

Antecommunion Service: January 28, 2024: Epiphany 4B

Celebrant: Blessed are you, holy and living One.

People: **You come to your people and set them free.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A moment of silence for self-reflection

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

**God of all mercy, we confess that we have sinned against you, opposing your will in our lives.
We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love and serve only your will. Amen.**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Canticle **A Song of God's Love** 1 John 4:7-11

Beloved, let us love one another, *

for love is of God.

Whoever does not love does not know God, *

for God is Love.

In this the love of God was revealed among us, *

that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through Jesus Christ.

In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us *

and sent his Son to show us how to love.

Beloved, since God loved us so much, *

we ought also to love one another.

For if we love one another, God abides in us, *

and God's love will be perfected in us.

Let us pray together: **Almighty and everlasting God, you govern all things both in heaven and on earth: Mercifully hear the supplications of your people, and in our time grant us your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.**

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

Moses said: 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.

Psalm 111

Confitebor tibi

1 Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, *
in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.

2 Great are the deeds of the Lord! *
they are studied by all who delight in them.

3 His work is full of majesty and splendor, *
and his righteousness endures for ever.

4 He makes his marvelous works to be remembered; *
the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

5 He gives food to those who fear him; *
he is ever mindful of his covenant.

6 He has shown his people the power of his works *
in giving them the lands of the nations.

7 The works of his hands are faithfulness and justice; *
all his commandments are sure.

8 They stand fast for ever and ever, *
because they are done in truth and equity.

9 He sent redemption to his people; he commanded his covenant for ever; *
holy and awesome is his Name.

10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; *
those who act accordingly have a good understanding; his praise endures for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. World without end. Amen.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

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

Mark 1:21-28

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

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, Lord Christ.

Sermon

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He 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, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again 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 the People

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation. In peace, we pray to you, Lord God. *Silence*

For this community, the nation, and the world;

For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

For the peace and unity of the world;

That a spirit of respect may grow among nations and peoples.

For all who love and trust in God, that divisions may cease;

And that all may be one, as you and the Father are one.

For the just and proper use of your creation;

That we may treat your creation with the love of the Creator.

We honor and pray for our Indigenous neighbors.
That we may dwell together in respectful harmony.

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;
For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation.
Silence. Hear us, Lord; **For your mercy is great.**

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life. *Silence.*
We will exalt you, O God our King; **And praise your Name for ever and ever.**

We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom. *Silence.*
Lord, let your loving kindness be upon them. **May they rest in your peace eternally.**

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we pray together:

**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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

We pray together for Christ's presence:

**My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the bread and wine.
I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my heart. I embrace you
and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.**

Celebrant: While we long to receive the sacrament of Christ's Body,

People: **We become the sacrament of Christ's Body.**

Celebrant: Let your lives be manna to feed our hunger for communion.

People: **The love we share becomes bread for the world.**

Blessing May God, who in the Word made flesh joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven,
give you his peace and joy; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be in you, among you, and remain with you always.

Dismissal Go in peace and hope and joy to love and serve the Lord. Alleluia. Alleluia.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.