

St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church

4 Epiphany + Saturday, January 27, 2024



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.

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. (*John 1*)

SCRIPTURE SONG

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

I: 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?

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

II: 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.

All: 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.

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.

FIRST LESSON: Deuteronomy 18:15-20

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.

A reading from Deuteronomy.

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

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

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

³Majesty and splendor mark your deeds,
and your righteousness endures forever.

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

⁵You give food to those who fear you,

remembering forever your covenant.

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

⁷The works of your hands are faithfulness and justice;
all of your precepts are sure.

**⁸They stand fast forever and ever,
because they are done in truth and equity.**

⁹You sent redemption to your people and commanded your covenant forever;
holy and awesome is your name.

**¹⁰The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all who practice this have a good understanding. God's praise endures forever.**

SECOND LESSON: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

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.

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

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

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

⁷It 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. ⁸"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. ⁹But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰For 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? ¹¹So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. ¹²But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³Therefore, 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 ACCLAMATION

Word of life, Jesus Christ, all glory to you!

Word of life, Jesus Christ, all praise to you!

Our hearts burn within us while you open to us the Scriptures.

Word of life, Jesus Christ, all glory to you!

Word of life, Jesus Christ, all praise to you!

GOSPEL: Mark 1:21-28

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.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the first chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²¹[Jesus and his disciples] went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught.²²They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴and 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."²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" ²⁶And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷They 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." ²⁸At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

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. (*Jude 20*)

Keep yourselves in the love of God;

look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. (*Jude 21*)

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

The almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, forgiveness,
and remission of all our sins.

Amen

THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

As we celebrate Christ embodied in human form, we pray for God's blessing on the church, the world, and all of creation.

Loving God, we pray that your example of teaching with confidence and authority builds up your church in love. May all church leaders and teachers honor your instruction and model your inclusive ways. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Renewing God, we pray for all of creation, that waterways flow clean and clear, natural spaces are protected, and our planet is healed. Let us commit to thoughtful care of the earth. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Justice-seeking God, we pray for those in government and community leadership, that they lead with honor and mindfulness. May they remember their covenants and be upright in their ways. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Compassionate God, we pray for all in need, especially those who have known rejection, any who struggle with long-term illness or chronic pain, those without access to safe housing or health care, and any who suffer in body, mind or spirit, especially those whose names we speak out loud, in our hearts or by listing online. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Still-speaking God, we pray for our congregation, for its artists and musicians, for its educators and caregivers, that all gifts are used to care for those in need and to live out your example of accompaniment, gospel witness, and love. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Eternal God, we remember all who have been teachers, mentors, and companions in the church and in our lives. We trust that all who have died rest in your loving care. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we offer these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

PEACE

Sisters and brothers, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace. (*2 Corinthians 13:11*)

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.

OFFERING PRAYER

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

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Let us pray.

Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God,

we give you thanks and praise.

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you. For your Word of life, O God,

we give you thanks and praise.

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God,

we give you thanks and praise.

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O

God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

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

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION. Sunday, January 28, after worship (11:30 a.m.). Make a special effort to attend this year's annual meeting of the congregation. There is a lot going on right now and decisions to make that will shape the way we do ministry for years to come.

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 by the parking deck and enjoy fellowship and walk around the mall.

GRIEF SHARE, Tuesdays 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. GriefShare is a 13-week program that gathers a group together to journey through grief.

LOOKING FORWARD TO LENT

Lent is a time for us to slow-down and reconnect with the practices and habits that strengthen our faith, deepen our love and build up this faith community. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14, and we observe the season until Holy Week and Easter Sunday, March 28-31.

Ash Wednesday Worship. 12:00 p.m. A spoken service for Ash Wednesday with the imposition of ashes, followed by time to study and discuss what we might add or take away from our life out of love for God and our neighbor.

Ash Wednesday Worship. 7:00 p.m. A spoken service for Ash Wednesday with the imposition of ashes, followed by time to study and discuss what we might add or take away from our life out of love for God and our neighbor.

BIBLE STUDY.

Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. We gather in the lounge on Wednesdays for fellowship and discussion around God's Word.

Thursday at 7:00 p.m. This study meets on Zoom. See your virtual bulletin for the link to join this study from any place.

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.

Night Prayer: End your day in prayer and fellowship. This ongoing prayer group meets **on Zoom each night at 9:00 p.m.** To participate in a brief service of night prayer. Zoom log info: Meeting ID = 401 244 599 + Password: 042662

BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen

DISMISSAL

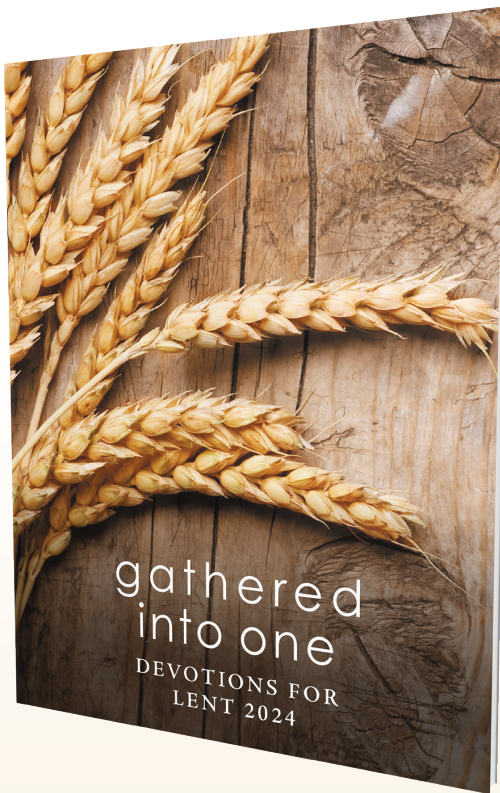
Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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gathered into one

DEVOTIONS FOR LENT 2024



ISBN: 978-1-5064-9659-7

Gathered into One provides daily devotions for each day from Ash Wednesday to the Resurrection of Our Lord/Vigil of Easter (traditionally known as Holy Saturday). Devotions begin with an evocative image and a brief passage from First Corinthians. The writers then bring their diverse voices and pastoral wisdom to the texts with quotations to ponder, reflections, and prayers.

Portions of First Corinthians appear in the Revised Common Lectionary during each lectionary year. The apostle Paul writes this letter to the church in Corinth after hearing of quarreling and divisions among the people. He teaches the Corinthians that each person has a unique set of gifts from the Holy Spirit, given for the common good, and reminds them that the church is the body of Christ, joined together with one bread, one cup, one baptism, one God, and one Spirit. This theme of unity amid diversity is as timely now as it was when Paul wrote to the Corinthians.