

Welcome to Christ Lutheran Church & Preschool

January 28, 2024

Fourth Sunday After Epiphany

Rev. Mark Selbo

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Member of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
(ELCA – www.elca.org)



All Are Welcome – All the Time!

You do not need to be a member of this church or Lutheran to participate in any part of worship. If you wish to take communion, we ask that you desire a relationship with Jesus. His body and blood were given and shed for you.



Christ Lutheran Church & PreSchool is a community committed to the work of equity and inclusion, bringing justice and support for all of God's beloveds. We welcome those who are seeking God's love and grace for the first time or as a life-long believer. We welcome because Jesus shows us how to welcome, regardless of race, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, economic resources, relationship status, health challenges or anything else that too often divides us. It is in our welcome which we commit ourselves to being an anti-racist space, a space where we seek daily to deepen our work of inclusion in the life of our church. Our unity is in Christ. All are welcome here.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & SHARING OF PRAYER CONCERNS

By Kathy Davis, who will provide updated Prayers of Intercession

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

– Silence for reflection –

Most merciful God,

We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.

**We have sinned against you in thought, word and deed,
by what we have done and what we have left undone.**

We have not loved you with our whole heart.

We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ have mercy on us.

**Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may
delight in your will and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together in Christ. By grace we have been saved.

In the name of + Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.

Almighty God strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit that Christ may live in our hearts. **Amen.**

SONG: God, Whose Almighty Word, ELW #673

(Printed on bulletin insert or in hymnal)

God, whose almighty word, chaos and darkness heard, and took their flight:
Hear us, we humbly pray, and where the gospel day,
sheds not its glorious ray, let there be light!

Christ, who once came to bring, on your redeeming wing, healing and sight;
Health to the troubled mind; Sight where illusions blind;
Oh, now to humankind let there be light!

Spirit of truth and love, life-giving, holy dove – speed forth your flight;
Move on the water's face, bearing the lamp of grace,
and in earth's darkest place let there be light!

Holy and blessed three, glorious Trinity – Wisdom, Love, Might:
Boundless as ocean's tide, rolling in fullest pride,
through the earth, far and wide, let there be light!

GREETING

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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.**

READING – Deuteronomy 18:15-20

(The words of Moses, as commanded by the Lord:) "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. This is what you requested of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.' Then the Lord replied to me, 'They are right in what they have said. 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. Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. But any prophet who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.'"

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

RESPONSIVE READING – Psalm 111

Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who delight in them.

Full of honor and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures forever.

He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds;
the Lord is gracious and merciful.

He provides food for those who fear him;
he is ever mindful of his covenant.

He has shown his people the power of his works,
in giving them the heritage of the nations.

The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.

They are established forever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever.
Holy and awesome is his name.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practice it have a good understanding.
His praise endures forever.

READING – 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

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

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.” Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth – as in fact there are many gods and many lords – 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.

– continued –

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. "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. But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. 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? So by your knowledge the weak brother or sister for whom Christ died is destroyed. But when you thus sin against brothers and sisters and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never again eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

– *Please stand as you are able* –

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (SUNG) – ELW 172

Halle, halle, halle – lujah. Halle, halle, halle – lujah.

Halle, halle, halle – lujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah!

THE GOSPEL – Mark 1:21-28

The Holy Gospel according to Mark. Glory to You, O Lord.

(Jesus and his followers) went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, 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." But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. 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." At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

The Gospel of our Lord. Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON – “Possessed”

SONG: Rise, Shine, You People! ELW #665

(Printed on bulletin insert or in hymnal)

Rise, shine, you people! Christ the Lord has entered,
our human story; God in him is centered.
He comes to us, by death and sin surrounded,
with grace unbounded.

See, how he sends the powers of evil reeling;
He brings us freedom, light and life and healing.
All men and women, who by guilt are driven,
now are forgiven.

Come, celebrate; Your banners high unfurling.
Your songs and prayers against the darkness hurling.
To all the world go out and tell the story
of Jesus' glory.

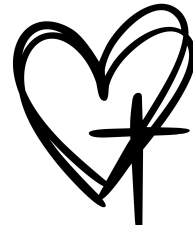
Tell how the Father sent the Son to save us.
Tell of the Son, who life and freedom gave us.
Tell how the Spirit calls from every nation
God's new creation.

APOSTLES' 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 *(on separate sheet)*

Merciful God... Receive our prayer.



PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. And also with you.

– Please share a greeting or sign of peace –

GREAT THANKSGIVING

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

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

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



WORDS OF INSTITUTION *(not printed/Presider's book on altar)*

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.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION AT THE FRONT

All are welcome to receive the Real Presence of Christ in the bread and wine of Holy Communion. You do not need to be a member of this church or Lutheran to receive the sacrament. We ask that you desire a relationship with Jesus Christ. Those who are interested will be invited by an usher to come up the center aisle to the front to select a single-serving Communion kit from the tray, or to receive a blessing. Then return to your seat via the side aisle to open the kit and partake in Communion. An usher will offer a basket to collect the container. *For those worshipping at home, please consider joining in Holy Communion by taking a bit of bread or cracker and a sip of wine or juice.* **All are welcome.**

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

BENEDICTION

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord look upon you with favor and give you His peace.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

SONG: Rise Up, O Saints of God! ELW #669

(Printed on bulletin insert or in hymnal)

Rise up, O saints of God! From vain ambitions turn.
Christ rose triumphant that your hearts, with nobler zeal might burn.

Speak out, O saints of God! Despair engulfs earth's frame;
as heirs of God's baptismal grace, the word of hope proclaim.

Rise up, O saints of God! The kingdom's task embrace;
Redress sin's cruel consequence. Give justice larger place.

Give heed, O saints of God! Creation cries in pain;
Stretch forth your hand of healing now, with love the weak sustain.

Commit your hearts to seek, the paths which Christ has trod;
And, quickened by the Spirit's power, rise up, O saints of God!

DISMISSAL

Go in peace! Serve the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Ash Wednesday** – We will worship at 7 p.m. on Wed, February 14 for Ash Wednesday as we begin our Lenten Season. Watch for Lenten devotions on our website.
- **Mother's Day Joy Bags!** Sue's Pantry asked if we could create a treat for the many women she serves. Holly is gathering items for us to pack gift bags for Mother's Day. Assembly date to be determined. If you would like to donate toward the cost of the items, please reach out to Holly (HollySJ@earthlink.net). Thank you.
- **Caring Hands** – February 17, March 16, April TBD, May 18, June 15 from 9 to noon.
- **Encampment Collection** – Thank you to all who contributed to our first delivery to the Chicago homeless encampment near Pastor Padraig's house. We continue to collect blankets/sleeping bags (new or gently used/clean), socks, hand warmers, gloves, feminine products, and Mariano's gift cards (store closest to camp). Next delivery soon.
- **Sanctuary Support** – We continue to collect items for asylum seekers living in Police Stations and community centers in Chicago, a Sanctuary City. New wishlist includes children's/adult cold medicines, cough drops, Advil, Tylenol, heart burn relief, lotion, coats all sizes, men's clothing, men's shoes 10.5+, strollers, book bags and suitcases.
- **Sue's Pantry** – Looking for small sizes of flour, cooking oil, sugar. Also anything needed to keep a home and family clean – dish soap, laundry detergent, body wash, shampoo.
- **Love INC** – Always looking for housewares, nonperishables and volunteers. Want to learn more about this amazing organization? Have a child or family in need of a bundle of clothes or housewares? Give the details to Natalie and on behalf of the church, we will request support – and Natalie will get us covered! (Thanks, Natalie.)
- **COOL Ministries** – We support the COOL pantry in Waukegan as well as Vernon Township Pantry with non-perishables. Collection bins in hallway or give online.
- **BSA Troop 273** – Thank you to all who support our partner Scouts as they have supported us. **Looking to restart Cub Scout Pack 273!** Children/families ages Kindergarten through 4th grade are encouraged to reach out to Theresa (tcalabrese98@gmail.com).
- **Prayer concerns?** Please consider reaching out, so that our network of Prayer Warriors can pray for you or your concerns. You may remain anonymous. Please email ChristLutheranVH@aol.com with your request, and we will email the prayer team to lift up your prayer. If you would like to be part of the Prayer Team, please send an email.
- **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.** Your presence in worship is very important as we join together in worship and praise. Thank you for being part of this community of faith so that we can lift our prayers together. If you would like to support the efforts of this community, we welcome donations, which can be provided by credit card or Paypal through the link at the bottom of our webpage, ChristLutheranVH.org. Thank you.