

Faith Lutheran Church
Sunday, February 7, 2021
Fifth Sunday after Epiphany



Welcome

Confession and Forgiveness

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.

Most Merciful 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.

How vast is God's grace!

Through the power and promise of ☩ Christ Jesus,
our sins are washed away

and we are claimed as God's own beloved.

Indeed, we are forgiven.

In the wake of God's forgiveness,
we are called to be the beloved community

living out Christ's justice
and the Spirit's reconciling peace.

Amen.

Gathering Hymn: ELW #532 (verses 1 & 2)

“Gather Us In”

Opening Prayer

Please join me in the Prayer of the Day:

Everlasting God, you give strength to the weak and power to the faint. Make us agents of your healing and wholeness, that your good news may be made known to the ends of your creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

(1)

Readings and Psalm

- Isaiah 40:21-31 *The creator of all cares for the powerless*
- Psalm 147:1-11, 20c *The LORD heals the brokenhearted. (Ps. 147:3)*
- 1 Corinthians 9:16-23 *A servant for the sake of the gospel*

The Holy Gospel according to Mark 1:29-39

Everywhere Jesus goes, many people expect him to set them free from oppression. Everywhere he goes, he heals people and sets them free. Disease, devils, and death are running for their lives. The forces that diminish human life are rendered powerless by Jesus.²¹

²⁹As soon as [Jesus and the disciples] left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. ³¹He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

³²That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. ³³And the whole city was gathered around the door. ³⁴And 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.

³⁵In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. ³⁶And Simon and his companions hunted for him. ³⁷When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." ³⁸He 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." ³⁹And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon

Grace, Mercy, and Peace from God our Father and our Lord and savior Jesus Christ!

We have been reading Mark's Gospel for a couple of weeks. Last week we read about Jesus in the synagogue, where he had an encounter with a demon possessed man. We also read about four people that Jesus called to follow Him. Today's Gospel text tells us that Jesus visited Simon and Andrew with James and John, where Jesus healed Simon's mother-in-law and also healed those in the community that were sick or possessed by demons.

Jesus' presence makes a lot of difference, people were healed and restored, demons were cast out, people's lives were changed. Jesus brought positive change in the lives of people.

When I was a young and was learning Indian classical dance, my classical dance skills were respected and appreciated by my instructor. I remember when I graduated from college, I was offered a part time job to teach kids in the same institute. It appealed to me So, I took up the job, and started enjoying it, everything seemed good. But soon after taking the job, I heard voices from other members that the other leaders were jealous of the attention that I was receiving. One day one of the leader came over to me and said "you are not good enough, you need to brush up your dancing skills even more." Those words confused me in a way that was not positive, they had power over me. My inner core was not strong enough to take this type of attack, I was tender, and I submitted easily to what he said, which tore me down. When he spoke those words to me I became restricted, restrained, and could not move away from the negativity that cut my spirit.

I think sometimes we as people can be fueled by negative outside voices that ultimately take control of us, silence our voice, and restrain us from living. Have you ever been told you are not good enough? I am not talking about when someone corrects us positively with love. I am talking about a negative voice that looks to tear you down. Life becomes complicated when we lose our ability to speak against the negative voices that tell us we are not good enough in what we do, in what we say, with how we look, with how we feel, or that our life will not be safe from things that condemn us and confine us. Life becomes complicated when negative outside voices destroy our values and then trick us like demons into thinking that it is ok when this happens. It takes a lot of courage to heal ourselves from the demons like hatred, jealousy, anger.

In today's Gospel text We come to know the voices of the Pharisees and Scribes of the synagogue who were jealous and angry at Jesus' performance and popularity among people. They wanted to use the power of their voice to silence Jesus' words of love, compassion, mercy, and hope; the same words that came straight from God's mouth into creation and then through Jesus to our ears.

Do we try to silence the voices of God's church when people speak about love, service, and a community that is compassionate for all people no matter who they are because we are scared? We are God's children. And God's love towards us is unconditional. "God is our refuge and rock in whom we trust...and His faithfulness is our shield."

In today's reading we hear many times about Jesus healing many people. And we also read about Jesus casting out demons. When we hear about demon possession in scripture we can understand it as a demonstration of total domination and complete oppression of that individual. Where the individual has lost all control of who they are. That their voice is totally silenced to this world as they cease to exist as a person. The possessed man tries to silence Jesus' voice by calling out His name and title.

We can see God's voice through Jesus Christ having the authority that silences all the demonic powers of this world. God through Jesus Christ speaks in a way that demonstrates to all unclean spirits that they are not good enough, God's voice through Jesus Christ can never be silenced.

The good news and celebration of this Gospel is, God through Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit have the power to exercise all the unclean spirits in our life, which silence our voice, and keep us away from feeling God's divine love. I truly believe that when I let Father, Son, and Holy Spirit into my heart, into my inner core, I was released from not being good enough. Those words that constricted me, no longer have power over me. Because of the power of God's voice through Jesus I have had many other positive experiences in life, and ultimately I am here today as a woman of God to tell you about it. Therefore, you can know in your heart that God sent Jesus to this world so you no longer have to be haunted, by not feeling good enough, because of negative outside voices.

The truth of God's voice through Jesus Christ lets us hear that we no longer are possessed by this world of hatred, jealousy and anger. The truth of God's voice cannot be silenced, it shall rise as high as the stars of the skies, flourish around an eagle's wing. God through Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit proclaim now and forever that we have a voice that lives on forevermore. Amen.

Hymn of the Day: ELW #787 (verses 1 & 2)

"On Eagle's Wings"

Blessing

The peace of the lord be with you always
and also with you. Amen.

Apostles' 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

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 the whole church of Christ, especially the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and all congregations, our national Bishop, Elizabeth, our synodical Bishop Katherine, and our pastor Rita. 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 our nation and all our new and returning leaders, they will be guided by your grace and wisdom and for all who lead in cities and towns, states and countries; for community organizers, school officials, and CEOs; for international health organizers. 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 especially: Beverly Tankersly, Pastor Matthew Lamb, Connie Mattson, Lori Strickland, Eric Marken, Eva Mohr, Al Picotte, Bill Duff, Bill Vaneffen, Sandra Kaye, Lois Stoppel, Teri DePlonty, and for all those who are grieving for loved ones especially the family and friends of Adam Sanderson, Corri Darou, and Bert Kinnear Jr.. For whom and what else do we pray silently or out loud? (Pause...), let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For this congregation: for outreach and social ministries centered here; 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.

Offering

It is generally at this time during the service that worshipers are invited to share their gifts for the Mission and Ministry of the church. Whether you choose to pause at this time or make your contribution following this service, we encourage you to continue your support of the ministry. We are grateful for the community's continued generous support especially during these trying times.

Offertory Prayer (please join in prayer)

O God,

receive these gifts as you receive us:

like parents receive their children, with arms open wide.

Nourish us anew in your tender care,

and empower us in faithful service

to tend to others with this same love,

through Jesus Christ, our saving grace.

Amen.

Our Lord's Prayer

I invite you to join in praying the prayer our Lord 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors;

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen

Benediction

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

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Be the light of Christ!

Thanks be to God.

Sending Hymn: ELW # 661 (*verses 1 & 2*)

“I Love to Tell the Story”

Sources:

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Faith Lutheran Church Annual Meeting 2021 Zoom Information

February 14, 2021 at 11:30 AM for
Faith’s Annual Meeting 2021

1. Go to www.zoom.us
2. Along the top towards the right corner, click on **“Join A Meeting”**

Enter the following information when asked for it...

Meeting ID: **896 1171 6468**

Passcode: **639417**

If not using a computer or smartphone, you can join by simply calling in and following the prompts.

Phone number: **1(301)715-8592**

(enter this information when asked)

Meeting ID: **896 1171 6468#** Participant ID: **0#** Passcode: **639417#**

*****For now, while we are transitioning back into holding in-person worship, our After Service Virtual Coffee Hour will be suspended until further notice. We apologize for any inconveniences. Stay tuned for more information.*****

ANNOUNCEMENTS

❖ **In-person Worship Services at Faith has resumed!**

We urge everyone to follow the guidelines set forth to ensure the safety of everyone in attendance. We hope to see you there!

Faith's Annual Meeting will be held next Sunday, February 14, 2021. There are 3 seats to be filled on the council this year. If you are interested please get your information in to the office or to a Council Member. The meeting will take place in-person and on Zoom following Sunday's service.

Zoom information can be found on page 5 of this document

❖ **Pastor Rita is available for any pastoral needs by phone, email, and Zoom! ❖**

If you would like to speak with Pastor Rita, please call or email her at **(312) 478-6212** or **critawilliam@gmail.com** From there if you'd like to set up a Zoom meeting, just ask!

❖ **Ash Wednesday - February 17th**

Ash Wednesday service will be streamed at 10:30am on Facebook, and after the service there will be a drive through ash distribution. Pastor Rita will be available until 3:00pm for the distribution of ashes. All are welcome!

❖ **Midweek Lenten Zoom Gathering**

Beginning February 24th, we will be having 30 minute midweek Lent contemplative worships via Zoom at 6pm every Wednesday. You can make a request for your free copy of the devotional we will be using, by contacting the church office. Zoom info will be coming.

❖ **Online giving coming soon!**

We are working on implementing online giving for anyone looking to make a contribution electronically, instead of writing and mailing a check, or dropping off a contribution. More information will be forthcoming.

❖ **Watch Faith's Worship Service Live on Sundays on our Facebook page!**

You can catch our Service at 10:20am every Sunday at **www.facebook.com/FaithLC1966**. You can also find us online by searching for **FaithLC1966** in any browser. If you have any questions or comments, please call the church office at (906) 632-7246.