeless in our counties. Bishop Eaton, our Presiding Bishop; and Bishop Collins, Bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. For our Companion Synod in Liberia and Ansbach-Wurzburg, Germany; our sister church, St. Wunibald in Heidenheim, Germany and for the New Love Center as it seeks to build a new food hub.

The Lutheran Church **Women's Prayer Chain** is a vital ministry of St. John Lutheran. Anyone in need of prayers is asked to contact any of the following persons:

Gloria Ely – 570-873-3597
Sarah Davidson - 570-398-0659
Joyce Braucht - 570-398-2852

Thank you

Thank you so much for Russ's Birthday card. He was 85! He is healthy, but forgetful - sometimes that's a good thing-sometimes NOT!! Hope to see you soon.
God bless, Linda Umstead.

My sincere thanks to the congregation and church council for the thoughtful Christmas gift!
Laurel Gottschall

Dear St. John Congregation, Thank you so very much for your generous Christmas gift. It is greatly appreciated, especially during these trying times. Hopefully we get back to normal soon.
Sincerely, Sue Willits

Giving Plus+

Download the "Giving Plus+" app from your app store for your cell phone. Also available on our web site. Enter your email, make up a password, and walk through the choices to give the church an electronic donation by check or debit/credit card. People were asking if they could give electronically by debit/credit card.

Give+ Text: Simply send a text message to 570-865-1101 with the amount you would like to contribute. Within a few minutes, you'll be sent a text with a link to register. Click on the link and enter your cardholder name and credit or debit card information. Once your registration is complete, you will receive a text verification and a receipt of your donation via email.

Newsletters/Annual Reports

Hard copies of the February/March 2021 and the 2020 Annual Report are available. If you would like a copy please contact the church office at 570-398-1676 or stjohn@stjl.org

Church Envelopes

Please call the church office Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday at 570.398.1676 to arrange pick up or drop off of your 2021 offering envelopes. Thank you.

The 2021 Altar Flower Calendar is now available.

Please call or email the church to reserve your special dates in 2021. Russells fee is \$42.00. Thank you for continued support weekly.

“Souper Bowl Sunday” February 7

Since 1990, young people have been leading the charge and inspiring others to collect dollars and food on Super Bowl Sunday. We will give 100% of donations to the New Love Center Food Pantry, teaming up with and changing the nation’s largest weekend of football into the largest weekend of caring. The Youth have been collecting for Souper Bowl Sunday since 1998. Please designate a special offering for Souper Bowl Giving.

Valentines Day

“To celebrate Valentine’s Day we will be having a virtual reaffirmation of Wedding Vows on Sunday, February 14 during the worship service.” Couples can participate by responding to the M or W parts in the bulletin.

Summer Camp

Sign up for Summer Camp at Camp Mt. Luther. Registration forms and Camp Brochures are available please see Molly. Our Christian Education Ministry encourages all our youth to attend camp and we will pay your registration fees. Church camp is a great place to grow in your faith.

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

Sunday, January 31, 2021

9:00 a.m. Worship Service on Facebook

Tuesday, February 2, 2021

7:00 p.m. Council

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

No Prayer

Saturday, February 6, 2021

28th Anniversary of Pastor's Ordination

Sunday, February 7, 2021

Souper Bowl Sunday

Gary Johnson leading worship

9:00 a.m. Worship Service on Facebook

No Catechism

4th Sunday after the Epiphany

Groundhog Day

5th Sunday after the Epiphany

