

## Antecommunion Service: February 4, 2024: Epiphany 5B

*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: **Set us free, O God, from the bondage of our sins, and give us the liberty of that abundant life which you have made known to us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

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

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?

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;

who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.

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.

To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One.  
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.  
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"?  
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.  
He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.  
Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;  
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 147:1-12, 21c**

*Laudate Dominum*

1 Hallelujah! How good it is to sing praises to our God! \*

**how pleasant it is to honor him with praise!**

2 The Lord rebuilds Jerusalem; \*

**he gathers the exiles of Israel.**

3 He heals the brokenhearted \*

**and binds up their wounds.**

4 He counts the number of the stars \*

**and calls them all by their names.**

5 Great is our Lord and mighty in power; \*

**there is no limit to his wisdom.**

6 The Lord lifts up the lowly, \*

**but casts the wicked to the ground.**

7 Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; \*

**make music to our God upon the harp.**

8 He covers the heavens with clouds \*

**and prepares rain for the earth;**

9 He makes grass to grow upon the mountains \*

**and green plants to serve mankind.**

10 He provides food for flocks and herds \*

**and for the young ravens when they cry.**

11 He is not impressed by the might of a horse; \*

**he has no pleasure in the strength of a man;**

12 But the Lord has pleasure in those who fear him, \*

**in those who await his gracious favor. Hallelujah!**

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 9:16-23**

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! 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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**

**Mark 1:29-39**

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

**Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

After Jesus and his disciples left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. 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. In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." 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." And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

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.**