

## **4 Epiphany Sunday, January 31, 2021**

### **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.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **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.

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 SONG: Son of God, Eternal Savior**

1 Son of God, eternal Savior,  
source of life and truth and grace,  
Word made flesh, whose birth among us  
hallows all our human race,  
you our head, who, throned in glory,  
for your own will ever plead:  
fill us with your love and pity,  
heal our wrong, and help our need.

- 2 As you, Lord, have lived for others,  
so may we for others live.  
Freely have your gifts been granted;  
freely may your servants give.  
Yours the gold and yours the silver,  
yours the wealth of land and sea;  
we but stewards of your bounty  
held in solemn trust will be.
- 3 Come, O Christ, and reign among us,  
King of love and Prince of peace;  
hush the storm of strife and passion,  
bid its cruel discords cease.  
By your patient years of toiling,  
by your silent hours of pain,  
quench our fevered thirst of pleasure,  
stem our selfish greed of gain.
- 4 Son of God, eternal Savior,  
source of life and truth and grace,  
Word made flesh, whose birth among us  
hallows all our human race:  
by your praying, by your willing  
that your people should be one,  
grant, oh, grant our hope's fruition:  
here on earth your will be done.

Text: Somerset C. Lowry, 1855-1932

## **GREETING**

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

## KYRIE



Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **Lord, have mer - cy.**  
*Lord, . . . . have mer - cy:*



Chri - ste e - le - i - son: **Christ, have mer - cy.**  
*Christ, . . . have mer - cy:*



Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **Lord, have mer - cy.**  
*Lord, . . . . have mer - cy:*

## CANTICLE OF PRAISE: Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing (v 1, 2, 6)

- 1 Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing  
my great Redeemer's praise,  
the glories of my God and King,  
the triumphs of his grace!
  
- 2 My gracious Master and my God,  
assist me to proclaim,  
to spread through all the earth abroad  
the honors of your name.
  
- 6 To God all glory, praise, and love  
be now and ever giv'n  
by saints below and saints above,  
the church in earth and heav'n.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

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.**

## SPECIAL MUSIC: Answer to Our Prayer (Aspinell/McDonald) Worship Team

### FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 18:15-20

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:] <sup>15</sup>The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. <sup>16</sup>This 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." <sup>17</sup>Then the LORD replied to me: "They are right in what they have said. <sup>18</sup>I 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. <sup>19</sup>Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. <sup>20</sup>But 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."

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### PSALM: Psalm 111

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

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

<sup>3</sup>Majesty and splendor mark your deeds,  
and your righteousness endures forever.

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

<sup>5</sup>You give food to those who fear you,  
remembering forever your covenant.

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

<sup>7</sup>The works of your hands are faithfulness and justice;  
all of your precepts are sure.

<sup>8</sup>**They stand fast forever and ever,  
because they are done in truth and equity.**  
<sup>9</sup>You sent redemption to your people and commanded your covenant forever;  
holy and awesome is your name.  
<sup>10</sup>**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**

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.*

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

<sup>4</sup>Hence, 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.” <sup>5</sup>Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—<sup>6</sup>yet 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.

<sup>7</sup>It 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. <sup>8</sup>“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. <sup>9</sup>But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. <sup>10</sup>For 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? <sup>11</sup>So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. <sup>12</sup>But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. <sup>13</sup>Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL: Mark 1:21-28**

The holy gospel according to Mark. **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.*

<sup>21</sup>[Jesus and his disciples] went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. <sup>22</sup>They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. <sup>23</sup>Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean

spirit, <sup>24</sup>and 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.” <sup>25</sup>But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” <sup>26</sup>And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. <sup>27</sup>They 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.” <sup>28</sup>At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON "THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN HAS COME NEAR!"**

### **HYMN OF THE DAY: Ancient Words**

1. Holy words, long preserved  
for our walk in this world  
they resound with God's own heart,  
oh, let the ancient words impart.  
Words of life, words of hope  
give us strength, help us cope.  
In this world where'er we roam,  
ancient words will guide us home.

#### **Refrain**

Ancient words, ever true,  
changing me and changing you,  
we have come with open hearts.  
Oh, let the ancient words impart.

2. Holy words of our faith,  
handed down to this age,  
came to us through sacrifice.  
Oh, heed the faithful words of Christ.  
Holy words, long preserved  
for our walk in this world,  
they resound with God's own heart.  
Oh, let the ancient words impart. Refrain

C2001INTEGRITY'S HOSANNA!MUSIC All Rights Administered at CapitolCMBPublishing.com  
This arrangement c2014 INTEGRITY'S HOSANNA!MUSIC  
All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission  
Used by permission 2021 onelicense.net A-712659

## **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.**

## **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

## **OFFERING**

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

O God, receive these gifts as you receive us: like a mother receives her child, with arms open wide. Nourish us anew in your tender care, and empower us in faithful service to tend to others with this same love, through Jesus Christ, our saving grace. **Amen.**

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

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

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.

**Have mercy, O God.**

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.

**Have mercy, O God.**

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. **Have mercy, O God.**

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. **Have mercy, O God.**

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. **Have mercy, O God.**

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. **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.**

#### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.**

#### **BLESSING**

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

#### **SENDING SONG: FORWARD THROUGH THE AGES**

1. Forward through the ages, in unbroken line,  
move the faithful spirits at the call divine;  
gifts in differing measure, hearts of one accord,  
manifold the service, one the sure reward.

Refrain:

Forward through the ages, in unbroken line,  
move the faithful spirits at the call divine.

2. Wider grows the kingdom, reign of love and light;  
for it we must labor, till our faith is sight.  
Prophets have proclaimed it, martyrs testified,  
poets sung its glory, heroes for it died.  
(Refrain)

3. Not alone we conquer, not alone we fall;  
in each loss or triumph lose or triumph all.  
Bound by God's far purpose in one living whole,  
move we on together to the shining goal.  
(Refrain)

*Text: Frederick Lucian Hosmer Music: Arthur S. Sullivan Tune: ST. GERTRUDE, Meter: 65.65 D with Refrain  
The United Methodist Hymnal Number 555 Used by permission 2020 onelicense.net A-712659*

## **DISMISSAL**

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

From [sundaysandseasons.com](http://sundaysandseasons.com).

Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License number: SAS005987

Copyright © 2021 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.