

Service for Sunday, February 7, 2021
Provided via Elim's website and Facebook

5th Sunday
of
Epiphany

Announcement

Today we will be celebrating the meal of Holy Communion. If you'd like to partake in one of God's greatest gifts, have a small cup of wine or juice and a piece of bread or cracker. We will commune together virtually later in the service.

There will be drive-thru Communion on Wednesday, February 10 from 5:30 – 6:15 at the south driveway of the church. All are welcome.

Greeting

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Confession and Forgiveness

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.

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,
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.

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.
Amen.

Gathering Hymn

Gather Us In

Text and music: Marty Haugen

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Here in this place new light is streaming
 Now is the darkness vanished away
 See in this space our fears and our dreamings
 Brought here to you in the light of this day
 Gather us in, the lost and forsaken
 Gather us in, the blind and the lame
 Call to us now and we shall awaken
 We shall arise at the sound of our name

We are the young, our lives are a mystery
 We are the old who yearn for your face
 We have been sung throughout all of history
 Called to be light to the whole human race
 Gather us in, the rich and the haughty
 Gather us in, the proud and the strong
 Give us a heart so meek and so lowly
 Give us the courage to enter the song

Here we will take the wine and the water
 Here we will take the bread of new birth
 Here you shall call your sons and your daughters
 Call us anew to be salt for the earth
 Give us to drink the wine of compassion
 Give us to eat the bread that is you
 Nourish us well and teach us to fashion
 Lives that are holy and hearts that are true

Not in the dark of buildings confining
 Not in some heaven light years away
 But here in this place the new light is shining
 Now is the kingdom, now is the day
 Gather us in and hold us forever
 Gather us in and make us your own
 Gather us in, all peoples together
 Fire of love in our flesh and our bones
 Fire of love in our flesh and our bones

The Word

The Old Testament reading for today is from the 40th Chapter of Isaiah.

²¹Have you not known? Have you not heard?
 Has it not been told you from the beginning?
 Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

²²It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
 and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
 who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
 and spreads them like a tent to live in;

²³who brings princes to naught,
and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.

²⁴Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows upon them, and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

²⁵To whom then will you compare me,
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

²⁶Lift up your eyes on high and see:
Who created these?
He who brings out their host and numbers them,
calling them all by name;
because he is great in strength,
mighty in power,
not one is missing.

²⁷Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,
“My way is hidden from the LORD,
and my right is disregarded by my God”?

²⁸Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.

²⁹He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.

³⁰Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;

³¹but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:21-31 NRSV)

This is the Old Testament lesson.

Today's reading from the Book of Psalms is from the 147th Chapter.

- ¹Hallelujah! How good it is to sing praises to our God!
How pleasant it is to honor God with praise!
- ²The LORD rebuilds Jerusalem,
and gathers the exiles of Israel.
- ³The LORD heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds.
- ⁴The LORD counts the number of the stars
and calls them all by their names.
- ⁵Great is our LORD and mighty in power;
there is no limit to God's wisdom.
- ⁶The LORD lifts up the lowly,
but casts the wicked to the ground.
- ⁷Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;
make music upon the harp to our God,
- ⁸who covers the heavens with clouds
and prepares rain for the earth, making grass to grow up on the mountains.
- ⁹God provides food for the cattle
and for the young ravens when they cry.
- ¹⁰God is not impressed by the might of a horse,
and has no pleasure in the speed of a runner,
- ¹¹but finds pleasure in those who fear the LORD,
in those who await God's steadfast love. ^{20c}Hallelujah! (Psalm 147: 1-11,20c)

This ends the reading from Psalms.

Today's New Testament reading is from the book of 1st Corinthians, the 9th Chapter.

¹⁶If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! ¹⁷For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. ¹⁸What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel.

¹⁹For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. ²⁰To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. ²¹To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the

weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. ²³I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings. (1 Corinthians 9:16-23)

Here ends the New Testament reading.

The Gospel for today is from the 1st Chapter of Mark. **Glory to You, O Lord.**

²⁹As soon as [Jesus and the disciples] left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. ³¹He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

³²That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. ³³And the whole city was gathered around the door. ³⁴And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

³⁵In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. ³⁶And Simon and his companions hunted for him. ³⁷When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." ³⁸He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." ³⁹And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons. (Mark 1:29-39)

Word of God. Word of life. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

The Sermon

In the past several months, we've experienced things that are almost hard to believe. There are days when it seems we won't be able to stand another day. We've fallen on hard economic times. We are facing natural disasters. The strife and division which are centered in our nation's capital and has spread, from its ugly arms, to all the land. And of course, we can't forget about the global pandemic and all the questions around the vaccine. Are we living in fear and panic? When will all this end? Do we wonder if we have been abandoned by God?

My dear ones, do not fear. This is nothing new for humanity. Today's reading from Isaiah begins like this: *Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth...* In today's words, haven't you been paying attention, listening, or hearing? (Message Bible) These are God's words, from the mouth of the prophet Isaiah. He was speaking to the exiled people of Israel in Babylon. It is thought this exile lasted about 50 years. They, too, must have thought, "When will this ever end."

So, on this very day in the midst of our strife and struggles, we find irony in this story. According to Eugene Peterson, theologian and Presbyterian pastor, *God's church, entrusted with God's salvation history and the gospel, still panics, still doubts and worries, still feels like it is up to us to save the church. We are carriers of God's message but not understanding, preaching salvation but not believing, that God cares or will act to save. We live Isaiah 40 every day.* (paraphrase)

In the Gospel, we see the healing of Peter's mother-in-law by Jesus. He has performed many other miracles; changing water into wine, raising people from death, healing the sick, casting out demons, calming the sea. Perhaps, all these acts may seem like a way for Jesus to draw attention to himself in order for his fame to spread rapidly. And it is likely these miracles did that. There is another more important reason for all these mind-bending things Jesus did.

At the end of the Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples, “Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.” Jesus did this. He shared with the neighboring communities the Good News of God’s love and redeeming grace. That, my beloveds, is our responsibility as well.

The New Testament message this day shares with us exactly what our responsibilities are. Enter Paul, formerly known as Saul, the prosecutor and killer of Christians. Transformed, Paul now shares with us what our obedience to God is to look like.

Paul proclaims the Gospel without boasting. It is the same for us. We are to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, and there is NO cost to anyone to receive this message. This Good News is the love, grace, and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and is to be sent from each of our hearts and shared to the ends of the earth.

It is our responsibility, because Christ first loved us, to be servant of all. Do not hold fast to the laws of man but cling to the laws of Christ. Paul goes on to say this; to the Jews, be like a Jew. In other words, so we may win over all to the way of Christ, we are to be LIKE those whom we are hoping to turn to Christ as Lord and Savior of all. Be like others and love all others.

Here is the same message in contemporary terms. Maybe it will become clearer when you hear how the *Message Bible* puts it.

[Paul says] even though I am free of the demands and expectations of everyone, I have voluntarily become a servant to any and all, in order to reach a wide range of people: religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized – whoever. I didn't take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ – but I did enter their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I've become just about every sort of servant there is, in attempt to lead those I've met into a God-saved life. I did all this because of the Message. I didn't just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!

Here we are. Be aware of all things God is telling us to do; listen, hear, and obey.

Hear Jesus calling us to share his Good News to all the world, even to the ends of the earth. Heed Paul's message, the Message of Christ, and share the Gospel with all while being a servant of all.

Fear not, for God is with us. God has not abandoned us. God loves us with the love of Christ – today and always, in times of joy and in times of trouble, even to the ends of the earth. Amen.



Sermon Hymn

Healer of Our Every Ill

Text and music: Marty Haugen

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Healer of our every ill,
light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear,
and hope beyond our sorrow.

You who know our fears and sadness,
grace us with your peace and gladness;
Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts.

Healer of our every ill,
light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear,
and hope beyond our sorrow.

In the pain and joy beholding
how your grace is still unfolding,
give us all your vision, God of love.

Healer of our every ill,
light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear,
and hope beyond our sorrow.

Give us strength to love each other,
every sister, every brother;
Spirit of all kindness, be our guide.

Healer of our every ill,
light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear,
and hope beyond our sorrow.

You who know each thought and feeling,
teach us all your way of healing;
Spirit of compassion, fill each heart.

Healer of our every ill,
light of each tomorrow,

give us peace beyond our fear,
and hope beyond our sorrow.

The Apostles' Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there 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 the People

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.

For the church: for ministries of healing and wholeness, for hospital, hospice, and military chaplains, for bishop, pastors, and deacons, for those serving in prison ministry, for all who proclaim freedom and release in the name of Christ, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For creation: for insects in the grass, clouds on the mountaintops, for cattle and the rainwater they drink, for the humility to take our place among all creatures of the earth, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For the nations: for all who lead in cities and towns, states and countries; for community organizers, school officials, and CEOs; for international health organizations, that in times of trial, fear, or hopelessness, they find freedom in service to those most in need, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For all wearied by life's burdens: for those who are poor, for those lacking supportive relationships, for those crushed by debt, for those struggling with chronic pain or other sickness, for those exhausted from overwork or stress, and for all who cry out to you especially Clifford Berkhus - LaVonne Black's cousin, Gayle Lee – friend of Connie Rawls, Tom Phillips - family of Scott and Pastor Carol Strand, Marilyn Dolezal, Jeanne Roen, Edna Mae Lewis, Judy - Curt Meyer's sister, Rose – Lenora Scheer's niece, Greg Turner, Fern Softing, and those we name in our hearts before you; hear our prayers for caregivers, hospice workers, and home health aides, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For this congregation: for all outreach and social ministries centered here, especially those which concentrate their efforts for those who are hungry and those who are cold; for visitors; for ministries of companionship, visitation, and support, for the young people in this place who open us to new understandings, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For those suffering with COVID, for those for those who've lost dear ones to this dangerous virus, for those afraid of the vaccine; give them comfort, peace, and assurance, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

In thanksgiving for the faithful departed, who were called by name and now rest from their labors, that their lives serve as witnesses to the goodness of God, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

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. **Amen.**

Holy Communion



The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us gift thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Epiphany Preface

It is indeed our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. Holy One, by the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations; in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son; and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Words of Institution

On the night our Lord was betrayed, he took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take and eat. This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

After supper, our Lord took the cup gave thanks and blessed it and said to his disciples, "This cup is the new promise in my blood which is shed for you and for ALL people for the forgiveness of sins. When you drink from this cup, remember me, for I will not drink from it until I return."

The Lord's Prayer

As we have been gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray together the pray we have been taught.

Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed by 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. Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. Forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

The Word is revealed in simple bread and wine.
Come meet Christ in this meal.

We eat and drink together

The body of our Lord given for you.
The blood of Christ shed for you.

Prayer after Communion

We give you thanks, gracious God,
that you have once again fed us from your very self
with the body and blood of Christ.
Through this mystery, send us forth
to proclaim your promise to a world in need,
through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

Sending Hymn*I Love to Tell the Story*

Text: Katherine Hankey

Music: William E. Fischer

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I love to tell the story of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love;

I love to tell the story, because I know 'tis true,
It satisfies my longings as nothing else would do.

I love to tell the story,
'Twill be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and His love.

I love to tell the story, 'tis pleasant to repeat,
What seems each time I tell it more wonderfully sweet;
I love to tell the story, for some have never heard
The message of salvation from God's own holy Word.

I love to tell the story,
'Twill be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and His love.

I love to tell the story, for those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest;
And when in scenes of glory I sing the new, new song,
'Twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long.

I love to tell the story,
'Twill be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and His love.

Sending

Blessing

Everlasting God, you give strength to the weak and power to the faint. Make us agents of your healing and wholeness, that your good news may be made known to the ends of your creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

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

Dismissal

Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

Healer of our every ill



Give us strength to love each other

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