

St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church

3 Epiphany + Saturday, January 21, 2023

INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

Jesus begins his public ministry by calling fishers to leave their nets and follow him. In Jesus the kingdom of God has come near. We who have walked in darkness have seen a great light. We see this light most profoundly in the cross—as God suffers with us and all who are oppressed by sickness, sin, or evil. Light dawns for us as we gather around the word, the font, and the holy table. We are then sent to share the good news that others may be “caught” in the net of God’s grace and mercy.



GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (*2 Corinthians 13:13*)

And also with you.

In the beginning was the Word,

and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

In the Word was life,

and the life was the light of all people.

The Word became flesh and lived among us,

and we have seen his glory, full of grace and truth.

SCRIPTURE SONG

Salvation belongs to our God and to Christ the Lamb forever and ever.

Great and wonderful are your deeds, O God of the universe;

just and true are your ways, O Ruler of all the nations.

Who can fail to honor you, Lord, and sing the glory of your name?

Salvation belongs to our God and to Christ the Lamb forever and ever.

For you alone are the Holy One.

All nations will draw near and worship before you,

for your just and holy works have been revealed.

Salvation belongs to our God and to Christ the Lamb forever and ever.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Lord God, your lovingkindness always goes before us and follows after us. Summon us into your light, and direct our steps in the ways of goodness that come through the cross of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 9:1-4

The northern tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali experienced the gloom of defeat by Assyrian military forces, but they are assured that their condition will be reversed when God makes a light-filled appearance. The joy they will experience will resemble celebrations of great harvests, because God will deliver them from everything that diminishes or oppresses them.

A reading from Isaiah.

¹There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time [the LORD] brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

³You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 27:1, 4-9

¹The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

⁴**One thing I ask of the LORD; one thing I seek;
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life;
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek God in the temple.**

⁵For in the day of trouble God will give me shelter,
hide me in the hidden places of the sanctuary, and raise me high upon a rock.

⁶**Even now my head is lifted up above my enemies who surround me.
Therefore I will offer sacrifice in the sanctuary, sacrifices of rejoicing;
I will sing and make music to the LORD.**

⁷Hear my voice, O LORD, when I call;
have mercy on me and answer me.

⁸**My heart speaks your message— “Seek my face.”
Your face, O LORD, I will seek.**

⁹Hide not your face from me, turn not away from your servant in anger.
Cast me not away—you have been my helper;
forsake me not, O God of my salvation.

SECOND LESSON: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Paul calls on the Corinthians to end their dissensions and share the unified outlook of the gospel. Discord arises when we forget that we belong not to human leaders or institutions but to Christ. Indeed, the unifying word of the cross of Christ is the center of the gospel and the power of God’s salvation.

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

¹⁰Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. ¹¹For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. ¹²What I mean is that each of you says, “I belong to Paul,” or “I belong to Apollos,” or “I belong to Cephas,” or “I belong to Christ.” ¹³Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

¹⁸For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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

GOSPEL: Matthew 4:12-23

Jesus begins his public ministry shortly after John the Baptist is imprisoned by Herod. He proclaims the nearness of God's reign and calls four fishermen to be his first disciples.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the fourth chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹²Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵"Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,

on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—

¹⁶the people who sat in darkness

have seen a great light,

and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death

light has dawned."

¹⁷From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

¹⁸As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁹And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

²³Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

RESPONSE TO THE WORD: CREED AND CONFESSION

In Christ, you have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

We believe in him and are marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again 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

Build yourselves up on your most holy faith;

pray in the Holy Spirit.

Keep yourselves in the love of God;

look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:

Everything old has passed away; behold, everything has become new!

God has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

Therefore, let us be reconciled to God and to one another.

Gracious God,

have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins,

known and unknown, things done and left undone.

Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life,

to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Almighty God have mercy on you,

forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ,

strengthen you in all goodness,

and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

Amen

PEACE

Sisters and brothers, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace. The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

We give our offerings in praise and thanksgiving for all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ and for the sake of Jesus' ongoing mission and ministry in this world. We have been entrusted to carry out this mission Jesus' name, bringing the good news of Jesus to the people of this community and around the world. Please, take a minute of your time to make an electronic gift through the St. Paul's Website www.stpauls-edison.org/online-giving.html. Please consider making this gift a recurring gift, and look for ways to grow in your giving for the sake of Christ's mission through this congregation. You may also mail your offering to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 445 Old Post Rd., Edison NJ 08817.

OFFERTORY

**Glory to you, God, for yours is the earth;
yours is the promise, the blessing, the birth.
Ours the rejoicing for Word given frame;
ours the thanksgiving to your holy name.
Ours be the telling of deeds greatly done;
yours be the glory, O God, yours alone.**

Let us pray.

Merciful God,

in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you embrace our lives with your great love for humanity. With joy and gladness we ask that these gifts may be for many a sign of that love, and that we may continue to share in your divine life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

Make your church one in purpose, proclaiming the message of the cross. Help us to work together across differences. Energize ecumenical partnerships, including the World Council of Churches and Lutheran World Federation and our relationship with the neighboring ministries of Edison. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

We rejoice at the bounty of your creation. Fill the land and sea with your abundance.

Bless harvests in the southern hemisphere and fallow fields in the northern hemisphere. Equip farmers to till and keep the earth sustainably. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

In Christ your reign comes near and calls all to repentance. Break the rod of the oppressor in every nation. Dispel the shadow of death in places of war and persecution,

especially in Ukraine. Grant us leaders who lift the yokes that burden those in need.
Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Be a stronghold for those in trouble and a rock for all who are afraid. Rouse communities to care for neighbors who need shelter, are facing maltreatment, or are isolated and lonely. We especially pray for those we name out loud, in our hearts, or list online... Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Sustain the ministries of this congregation and all churches in this community and around New Jersey. Nurture each congregation's unique witness to your presence, foster mutual respect, and inspire our cooperation in loving our neighbors.
Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

We praise you for the faithful who have gone ahead of us, both famous and unknown. Help us to follow Jesus and know our emptiness is made full with your promise of eternal life. 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.

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WALKING AT MENLO MALL. Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Call your friends and put on your walking shoes and meet at the entrance to Nordstrom under the cover of the parking garage and enjoy fellowship and walk around the park.

ANNUAL REPORTS & CONGREGATION MEETINGS. Sundays at 11:15 a.m.

Sunday, January 22: 2023 Budget Presentation. The first-look at the 2023 budget. The finance team answers questions and changes and adjustments can be made before the Congregation Meeting

Sunday, January 29: Annual Congregational Meeting. Review our ministry in 2022, elect council members, and approve our budget for 2023.

BIBLE STUDY.

Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. in the Lounge

Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

DAILY PRAYER. Daily prayer is one of the means the Holy Spirit uses to keep us in faith. Here are two ways to make daily prayer part of your life: a daily service of morning prayer and a daily service of night prayer.

Morning Prayer: Start each day (Monday through Saturday) with a brief service of Morning Prayer. This service is available as an audio file on the [St. Paul's Website](#) and the St. Paul's Facebook each morning. You can listen and pray along from your home or take it with you as you exercise or commute.

Night Prayer: End your day in prayer and fellowship. This ongoing prayer group meets **on Zoom each night at 9:00 p.m.** to share what has been happening in their day, to let go of each day's trouble and to participate in a brief service of night prayer. Zoom log info: Meeting ID = 401 244 599 + Password: 042662

BLESSING

The God who faithfully brings forth justice
and breaks the oppressor's rod
bless, strengthen, and uphold you,
today and always.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Follow the way of Jesus.

Thanks be to God.

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