

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

First Lutheran Church, Lynn, MA

January 31, 2021



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.

Welcome to worship!

Yes, *this is worship!* It is not the way any of us *want* it to be, but God is alive and present in this virtual gathering. God's work will still speak to us through the Holy Spirit, and we are still the Body of Christ, joined together in a fellowship of love, even if it is not in person.

Create a sacred space in your home.

Light a candle. Pour yourself a warm beverage. Welcome the presence of God into your dwelling. Set aside this time for worship as if you were in church. Put away the cell phone (unless you are watching on your cell phone!) Adopt a posture of prayer that works for you.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We begin our worship by freeing ourselves from the baggage we have carried around this week.

It is liberating to admit that we are not perfect people, and to know that we have a God who loves and accepts us unconditionally.

Selections from *Messe Pour Les Convents*
François Couperin

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, † one God,
whose voice is upon the waters,
whose mercy is poured out upon all people,
whose goodness cascades over all creation.
Amen.

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the abundant grace of God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,
you search us and know us.
You are acquainted with all our ways.
We confess that our hearts are burdened by sin—
our own sins and the broken systems that bind us.
We turn inward, failing to follow your outward way of love.
We distrust those who are not like us.
We exploit the earth and its resources
and fail to consider generations to come.
Forgive us, gracious God,
for all we have done and left undone.
Even before the words are on our tongues, you know them;
receive them in your divine mercy. Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

The minister announces God's forgiveness, to which the assembly responds:
Amen.

Hail to the Lord's Anointed



1 Hail to the Lord's a - noint - ed, great Da - vid's great - er Son!
2 You come with res - cue speed - y to those who suf - fer wrong,
3 You shall come down like show - ers up - on the fruit - ful earth;
4 Kings shall fall down be - fore you, and gold and in - cense bring;



Hail, in the time ap - point - ed, your reign on earth be - gun!
to help the poor and need - y, and bid the weak be strong;
love, joy, and hope, like flow - ers, spring in your path to birth.
all na - tions shall a - dore you, your praise all peo - ple sing.



You come to break op - pres - sion, to set the cap - tive
to give them songs for sigh - ing, their dark - ness turn to
Be - fore you on the moun - tains shall peace, the her - ald,
To you shall prayer un - ceas - ing and dai - ly vows as -



free, to take a - way trans - gres - sion and
light, whose souls, con - demned and dy - ing, are
go; and righ - teous - ness in foun - tains from
cend; your king - dom still in - creas - ing, a



rule in eq - ui - ty.
pre - cious in your sight.
hill to val - ley flow.
king - dom with out end.

God speaks to us in scripture readings, preaching, and song

FIRST READING

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.

PSALM

Psalm 111

The psalms were the original prayer book of God's people and capture the full gamut of human emotion.

The cantors sing the refrain, which is repeated by the assembly. The cantors sing the verses.

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



The fear of the LORD is the be-gin-ning of wis-dom.

1. Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation. Great are your works, O Lord, pondered by all who delight in them. Majesty and splendor mark your deeds, and your righteousness endures forever. You cause your wonders to be remembered; you are gracious and full of compassion.
2. You give food to those who fear you, remembering forever your covenant. You have shown your people the power of your works in giving them the lands of the nations. The works of our hands are faithfulness and justice; all of your precepts are sure. Then stand fast forever and ever, because they are done in truth and equity.
3. You sent redemption to your people and commanded your covenant forever; holy and awesome is your name. The fear of the lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who practice this have a good understanding. God's praise endures forever.

SECOND READING

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.

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

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

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

We stand to welcome Christ, the living word of God, in the gospel reading.

GOSPEL

Mark 1:14-20

Before Jesus calls his first disciples, he proclaims a message that becomes known as "the gospel" or good news from God. God is ready to rule our lives. Those who realize this will respond with repentance and faith.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON



Verse: Speak, Lord, your servant is listening; speak your words of wisdom, for the words you speak are everlasting life.

The Holy Gospel according to Mark.

Glorify to you, O Lord.

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

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY

We stand to proclaim the word of God in song.

*This new hymn text is set to a familiar tune from the new ELCA hymnal supplement **All Creation Sings**, which we will begin introducing this year. Read more about in this year's Annual Report!*

Do you recognize the tune? It's from a song we always sing on the First Sunday in Lent (which means you'll hear it again soon!)

Cast Out, O Christ

1 Cast out, O Christ, cast far a - way the
2 Our rag - ing griefs, our jeal - ous fears are
3 Once long a - go, from Gal - i - lee, you
4 Your word breathes life and health and hope that
5 So come, O Christ, and cast a - way the

de - mons that de - stroy: the haunt - ing dreads that
Le - gion in their name. Our shack - led hearts im -
sailed to storm - tossed shores. And still, in pow'r, you
break through e - vil's thrall. You send us, strength - ened,
de - mons that de - stroy. Trans - form our lives to

choke our souls, the hates that sti - fle joy.
plore your grace to loose our bind - ing shame.
brave new paths to breach our bolt - ed doors.
home in peace to live your gos - pel call.
sense your love and spread a - broad your joy.

APOSTLES CREED

The word "creed" comes from the Latin credo which simply means "I believe."

By professing our faith with these ecumenical words, we are one with Christians all around the world, no matter what else might divide us.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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.**

After each petition:

O _____ God, we pray:
Hear us and help us.

As we pray, we sing this refrain:



Take, oh, take me as I am; sum - mon out what I shall be;



set your seal up - on my heart and live in me.

OFFERTORY

*You are invited to
make your offering
online at
www.flc-lynn.org/give
or by mail. Please
continue to give during
this time to support the
ongoing ministry of our
congregation.*

Jesus, The Very Thought of Thee
Arlen Clarke

Jesus the very thought of thee with sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far thy face to see and in thy presence rest.

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame, nor can the mem'ry find
A sweeter sound than thy blest name, O Savior of mankind.

O hope of ev'ry contrite heart, o joy of all the meek,
To those who fall how kind thou art, how good to those who seek.

Jesus, our only joy be thou, as thou our prize will be:
Jesus be thou our glory now and through eternity.
Amen.



SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission for the world

BLESSING

SENDING SONG

Rise, Shine, You People!



1 Rise, shine, you peo - ple! Christ the Lord has en - tered
2 See how he sends the pow'rs of e - vil reel - ing;
3 Come, cel - e - brate; your ban - ners high un - furl - ing,
4 Tell how the Fa - ther sent the Son to save us.



our hu - man sto - ry; God in him is cen - tered. He comes to
he brings us free - dom, light and life and heal - ing. All men and
your songs and prayers a - gainst the dark-ness hurl - ing. To all the
Tell of the Son, who life and free-dom gave us. Tell how the



us, by death and sin sur-round-ed, with grace un - bound-ed.
wom - en, who by guilt are driv - en, now are for - giv - en.
world go out and tell the sto - ry of Je - sus' glo - ry.
Spir - it calls from ev - 'ry na - tion God's new cre - a - tion.

DISMISSAL

Be at peace. Shine with the light of Christ.

Thanks be to God

POSTLUDE

Offertoire sur les Grands Jeux (from Messe Pour Les Convents)

François Couperin

Join us for virtual coffee hour!

At **11:30 AM** (or shortly after worship concludes) you are invited to grab a cup of coffee and a snack and join us on Zoom for a virtual coffee hour! If your computer has a camera and you'd like to use video chat, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88484060366> and follow the instructions. You may need to install a free piece of software. If you would like to call in on your phone, dial **(929) 205-6099** and enter meeting ID **884 8406 0366**. It won't be as good as the Fireside Room, but it will allow us to check in!

All voting members are encouraged to join us for our *Virtual Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, February 14 at 11:45 AM on Zoom!* Zoom meetings can be joined either by telephone (which simply involves dialing a phone number) or via a device such as a smartphone or computer that has a video camera. This usually involves installing a free app. It may sound complicated, but those who use it regularly attest to how simple it is once you try it. Both Pr. Jon and Karin Butterworth are willing to practice with anyone who would like to try joining a Zoom meeting to be sure they can connect on February 14. If you would like to do this, please reach out via e-mail or phone!

MUSIC NOTES

Both the prelude and postlude for today were written by Francois Couperin (1668-1733), a French Baroque organist and composer. Couperin became the organist at the Royal Chapel in Paris and eventually was named the court organist and composer as well. His *Messe Pour Les Convents* is a collection of pieces based on a chant setting of the mass. These short pieces were written to serve a variety of purposes: to introduce various movements of the mass setting, to be played in alternation with sung movements of the mass, and as incidental music to accompany other parts of the service. Couperin wrote two of the settings, one for the Convents, written with smaller organs in mind, and one for the Parishes, written for larger organs.

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***We are a Reconciling in Christ congregation,
welcoming and serving all people.***