

## February 7, 2021 – 5th Sunday After Epiphany

Prelude

### **THANK YOU!**

As we are unable to gather at the church building to receive your gifts and offerings, we are grateful you have continued to forward your gifts to the Church during this time.

For your Gifts and Offerings, we give Thanks.!

### **INTRODUCTION**

### **WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Gracious God, you have gathered us here as your church, united in love for you and love for your children. Dwell with us now as we worship your holy name. Bind us together in love that we may embody your love in our life together. Send us forth in love that we may bear witness to your love in the world. Amen

Come! Let us Worship God who makes us one.

Come! Let us Worship.

### **CONFESSION OF OUR FAITH**

*God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ.*

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

We believe God is the creator,  
Who has promised to love us always.

We believe Jesus Christ, Fully God and fully human, is God's promise living among us.

He experienced all the pain and joy and challenges of human life. God's forgiving selfless love was revealed to us when Jesus suffered death on the cross. His actions of selflessness resurrected God's love for us all, and a promise of a new life in unity with God.

We believe the Holy Spirit is God's Breath, breathing life into our spirits, guiding us even through the darkest and most difficult moments of our lives. We believe God is among us in community. Mysterious, yet very real, in Creation, in Breath, in Flesh. God promises to be with us always, even to the end of the age. This is our faith!

## **Gathering Song:** ELW #886 – *“Oh for a Thousand Tongues to Sing”*

### **Kyrie**

#### **Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray.

You who formed us, named us and gathered us, open our ears to hear your message. You who give power to the faint, help us understand your message. You who uplift, strengthen, and heal, inspire us to proclaim your message. We pray in the name of Christ, who is the Message. **Amen.**

#### **First Reading:** Isaiah 40:21-31

<sup>21</sup>Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

<sup>22</sup>It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; <sup>23</sup>who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing. <sup>24</sup>Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. <sup>25</sup>To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One. <sup>26</sup>Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing. <sup>27</sup>Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God”? <sup>28</sup>Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. <sup>29</sup>He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. <sup>30</sup>Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; <sup>31</sup>but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 147:1-11, 20c**

<sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! How good it is to sing praises to our God!

How pleasant it is to honor God with praise!

<sup>2</sup>**The LORD rebuilds Jerusalem,  
and gathers the exiles of Israel.**

<sup>3</sup>The LORD heals the brokenhearted  
and binds up their wounds.

<sup>4</sup>**The LORD counts the number of the stars  
and calls them all | by their names.**

<sup>5</sup>Great is our LORD and mighty in power;  
there is no limit to God's wisdom.

<sup>6</sup>**The LORD lifts up the lowly,  
but casts the wicked to the ground.**

<sup>7</sup>Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;  
make music upon the harp to our God,

<sup>8</sup>**who covers the heavens with clouds  
and prepares rain for the earth, making grass to grow upon the  
mountains.**

<sup>9</sup>God provides food for the cattle  
and for the young ravens when they cry.

<sup>10</sup>**God is not impressed by the might of a horse,  
and has no pleasure in the speed of a runner,**

<sup>11</sup>but finds pleasure in those who fear the LORD,  
in those who await God's steadfast love. <sup>20c</sup> Hallelujah!

## **Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:16-23**

<sup>16</sup>If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! <sup>17</sup>For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. <sup>18</sup>What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel. <sup>19</sup>For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. <sup>20</sup>To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. <sup>21</sup>To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's

law) so that I might win those outside the law. <sup>22</sup>To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. <sup>23</sup>I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

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: Mark 1:29-39**

The holy gospel according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>29</sup>As soon as [Jesus and the disciples] left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. <sup>30</sup>Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. <sup>31</sup>He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. <sup>32</sup>That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. <sup>33</sup>And the whole city was gathered around the door. <sup>34</sup>And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. <sup>35</sup>In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. <sup>36</sup>And Simon and his companions hunted for him. <sup>37</sup>When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." <sup>38</sup>He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." <sup>39</sup>And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

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

**Message:** *Epiphany Sermon Series*, Bishop Sid Haugen, Saskatchewan Synod. "The Church of Four Fishermen"

People of God, I'm glad you are gathering together today. It might be again an uncomfortable gathering—gathering in community but separately—sitting at our kitchen tables. Or perhaps gathering in our worship spaces but masked and 6 feet apart. So glad you pushed through the discomfort of these times to gather anyway. Let me center with you today on the Word. The Word that we have shared as church in good times, in hard times: in times of war, times of peace, times of growth and prosperity, times of uncertainty. I invite you to walk with me today into the Word that holds us. If you are at home today, I'd invite you to open your Bibles to the beginning of the Gospel According to Mark where our text is found this morning. And dwell with me in that so deep, so beautiful Gospel. Mark chapter 1.

Please join with me in prayer:

*May these words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts  
be acceptable in your sight,*

*O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.*

First let me begin with a word about the Gospel according to Mark among the Gospels. In the Gospels we love The Good Samaritan story, the prodigal son story. We know them by heart. Both stories are in the Gospel according to Luke. Luke's gospel fires our imagination about a gracious God. In the Gospels, we love Matthew's gospel because in Matthew's Gospel Jesus gives us clear directions. In Matthew, Jesus tells the faith community about prayer, about love, about how to be church—even how to handle conflict step by step. But Mark. . .Mark's gospel is different. Mark's gospel is often a puzzling narrative filled with unanswered questions. For example, as you make your way into Mark, often Jesus will heal someone and then command them in no uncertain terms to tell no one

about it! Why Jesus would reject good advertising! And do you know what? For 2000 years theologians have been wondering why he said that. Various solutions have been suggested. But we still don't know. We are not quite sure what God is up to in the story. Maybe neither was Mark.

Maybe that is why I'm so drawn to this narrative—because in fact, our lives are so much like that aren't they? We are not always sure what God is up to in the events of our lives, of our world either. Maybe that is particularly the case in the last past year as we walk through this pandemic.

I'd invite you to turn to Mark chapter 1. As we begin, remember that the three similar Gospels, referred to collectively as the Synoptic gospels tell broadly a similar story of Jesus. Matthew Mark and Luke all share a simple geographical order. Each gospel speaks at length of Jesus' one-year ministry in Galilee—the north province of Palestine; then tells of his journey to Jerusalem for the last week of his ministry, from Palm Sunday through Good Friday to Easter Day. So each Gospel presents a year in Galilee; then a week in Jerusalem. And each Gospel also includes a Prologue to give the readers a hint of where the story will go.

Turn for a moment to Mark's Prologue. To start with, notice what isn't there: no stable in Bethlehem, that's in Luke; no magi following the star, that's in Matthew. Mark's prologue is really brief. It is just 12 verses long and the first 8 verses are spent introducing John the Baptist. Verse 9 introduces Jesus and it does it like this:

*It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John.*

That's it. Jesus just arrives a grown man from Nazareth in Galilee. He comes from Nazareth, which is to say, he comes from nowhere of importance as far as people knew—it's Jesus in blue jeans if that image helps you imagine it.

Then as you walk through chapter 1, he meets John the Baptist and is baptized. As the water runs down his body he hears the voice of God affirming that he is God's son and God is pleased with them. Then immediately following his baptism in verse 12, the Spirit drives him into the desert. Notice. . .the Spirit doesn't advise Jesus to go into the wilderness. The Spirit doesn't simply guide him to the wilderness. The Spirit drives him in the desert where Jesus remains for 40 days and is put to test by the Satan. Why does the Spirit drive Jesus into the wilderness? Mark doesn't say.

Again, if you might be expecting a long conversation with the Satan tempting him to throw himself from the top of temple or turn stones into bread—it's not there. That's in Luke and Matthew. What does he go through in the desert? Mark doesn't say. What does the Satan say? Mark doesn't say. Just that he was driven into the lonely place and was tested for 40 days. Then this

*And afterward the angels served him.*

The Greek word for served here is *diakoneo*, the word behind our word "deacon." The angels literally ministered to him. They served him so that he could continue the journey.

With the Prologue complete we move into the long Galilean ministry section that continues till chapter 11 when Jesus will enter Jerusalem. Mark says, verse 15, that Jesus went into Galilee and proclaimed this message:

*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel.*

What does the kingdom of God look like? Many groups in Jesus' time were putting forward a way to the "kingdom of God," to God's new world. The Zealots called for an armed rebellion against the Roman overlords to bring in a new world. They wanted to storm the Capitol! The Essenes called the people to withdraw from the world into a colony and follow the Scripture together and wait for God's Kingdom to break in. The Pharisees and Sadducees each had a plan for meeting the Kingdom of God, for God's new world to break in. What does the kingdom of God Jesus proclaims look like? Mark doesn't say.

But in the Galilean section, right at the outset, the narrative does clarify one thing about how that new world, that kingdom of God Jesus proclaimed was coming. Jesus immediately gathers together a community. The community he gathers is always surprising. It was not the religious leaders of the time, nor was it the most prominent secular leaders.

While Jesus was walking along by the Lake of Galilee, he meets two fishermen: Simon and Simon's brother Andrew. Jesus calls them to follow him. Mark says:

*And at once they left their nets and followed him.*

It is the same story, just down the lakeshore, were two other fishermen, James and John. Jesus calls them as well and immediately get up and follow Jesus. Why did they find themselves following Jesus? Mark doesn't say. The fishermen don't tell us, either. Only that Jesus called them and they found themselves following after him.

I wonder if they were wondering what the Kingdom of God Jesus was announcing was going to look like, too. What were they being brought into? Were they going to be an army? Or a cloister? Or something else.

Now our Gospel text is located during one day of the life of this Church of Four Fishermen. The sabbath day begins with the church of four fishermen following Jesus into Capernaum where Jesus preaches in a synagogue. Mark says that the people marveled at his words. What did he teach? Mark doesn't say. Then after preaching Jesus meets a person we would describe as sick in body and mind and soul. Jesus heals him.

So from the outset, the little church of four fishermen are beginning to know what this Kingdom of God was going to be about: it would be about gathering and teaching and it was going to be about bringing healing to the broken and rejected.

On leaving the synagogue, Jesus and his church of four fishermen went to the home of Simon's mother-in-law. She was in bed with a fever. The church had said, "Jesus, is there something you can do for Simon's mother-in-law?" Does that sound familiar? The church of Jesus prays for each other. And yes, they didn't just pray, they go on the road with Jesus to where the need is.

Listen to what happens at the house. Mark in so few words tells it beautifully.

*Jesus went in to her, took her by the hand, lifted her up, and the fever left her.*

It was a ministry of presence. He went to see her. It was a ministry of touch. He "took her by the hand." It was a ministry of healing: he "lifted her up."

The little church of four fishermen was learning that this kingdom of God Jesus was proclaiming was not about leading an uprising against the Romans. Nor was it withdrawing from the world. It would be about dwelling deeply in the world. It would be about “drawing near” to people. It would be about “lifting people up.” It would be about bringing healing.

Finally, the moment at the house closes so simply—you could almost miss it.

*Then she served them.*

The Greek word for “serving” here is *diakoneo*— the same word used for how the Angels ministered to Jesus after his 40-day temptation. Simon’s mother-in-law got up and did angels’ work—she ministered to Jesus and this little church of four fishermen--the church now of four fisherman and one mother-in-law.

The healed had become the healer. Those lifted up became those who lifted up others.

Finally, the day closes for the little church like this. The text reads:

*That evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were possessed by devils. The whole town came crowding round the door, and he cured many who were sick with diseases of one kind or another; he also drove out many devils, but he would not allow them to speak, because they knew who he was.*

People were gathering around this Jesus. He healed many. . .but just many—not all. Why was that? Why only some? Mark doesn’t say. Maybe he doesn’t know why either. Neither do we, come to think of it. Finally, Jesus

told them not to tell anyone about the healing. Why are they to tell no one? Mark doesn't say.

As the gospel story closes, I believe that the Word, this story, will take its place in your life and speak. It may speak to you today or much later—without comment from me. That is the way of the Word. It will have its way. But I would share one place where the story takes me in this particular time of our lives.

I'm struck today, by the unpredictable journey of the church of four fishermen. I'm so struck by the questions they are obliged to walk with. Why did Jesus tell those healed not to tell anyone? They don't know. Why were only some healed? They don't know. Why did Jesus choose simple down to earth fisherman to lead his church? They don't know that either.

The questions on the journey for people of faith are still here with us, aren't they? What is this pandemic all about? What are we learning from it? What is God doing in the middle of all this? But like the church of four fishermen, we find ourselves following Jesus down the road day by day.

Barbara Brown Taylor in *Gospel Medicine* shares this. She says,

*On Sunday mornings a great division takes place among American people: **some** go to church, and **most** stay home.*

She adds the ones who stay home just see no particular value in the church gathering on Sunday. It looks like an hour a Sunday that would be more efficiently used if you did something constructive: mow the grass, shovel the drive, learn a skill. But for us who gather, she says, we know something else. She continues:

*This is how we learn how we fit.*

*This is how we locate ourselves between the past and the future;*

*between our hopes and our fears, between the earth and the stars.  
This is how we learn who we are and what we are supposed to be  
doing:*

*by coming together to sing and to pray, to be silent and to be still,  
**by peering into the darkness together and telling each other what  
we will see when we do.***

That's how important this following Jesus is for us. Isn't it!

I leave you the story of the church of four fishermen walking with Jesus.

Walking each day learning how to be church. Walking each day with  
unexpected blessings and, yes, with unanswered questions.

But, I think, if you asked them about what walking with Jesus meant. . .they  
would say. . .“Everything.”

Everything.

As do we.

Amen.

**Hymn of the Day:** ELW #612 - *“Healer of Our Every Ill”*

### **Prayers of the Faithful**

Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

*A brief silence.*

For the church: for ministries of healing and wholeness, for hospital, hospice, and military chaplains, for those serving in prison ministry, for all who proclaim freedom and release in the name of Christ, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

For creation: for insects in the grass, clouds on the mountaintops, for cattle and the rainwater they drink, for the humility to take our place among all creatures of the earth, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

For the nations: for all who lead in cities and towns, states and countries; for community organizers, school officials, and CEOs; for international health organizations, that in times of trial, fear, or hopelessness, they find freedom in service to those most in need, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

For all wearied by life's burdens: for those who are poor, for those lacking supportive relationships, for those crushed by debt, for those struggling with chronic pain or other sickness, for those exhausted from overwork or stress, and for all who cry out to you Florence, Jason, Harold, Richard, Flora, Dorian, Sharon, and for those we name silently in our hearts, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

For this congregation: for outreach and social ministries centered here (*especially*); for parish nurses and visitors; for ministries of companionship and support, for the young people in this place who open us to new understandings, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

In thanksgiving for the faithful departed, who were called by name and now rest from their labors, that their lives serve as witnesses to the goodness of God, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

## **Music During Preparation of Communion Table**

### **COMMUNION**

#### **LORD'S PRAYER**

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

#### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

*"Lamb of God"*

#### **POST COMMUNION MUSIC**

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray.

Christ Jesus, at this table we have feasted on your very life and are strengthened for our journey. Send us forth from this banquet nourished in body and in spirit to proclaim your good news and serve others in your name. **Amen.**

**SENDING HYMN:** *ELW #663 – “Spread, Oh, Spread, Almighty Word”*

## **BLESSING AND SENDING**

### **Blessing**

God the creator strengthen you;  
Jesus the beloved fill you;  
and the Holy Spirit the comforter  
✠ keep you in peace. **Amen.**

Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## **Postlude**

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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## **News and Announcements:**

**Please Pray for Those Who are Ill, in Hospital, or Requested Special Prayers:** Florence Felske, Jason Godin, Harold Hampel, Richard Hubert, Flora Schrie, Dorian Verch, Sharon Watt.

## **SERVICE BROADCAST ON COGECO**

Cogeco Community Channel is now broadcasting Zion's services at 9:00 a.m. and 12 noon on Sunday mornings.

## **UPDATES FROM CHURCH COUNCIL**

1. With the restriction of the Covid pandemic we have begun using Zoom as a communication tool. I have purchased an account that can be accessed by other committees in the congregation. Please contact Jean for the account name and password. If you would like help with how to use Zoom please let me know. Susan Dupuis

2. We want to say a special "Thank you" to everyone who has given a special offering to our Stained Glass Window account. We now have enough money to complete this project. We are in the early stages of making plans to upgrade the entrance to the building from the parking lot. This area has deteriorated over the years and needs attention. If you would like to make a special donation we would suggest that you consider the building account. Susan Dupuis

3. Please remember that Pastor Leena is available to all for pastoral care during the next few months. This support may look different than we are accustomed to as she will be following all of the covid restrictions. She can be contacted at 613-631-1082

4. Zion's Annual Meeting: I am planning to hold the annual meeting on February 28 with March 7 as the alternate date if the February 28 date is cancelled. We will be holding a short worship service at 10:00 and will follow with the meeting at 10:30. The meeting will be a maximum of 1 hour long. I realize that attending in-person may not be possible for many members. We do not have the ability to do an electronic meeting at this time. We will be sending the annual report by e-mail to anyone that we have an address for. If you would like to pick up a print copy of the report, please call Jean to make the arrangement for pick up. If you will not be able to attend and have any questions regarding the report please give me, Susan Dupuis 343-379-2057 or Gerry Vandersleen 613-732-7649 a call

## **COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR - ABOUT THE EVENT**

***It's cold out there.*** The Coldest Night of the Year is a covid-safe, family-friendly walk to raise money for charities serving people experiencing homelessness, hurt, and hunger. Walk virtually or in-person on February 20, 2021 – there's a place for everyone!

### **About Our Cause**

**The Coldest Night of the Year is a moment when tens of thousands of Canadians step outside the warmth and comfort of home and shine a light of welcome and inclusion.**

Together, we're collecting donations that fund critical services at a local charity partner who serves and supports vulnerable families and individuals in our CNOY community.

- **We walk** through the cold and dark on **February 20, 2021** to declare our concern for people who have no home, and take shelter in nooks and crannies.
- **We walk** for those whose days are a battle to house and feed their families, and whose nights are filled with fear and frustration.
- **We walk** for those driven from home by violence and abuse. And we walk for people overwhelmed by isolation, guilt and despair
- **We walk** humbly, realizing that anyone can lose their footing and then lose everything else.

Each step we take brings someone closer to safety, health and home, as together, we raise funds for organizations whose commitment and work transforms peoples' lives.

Please support the vulnerable in our community by donating to Coldest Night of the Year. You can do that by:

1. Writing a cheque to Zion Lutheran Church and/or cash and mark the envelope or memo Coldest Night of the Year and bring or mail to the church then Zion will submit one cheque, for all who donate this way.
2. Go to the Coldest Night of the Year website and look for Team Zion with Team Captain Ellen and donate to the team. You can pick a team member to sponsor if you wish. You will need your credit card for that. If you wish to join the team, awesome, there is room for everyone.

Please help anyway that you can. Call Ellen @ 613 732 7649 if you have any questions

Your Social Ministry Committee

## **Today's Video Has Been Brought To You By Zion Lutheran Church's Production Crew:**

**Presider:** Pastor Leena Jensen

**Musician:** Blaine Sack

**Worship Assistant/Reader:** Debbie Wegner

**Projectionist:**

**Credit Researcher:** Diane Hammel

## **This Week at Zion – February 8 - 14**

**Tuesday**      **7p.m.**      Narcotics Anonymous

**7pm**      **Virtual Council Mtg.**

**Thursday**    **10am**      Recording of Transfiguration Service