

January 29, 2023

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Gathering Hymn “Dearest Jesus at Your Word” ELW#520

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| 1 | Dearest Jesus, at your word
we have come again to hear you;
let our thoughts and hearts be stirred
and in glowing faith be near you
as the promises here given
draw us wholly up to heaven. | 3 | Radiance of God's glory bright,
Light of light from God proceeding,
Jesus, send your blessed light;
help our hearing, speaking, heeding,
that our prayers and songs may please
as with grateful hearts we praise you. |
| 2 | All our knowledge, sense, and sight
lie in deepest darkness shrouded
till your Spirit breaks the night,
filling us with light unclouded.
All good thoughts and all good living
come but by your gracious giving. | 4 | Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
praise to you and adoration!
Grant us what we need the most:
all your gospel's consolation
while we here on earth await you,
till in heav'n with praise we greet you |

Text: Tobias Clausnitzer, 1619-1684, sts. 1-3; *Gesangbuch*, Berlin, 1707, st. 4; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, adapt.

Prayer of the Day

A: Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Word

First Reading: Micah 6:1-8

With the mountains and the foundations of the earth as the jury, God brings a lawsuit against Israel. God has “wearied” Israel with a long history of saving acts. God does not want or expect lavish sacrifices to attempt to earn divine favor. Rather God empowers the people to do justice, to love loyalty to God, and to walk shrewdly in God’s service.

¹Hear what the LORD says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

²Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the LORD,
and you enduring foundations of the earth;
for the LORD has a controversy with his people,
and he will contend with Israel.

³“O my people, what have I done to you?

In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

⁴For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,
and redeemed you from the house of slavery;
and I sent before you Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam.

⁵O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the LORD.”

⁶“With what shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?

⁷Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,

with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

⁸He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Psalm: 15

LORD, who may abide upon your holy hill? (Ps. 15:1)

¹LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle?

Who may abide upon your holy hill?

²**Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right,
who speak the truth from their heart;**

³they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends;
they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.

⁴**In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those who fear
the LORD.**

**They have sworn upon their health and do not take back their
word.**

⁵They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes
against the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

According to the world's standards of power and might, the message of the cross seems stupid and offensive. Yet this word reveals the paradoxical way God has chosen to work power and salvation through weakness, rejection, and suffering. Hence the message of the cross becomes true wisdom and power for believers.

¹⁸The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written,
“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.

²⁶Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no one might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

L: The Word of the Lord”

C: Thanks be to God

Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

Jesus opens the Sermon on the Mount by naming those who are blessed in the reign of God.

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

- ⁵“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
- ⁶“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
- ⁷“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
- ⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
- ⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
- ¹⁰“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ¹¹“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
- ¹² “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Sermon Song

“Here I am Lord”

ELW#574

Refrain

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
 I have heard you calling in the night.
 I will go, Lord, if you lead me
 I will hold your people in my heart

1." I, the Lord of sea and sky
 I have heard my people cry.
 my hand will save.
 I, who made the stars of night
 I will make their darkness bright
 Who will bear my light to them?
 Whom shall I send?" ***Refrain***

2." I, the Lord of snow and rain,
 I have borne my people's pain.
 I have wept for love of them.
 They turn away.
 I will break their hearts of stone,
 give them hearts for love alone.
 I will speak my word to them.
 Whom shall I send?" ***Refrain***

3."I, the Lord of wind and flame,
 I will tend the poor and lame.
 I will set a feast for them.
 My hand will save
 Finest bread I will provide
 till their hearts be satisfied.
 I will give my life to them
 Whom shall I send?" ***Refrain***

. Text: Daniel L. Schutte, b. 1946

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Offering Song

“Songs of Thankfulness”

ELW#310:Vs 4

**4 Grant us grace to see thee, Lord,
present in thy holy word;
grace to imitate thee now
and be pure, as pure art thou;
that we might become like thee
at thy great epiphany,
and may praise thee, ever blest,
God in flesh made manifest.**

Text: Christopher Wordsworth, 1807-1885, alt.

Prayers of Intercession

A: Called together to follow Jesus, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Cultivate humility in your church. In gatherings of every size, teach us to boast only in the cross. Shape your church to be people of kindness, generosity, and justice.

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

The foundations of the earth bear witness to your faithfulness; the mountains and hills echo with your holiness. When we mistreat your creation, show us the error of our ways. Inspire us with reverent awe to honor all you have made. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

You make foolish the wisdom of the world. Raise up honorable leaders who seek justice, love mercy, and pursue peace. Frustrate plans that are corrupt, wicked, and self-seeking. Prosper the work of peacemakers (*local and international reconciliation efforts may be named*). Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Bless all whom the world rejects. Accompany those who are regarded as foolish, weak, low, and despised; reveal your power and presence at work where it is least expected. Give your life, strength, and wisdom to all in need (*especially*). Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

As with your people Israel, remind this congregation of your saving acts. Remind us how your faithfulness brought us through difficulties and sustained us despite our weaknesses. Establish the cross as the center of our life together. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Praise to you for your blessed saints in every time and place (*especially*). Trusting you accompanied them in poverty, persecution, and in every trial, we trust you abide with your people always. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

We bring to you our needs and hopes, O God, trusting your wisdom and power revealed in Christ crucified.

Amen.

L: God of grace,

C: hear our prayer

Words of Institution

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Prayers for Healing

P: *After you have received communion, you may choose to kneel at the altar and receive a word of blessing and a prayer; the laying on of hands and anointing with oil as a physical gesture of healing. (James 5:13-16). Our Lord Jesus healed many as a sign of the reign of God come near and sent the disciples to continue this work of healing-with prayer, the laying on of hands, and anointing. In the name of Christ, the great healer and reconciler of the world, we now entrust to God all who are in need of healing.*

P: Let us pray....

**All: Living God, through the laying on of hands and anointing,
grant comfort to all who are in need of healing.**

When they are afraid, give them courage;

When they are afflicted, give them patience;

When they are dejected, give them hope; and

When they are alone, give them assurance.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Distribution

Songs: “Beautiful Savior”

ELW#838

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

ELW#413

Refrain

I love to tell the story;
of unseen things above,
'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story
of Jesus and his love.

1. I love to tell the story
of Jesus and his glory,
of Jesus and his love.

I love to tell the story
because I know it's true
it satisfies my longings
as nothing else would do. *Refrain*

2 I love to tell the story
how 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. *Refrain*

3. I love to tell the story,
for those who know it best
seem hungering and thirsting
for those who know it best
to hear it like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory,
I'll sing the old, old story
that I have loved so long. *Refrain*

Text: Katherine Hankey, 1834-1911