



Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

February 1, 2026

The Good News for Today: Blessed are the zeroes. To God they are heroes.

Thank you for worshiping with us at St. John's. Please fill out your yellow attendance card and place it in the offering plate when we collect the offering later in the service.

Who are the blessed ones of God? For Micah, they are those who do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. For Paul, they are the ones who find wisdom in the weakness of the cross. For Jesus, they are the poor, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who mourn, and those who hunger for righteousness. In baptism we find our blessed identity and calling in this countercultural way of living and serving.

Gathering Music

STAND

Hymn: Rise Up, O Saints of God! – ELW 669 (Red Book)

1	Rise up, O saints of God! From vain ambitions turn; Christ rose triumphant that your hearts with nobler zeal might burn.	4	Give heed, O saints of God! Creation cries in pain; stretch forth your hand of healing now, with love the weak sustain.
2	Speak out, O saints of God! Despair engulfs earth's frame; as heirs of God's baptismal grace, the word of hope proclaim.	5	Commit your hearts to seek the paths which Christ has trod; and, quickened by the Spirit's pow'r, rise up, O saints of God!
3	Rise up, O saints of God! The kingdom's task embrace; redress sin's cruel consequence; give justice larger place.		

Text: Norman O. Forness, b. 1936

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Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Word who spoke life into being, the Wind stirring the waters.

Amen.

Let us turn in confession to the one who knows us completely.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Mighty God, lover of justice,

you call us to life in community, but we have served our own interests at the expense of our neighbors. We have sown deceit where honesty was needed. We say the right words, but our hearts are far from you. Turn us to seek your face. Knit us together and give us the mind of Christ, that we may do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.

The former things have passed away, and new things God now declares: Like a spring of water that never fails, God covers you in the righteousness of Christ, and forgives your sin in + Jesus' name. May the Spirit give you strength to live for others, and bless you with the gift of peace.

Amen.

Welcome & Greeting

Welcome to St. John's, where we are building a loving, accepting community centered on growing in Christ, and giving people a place to belong at any stage of their journey with God.

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.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray... 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.

SIT

The Readings

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.

1 Hear what the Lord says:

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

2 Hear, you mountains, the case of the Lord,
and you enduring foundations of the earth,
for the Lord has a case against 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!"

4 For 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.

5 O 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?

7 Will 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?"

8 He 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?

The Word of the Lord,

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 15

1 Lord, 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;**

3 they 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.

5 They 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.

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.

18 For 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. **19** For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

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

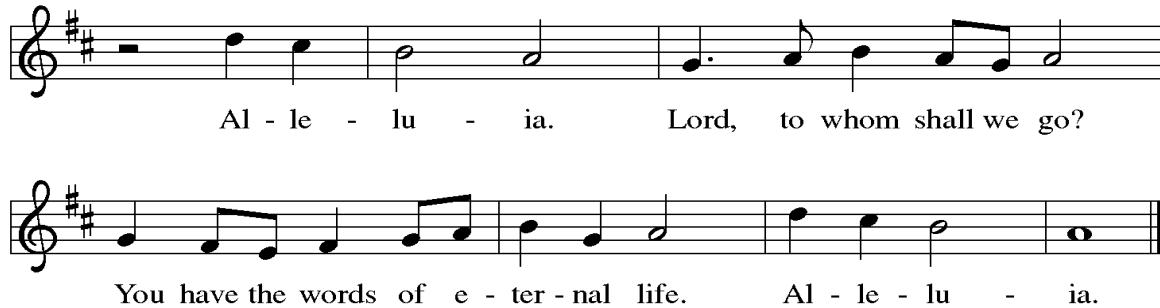
26 Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. **27** But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; **28** God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, **29** so that no one might boast in the presence of God. **30** In contrast, God is why you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, **31** in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

The Word of the Lord,

Thanks be to God.

STAND

Gospel Acclamation



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

Matthew 5:1-12

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

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the fifth chapter:

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And 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 the sake of righteousness, 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.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SIT

Sermon – “Believed in Throughout the World, Part 1:
Grace to You” – Pastor Bo Bannister

STAND

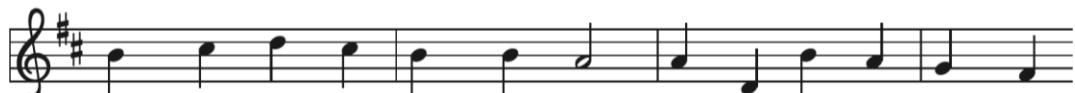
Hymn: Look Who Gathers at Christ's Table – ACS 977



1 Look who gath - ers at Christ's ta - ble! Hear the sto - ries
2 Clouds of light sur - round the ta - ble; an - cient fol - low -
3 Their sad sto - ries are re - peat - ed in a thou - sand
4 Bring your joy and bring your sad - ness, and pre - pare to



ers ap - pear, saints con - fess - ing how they wres - tled
dif - f'rent ways, but they share one thing in com - mon:
be sur - prised by the host whose hands are wound - ed,



with their guilt, their doubt and fear. Pe - ter tells of his de -
they all end in thanks and praise for the host who has in -
who will o - pen wide your eyes when he bless - es bread and



ny - ing Christ was ev - er in his sight; Paul re - lates his
vit - ed north and south and east and west to con- verge a -
breaks it— truth and man - na from a - bove!— and then pass - es



fruit - less ef - forts to ob - lit - er - ate the light.
round this ta - ble, where all life is fed and blest.
wine that wa - kens in your heart the taste of love.

Text: Thomas H. Troeger, b. 1945
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The Apostles' Creed

With the whole church let us confess our faith.

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

As God's beloved children united in Christ, let us pray for the church, the whole human community, and the well-being of the earth, our home.

A brief silence.

God our wisdom, renew the church in the power of the Spirit, that it may do justice, love kindness, live humbly, and boldly proclaim Christ crucified. We pray for social justice and humanitarian aid ministries. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God our source, we honor you by caring wisely for your creation. We pray for the health of old growth forests, ice caps, and ocean currents. Preserve the diversity of life on earth. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God our righteousness, raise up visionary leaders who serve with integrity and respect human rights. Increase freedom in every nation. Protect educators, journalists, artists, and religious activists who are reviled for speaking truth. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God our advocate, you give hope to all who suffer because of persecution, poverty, or war. Reunite separated families and bring orphaned children to safety. Comfort any who grieve or suffer in any way. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God our blessing, we pray for the children and youth of this congregation, and for parents, grandparents, mentors, teachers, and youth ministers who model love for their neighbor and care for others. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God our joy, we give thanks for the lives of those before us who journeyed humbly with you. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Confident that the Holy Spirit receives our prayers and answers us, we commend all for whom we pray to God's loving-kindness made known to us in Christ Jesus our Savior.

Amen.

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Please share a sign of peace with one another.

SIT

Announcements

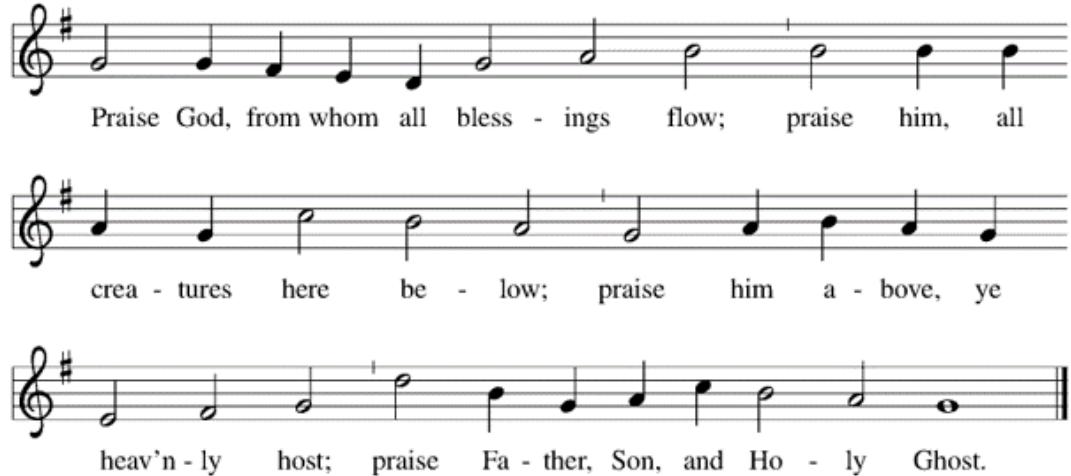
Printed copies of our weekly announcements are available at the usher's stand in the Narthex, and monthly newsletters are on the Hospitality Table. Please include your email address on your yellow attendance card to receive announcements electronically.

Children's Message

Offering

STAND

Offertory Hymn: Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow – ELW 885 (Red Book)



Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heav'n-ly host; praise Fa-ther, Son, and Ho-ly Ghost.

Offering Prayer

God of majesty, no eye has seen, no ear has heard what you have prepared for those who love you, yet in this meal you reveal the wideness of your mercy. Use what we have gathered to feed us with the reign of God come near, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

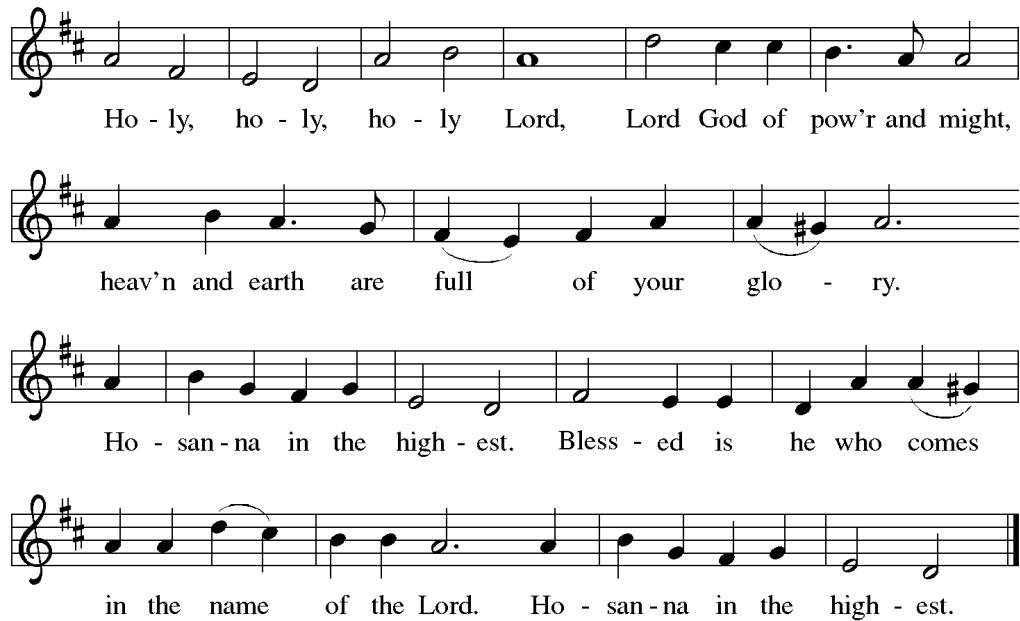
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God through our Savior Jesus Christ. In being baptized by John in Jordan's waters, Jesus took his place with sinners, and your voice proclaimed him as your Son. Like a dove, the Spirit descended upon him, anointing him as the Christ, to bring good news to the poor and proclaim release to the captives, to restore sight to the blind and free the oppressed. We praise you that in our baptism we are joined to Christ and, with all the baptized, are called to share his ministry. Therefore we join our voices with all the baptized through all times and places, as well as all creation, both visible and invisible, to proclaim the glory of your name:

Sanctus



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.

Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Eucharistic Prayer

Without any doubt, the mystery of godliness is great:

Christ was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory.

While on earth, to the very end, Jesus loved those whom he had been given, and prayed that his love, his joy, and his closeness with his heavenly Father might be in them. On the night he was betrayed, he took bread, and having blessed it, he broke it and gave it to his beloved friends, saying, “Take, eat, this is my body which was given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way he took wine and, having given thanks for it, poured it out and gave the cup to them, saying, “Drink this, all of you. This is my blood which is poured out for you and for all. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.”

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

God, we pray that in your goodness and mercy your Holy Spirit may descend upon us and upon these gifts, sanctifying them and showing them to be holy gifts for your holy people, the bread of life and the cup of salvation, the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ.

Grant that all who share this bread and cup may become one body and one spirit, a living sacrifice in Christ, to the praise of your Name.

Remember, Lord, your one holy catholic and apostolic Church, redeemed by the blood of your Christ. Reveal its unity, guard its faith, and preserve it in peace.

And grant that we may find our inheritance with all the saints who have found favor with you in ages past. We praise you in union with them and give you glory through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God and Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever.

Amen.

And now, as Christ our Savior has taught us, we are bold to pray:

The 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.

SIT

Invitation to Communion

Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! Come to the table; taste and see.

Distribution of the Elements

Lamb of God

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
grant us peace, grant us peace.

STAND

Post-Communion Blessing

The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you keep you in his Grace.

Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Radiant God, we have seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. In the sacrament of his body and blood you have drawn us to your heart. Send us from this table with delight, that our lives may reflect the beauty of your love, and bear witness to all we have seen and heard, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

May the triune God, who has put a new song in your mouth and tuned your heart for praise + bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Hymn: The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve – ELW 551 (Red Book)

1 The Spirit sends us forth to serve; we go in Jesus' name to bring glad tidings to the poor, God's favor to proclaim.	3 We go to be the hands of Christ, to scatter joy like seed and, all our days, to cherish life, to do the loving deed.
2 We go to comfort those who mourn and set the burdened free; where hope is dim, to share a dream and help the blind to see.	4 Then let us go to serve in peace, the gospel to proclaim. God's Spirit has empowered us; we go in Jesus' name.

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939

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Dismissal

Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy.

Thanks be to God.

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