**Worship Plan for Sunday, January 29, 2023** **\* Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

**Introduction to the day**

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.

**GOSPEL MESSAGE: Upside-Down Blessing**

How do you know that you are blessed? Our consumer-driven culture primes us to believe blessedness is based on our bank accounts. Or perhaps we learn that we are blessed if we are in good health, or if our work is meaningful, or if our social or family lives are fulfilling. Social media hashtags depict blessing as the result of good fortune. And health, work, family, and social connection can all be good things! But the beatitudes turn our assumptions about blessedness on their head.

Jesus reminds us that instead, blessedness is our beginning. “Blessed” is our primary identity in God. We are loved and favored by God before we do anything to earn it, before the circumstances of our lives begin to define us. Our level of blessedness has nothing to do with us and everything to do with God’s abundant love and grace. This is true especially when it feels like we are anything but blessed.

We are loved, held, and brought near to God, even in our pain and sorrow and everything that makes us feel like we are less worthy, less loved, less important. In fact, it is in those places that God draws nearest to us, reminding us that we are loved and whole and worthy of blessing. Then everything we do flows from that identity of blessedness. We are freed to bless others—with our words, our actions, our whole lives. We are invited to engage the world through the upside-down lens of the kingdom of God. We are given new eyes to see God’s presence in this world—not just among the important, the powerful, the popular, and the loud, but among those the world would rather ignore, disregard, or shame.

Whenever the world pronounces condemnation, God declares, “Blessed.” Whenever the world excludes, God welcomes. Whenever the world scorns, mocks, or causes harm, God promises new life in the kingdom of heaven that is ever drawing near.

**Gathering**

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

**Greeting**

Welcome to worship today, we are glad to have you with our Faith Lutheran Church community. I'm Pr. John Barton and I will be leading our service today.

This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!

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.**

**ASSISTING MINISTER: Announcements**

Monday, the 30th: Council meets at 1:00 in person and Zoom

For the month of January, we are collecting canned chili and plastic grocery bags
for the Community Cupboard. Please place donations in wire basket in the foyer.

We will be ordering headsets soon for the new hearing assist headphone system and we need to know how many of you expect you will use them. They will be sanitized after each use and we need to know how many headsets to order. Please tell Pastor John or put a note in the mailbox for the office.

We are looking for volunteers to pick up people on Sunday mornings who aren’t
able to transport themselves and bring them to church!

The year-end offering statements are in your mailbox ready to take home today! If you haven't already taken your offering envelopes and membership directory home, those are waiting for you, as well.

We have no one signed up for flowers for next Sunday...if anyone would like to sign up, please let the office know.

For more information and a complete monthly calendar, contact the church office. You can also go to the narthex and sign up to have the Forecaster and weekly announcements sent to you via email or via phone call.   Thank you!

**And now please turn to hymn 710**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Gathering Song:*Let Streams of Living Justice* (ELW 710)**

**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.

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 by 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.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**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.**

**Children's Chat**

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

**First Reading:** Micah 6:1-8

### 1Hear what the Lord says: Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. 2Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth; for the Lord has a controversy with 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! 4For 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. 5O 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? 7Will 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?” 8He 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.**

**PsalmODY:** Psalm 15

1Lord, 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;**

3they 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.**

5They 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.

**Amen.**

**Second Reading:** 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

18The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” 20Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. 22For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, 23but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength. 26Consider 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. 27But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, 29so that no one might boast in the presence of God. 30He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation (ELW p. 151)**

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

**Gospel:** Matthew 5:1-12

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

1When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2Then 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 righteousness’ sake, 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. 12Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon: “**The B-Attitudes” by Pastor Rex

**And now please turn to hymn 838**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Hymn of the Day: *Beautiful Savior* (ELW 838)**

**ASSISTING MINISTER**

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

**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.**

**Pastor and Assisting Minister: Prayers of Intercession**

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

Cultivate humility in your church. In gatherings of every size, teach us to boast only in the cross. Shape your church to be people of kindness, generosity, and justice. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

The foundations of the earth bear witness to your faithfulness; the mountains and hills echo with your holiness. When we mistreat your creation, show us the error of our ways. Inspire us with reverent awe to honor all you have made. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

You make foolish the wisdom of the world. Raise up honorable leaders who seek justice, love mercy, and pursue peace. Frustrate plans that are corrupt, wicked, and self-seeking. Prosper the work of peacemakers. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Bless all whom the world rejects. Accompany those who are regarded as foolish, weak, low, and despised; reveal your power and presence at work where it is least expected. Give your life, strength, and wisdom to all in need, especially Nancy Blackmer; JoLynne Buehring; Arnette Calkins; Vicki Crow; the De La Fuente family; Stephanie DeSimone; Carole Erickson; Kally Homchick; the Kniss family; Joanne McGavran; Sandra Miller; Carol Morris; Sheila Neal; Wilma Parker; Andrew Quinn; JoAnne Schriock; Bill and Dee Seel; Amy Sinclair; Joyce Stromberg; Diana Ward; the homebound; the Emergency responders; and those grieving and anticipating surgery/tests.  We especially pray for those affected by COVID-19 and those who have lost loved ones. At this time we also pray for those we name aloud or silently in our hearts. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

As with your people Israel, remind this congregation of your saving acts. Remind us how your faithfulness brought us through difficulties and sustained us despite our weaknesses. Establish the cross as the center of our life together. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Praise to you for your blessed saints in every time and place. Trusting you accompanied them in poverty, persecution, and in every trial, we trust you abide with your people always. 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.**

**Peace**

The peace of the Lord 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!

**ASSISTING MINISTER: Offering Prayer**

Let us pray.

Holy God, gracious and merciful, you bring forth food from the earth and nourish your whole creation. Turn our hearts toward those who hunger in any way, that all may know your care; and prepare us now to feast on the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**And now, please turn to hymn 728**

**Musical Offering:*Blest Are They* (ELW 728)**

**Meal**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

**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.**

**Preface (ELW p. 153)**

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. You reveal your glory as the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: equal in majesty, undivided in splendor, one Lord, one God, ever to be adored in your eternal glory. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, Holy, Holy (ELW p. 153)**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow’r and might: Heav’n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

**INSTRUCTION FOR COMMUNION**

As you are comfortable, you are invited to come forward to receive communion. All of God's children are welcome to Christ's table.

You may kneel or stand at the altar rail, I will distribute the communion elements or if you wish to receive a blessing, please cross your arms over your chest. You may commune yourself once you've received the communion elements. If you are concerned about spillage, place a napkin in your hand, commune the bread first, turn over the vessel and then carefully open the grape juice. There is also a gluten free option available, ask me at the rail. Please deposit empty cups in the provided baskets on your way back to your seat.

If you would like communion brought to you at your seat, indicate by raising your hand for the Assisting Minister to see and they will bring communion to you.

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**Amen.**

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.**

**Invitation to Communion**

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

**During Distribution:*In the Singing* (ELW 466)**

**During Distribution:*Eat This Bread: Jesus Christ, Bread of Life* (ELW 472)**

**Communion**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

**Prayer after Communion**

Let us pray.

God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have united us with Christ, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**Amen.**

**And now please turn to hymn 714**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Sending Song:*O God of Mercy, God of Light* (ELW 714)**

**Doxology*Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow* (ELW 884)**

**ASSISTING MINISTER: Dismissal**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Our Minister Today** is Rex S. Wignall who retired from full time ministry after 43 years in the United Methodist Church. Rex was pastor of Sun City United Methodist (2005-2018) and we have had numerous joint services between Faith Lutheran and Sun City Methodist over the years.  Rex continues to preach and teach study groups, and has been filling in at Trinity Lutheran on a regular basis. He and his wife Barbara live in Sun City.

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