**Worship Plan for Sunday, January 28, 2024** **\* Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

**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.

**GOSPEL MESSAGE: Teaching in Words and Actions**

Jesus’ teaching in the synagogue surprises, shakes, and even shocks the people of Capernaum who have gathered for the weekly celebration of the sabbath. His proclamation is different from what they are accustomed to hearing. Mark doesn’t tell us what Jesus taught this particular day, but all the gospel writers describe his message as consistently one of compassion, peace, hope, and love. Clearly, listeners heard something they found surprising in Jesus’ words.

In addition, Jesus’ teaching goes beyond words; he lives out his message in transforming and liberating actions, as we see in his healing of the man with an unclean spirit. The people sense an authority in Jesus only found in one whose words and deeds match—one who moves beyond theory to practice. It’s like learning from a physician who regularly practices medicine, a theologian who pastors a parish, a coach who plays the sport personally. In the synagogue, when Jesus unexpectedly practices what he has been preaching, it’s so new to his audience that they find it frightening and life-giving all at once.

At first, the healing miracle Jesus performs in today’s reading may seem distant from the preoccupations of our contemporary society. This kind of exorcism may be uncommon for us in mainline Christian churches, but we know well that various troubles have a grip on our existence and our being. On the one hand, we experience our own “unclean spirits” such as despair, jealousy, hatred, or guilt. On the other hand, we regularly encounter the “unclean spirits” of our society: intolerance, selfishness, indifference, materialism, or contempt. But even in the moments when we are divided, disoriented, and destabilized, Jesus speaks surprising, wondrous words that challenge and heal us, so we can be restored to the life God intends us to enjoy and share with others.

**Welcome**

Welcome to Faith Lutheran Church, where grace and love abound. While we wait and prepare for a new pastor, we invite you to participate fully in the vibrant life of the congregation, and to join us in prayer as we continue to serve God and God's people during this time of transition.

I’m Joanne McGavran, and I’ll be leading our worship this morning. If my voice gets too soft, or I start talking too fast, which sometimes happens, or if I forget to turn my microphone on, please just give a little wave. Today our lay preacher is Pat Adams, and we’re using the Service of the Word. Next Sunday, Pr. Rex Wignall will be here leading our worship and the celebration of Holy Communion.

**Gathering**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**Greeting**

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.**

This is the day that the Lord has made.

**Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

**Announcements**

Today, immediately following worship, please head down to the Fellowship Hall for cookies, coffee and conversation.

Monday, the 29th: Council meets at 1:00

Tuesday, the 30th: Bingo at 4:00pm!

Thursday, the 1st: Snip 'N Stitch meets at 9:00

Friday, the 2nd:  Al-Anon meets at 10:30

The altar flowers were provided by Marlene Rosselli.

There is a letter in each of your mailboxes announcing the Annual Meeting. The date will be Sunday, February 25th immediately after the worship service. All information needed is in the letter, but please call Lynn if you have any questions.

The Annual Report will be in your mailbox next Sunday, February 4th.

For the month of January, we are collecting boxes of stuffing, mashed potatoes, rice sides (spanish rice, rice pilaf, etc), grocery bags, and empty egg cartons for the Community Cupboard. Please place donations in the wire basket in the foyer.

For more information and a complete monthly calendar, contact the church office. Thank you!

**Silence**

Let us take a moment of silence to quiet our hearts and minds and prepare for worship.

**And now please turn to hymn number 303**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Gathering Song:*Brightest and Best of the Stars* (ELW 303)**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

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

Gracious God,

**have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

**Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with 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 through faith.

**Amen.**

**Prayer of the Day**

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.**

**CHILDREN’S CHAT**

**Word**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**First Reading:** Deuteronomy 18:15-20

[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.**

**Psalmody:** 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.

6**You 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.

8**They 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.

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

**Amen.**

**Second Reading:** 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

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.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation (ELW p. 216)**

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

**Gospel:** Mark 1:21-28

The holy gospel according to Mark.

**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: *Who’s in Charge? by Pat Adams***

**And now please turn to hymn number 815**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Hymn of the Day:*I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light, vs. 1, 3* (ELW 815)**

**ASSISTING MINISTER: APOSTLE'S CREED**

We continue as we confess our faith using the words of the Apostle's 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**

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 especially, JoLynne Buehring; Arnette Calkins; Vicki Crow; Frank Ehrig; Carole Erickson; Danny Johnson; Lorna Harrison; Patsy Loughboro; Donna McCain; Sandra Miller; Thordis Moe; Carol Morris; Michael Myers; Arlene Rickards; Marilyn Rieti; Dee Seel; Amy Sinclair; Joyce Stromberg; Diana Ward; Michael Weller; Peggy Westby and family; Harold Whitford and family; the homebound; the emergency responders; and those grieving and anticipating surgery/tests. At this time, we also pray for those we name aloud or silently in our hearts. 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**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**Offering**

At this time, we remember that the giving of our offering is an authentic part of worship. Whether you give of your time, talents, or treasures, a combination of them, or are discerning how you can give to God's beloved community, thank you so much for all the ways you give and help to make the ministries of this church possible!

**And now please turn to hymn number 785**

**Musical Offering: *When Peace Like a River* (ELW 785)**

**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 (ELW p. 221)**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

**Blessing**

The God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus.

**Amen.**

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

The God of all grace ☩ bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

**And now please turn to hymn number 310**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Sending Song:*Songs of Thankfulness and Praise* (ELW 310)**

**Dismissal**

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Invitation**

The Church Council Members invite guests and visitors to come and meet us in the narthex as you exit so that we can meet and welcome you, and all are welcome to join us in the Fellowship Hall for cookies, coffee and conversation.

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