

GREETING

Gathered in Christ. **We serve with grace.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, creator of darkness and light, word of truth, wind sweeping over the waters. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. *Silence is kept for reflection.* God, our rock and refuge, **we pour out our hearts before you. We have known you but have not always loved you. We have wounded one another and sinned against you. We have not always recognized the Holy Spirit dwelling in each of us. Remember your covenant. Renew your creation. Restore us, that we might proclaim your good news to all. Amen.**

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters. God has spoken: The time of grace is now. In Jesus, the reign of God has come near. By the authority of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. You are God's beloved. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG "*Songs of Thankfulness and Praise*"..... #310

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Compassionate God, you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Bring wholeness to all that is broken and speak truth to us in our confusion, that all creation will see and know your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING: DEUTERONOMY 8:15-20

[Moses said:] ¹⁵The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. ¹⁶This 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 anymore, or ever again see this great fire, I will die." ¹⁷Then the LORD replied to me: "They are right in what they have said. ¹⁸I 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. ¹⁹Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. ²⁰But 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." Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 111

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

²Great are your works, O LORD, pondered by all who delight in them.

³Majesty and splendor mark your deeds, and your righteousness endures forever.

**⁴You cause your wonders to be remembered;
you are gracious and full of compassion.**

⁵You give food to those who fear you, remembering forever your covenant.

**⁶You have shown your people the power of your works
in giving them the lands of the nations.**

⁷The works of your hands are faithfulness and justice; all of your precepts are sure.

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

**⁹You sent redemption to your people and commanded your covenant forever;
holy and awesome is your name.**

**¹⁰The 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

¹Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ²Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; ³but anyone who loves God is known by him. ⁴Hence, 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.” ⁵Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—⁶yet 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. ⁷It 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. ⁸“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. ⁹But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰For 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? ¹¹So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. ¹²But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall. Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

KID'S TALK

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK 1:21-28

Glory to you, O Lord. ²¹[Jesus and his disciples] went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²²They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³Just

then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴and 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.” ²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” ²⁶And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷They 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.” ²⁸At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee. The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON “*God’s Unique Authority, A Power in the Word*”Deacon Ro

HYMN OF THE DAY “*Oh For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*”..... #886

APOSTLES CREED

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

As we celebrate Christ embodied in human form, we pray for God’s blessing on the church, the world, and all of creation. *A brief silence.* Loving God, we pray that your example of teaching with confidence and authority builds up your church in love. May all church leaders and teachers honor your instruction and model your inclusive ways. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Renewing God, we pray for all of creation, that waterways flow clean and clear, natural spaces are protected, and our planet is healed. Let us commit to thoughtful care of the earth. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Justice-seeking God, we pray for those in government and community leadership, that they lead with honor and mindfulness. May they remember their covenants and be upright in their ways. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Compassionate God, we pray for all in need, especially those who have known rejection, any who struggle with long-term illness or chronic pain, those without access to safe housing or health care, and any who suffer (*especially*). God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Still-speaking God, we pray for our congregation, for its artists and musicians, for its educators and caregivers, that all gifts are used to care for those in need and to live out your example of accompaniment, gospel witness, and love. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Eternal God, we remember all who have been teachers, mentors, and companions in the church and in our lives. We trust that all who have died rest in your loving care. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we offer these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERING

OFFERTORY SONG "*GIVE THANKS*"

Give thanks with a grateful heart. Give thanks to the holy one. Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ His Son. And now let the weak say I am strong. Let the poor say I am rich; because of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks. Give thanks.

OFFERING PRAYER

Blessed are you, Holy One, for all good things come from you. In bread and cup you open heaven to us. Meet us at this table, that we receive what we seek and follow your Son, Jesus, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.** Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Bless are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh. In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. Let us proclaim the mystery of faith: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

COMMUNION HYMN *"There Is A Balm in Gilead"*..... #614

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Giver of every gift, Christ's body is our food, and we are Christ's body. Raise us to life by your power for the benefit of all and to your glory, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

God who names you, Christ who claims you, and the Holy Spirit who dwells in you, ✠ bless you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG *"From All That Dwell Below the Skies"* (green hymnal) #550

RINGING OF THE BELLS

SONG OF PEACE

My peace I give unto you. It's a peace that the world cannot give. It's a peace that the world cannot understand; peace to know; peace to live. My peace I give unto you.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. You are God's beloved. **Thanks be to God.**

THIS WEEK AT BETHLEHEM

- Today: 9:00 a.m. Worship
8:00 a.m. – Noon Ro at Bethlehem
3:00 p.m. Council Meets
- Monday: 9:00 a.m. -- Noon Ro at Bethlehem
- Tuesday: Terresa out of the office
9:00 a.m. – Noon Ro at Bethlehem
- Thursday: 9:00 a.m. Quilting
- Friday: 9:00 a.m. Quilting
- Saturday: 9:00 a.m. Prairie Parish Re-scheduled at Peace Lutheran, Akron
- Next Sunday: 9:00 a.m. Worship

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Newsletters are in your mailboxes – grab yours before you leave today!

Saturday, Feb 3 Prairie Parish is re-scheduled to meet at 9:00am after the January freeze. Breakfast will be served, followed by Roy Chavez, a Navaho Indian Boarding School survivor, presenting, “HOZHO”--Finding Peace Through Healing.

Star gifts are still available. See Deacon Ro to get yours!

Still seats available in “4 Gospels-Compare and Contrast” which meets the 3rd Saturday of the month from 9:00-11:00am. If you missed the January class, materials are available from that class. Class may be attended either in-person or Zoom.

Spiritual Teasers

Who had these dreams?

1. He saw angels going up and down on a ladder. (Genesis 28:12)
2. She had an unpleasant dream and blamed it on Jesus. (Matthew 27:9)
3. He saw a vine produce grapes and squeezed their juice into a cup. (Genesis 40:9-11)

(The Complete Book of Bible Trivia, J. Stephen Lang)



1. Two kids talking while walking to school...The little girl says to the boy: “Yesterday’s the past, tomorrow’s the future, but today is a *gift*. That’s why it’s called the *present*.”

2. And God said: “My name is not *I Was*. My name is not “*I Will Be*. My name is *I AM*.”

3. “If you’re not allowed to laugh in heaven, I don’t want to go there.” Martin Luther

(World’s Greatest Collection of Church Jokes, Paul M. Miller)

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise



1 Songs of thank-ful - ness and praise, Je - sus, Lord, to thee we raise;
 2 Man - i - fest at Jor - dan's stream, proph-et, priest, and king su - preme;
 3 Man - i - fest in mak - ing whole weak-ened bod - y, faint - ing soul;
 4 Grant us grace to see thee, Lord, pres - ent in thy ho - ly word;



man - i - fest - ed by the star to the sa - ges from a - far,
 and at Ca - na wed - ding guest in thy God-head man - i - fest;
 man - i - fest in val - iant fight, quell-ing all the dev - il's might;
 grace to im - i - tate thee now and be pure, as pure art thou;



branch of roy - al Da - vid's stem in thy birth at Beth - le - hem:
 man - i - fest in pow'r di - vine, chang-ing wa - ter in - to wine;
 man - i - fest in gra - cious will, ev - er bring-ing good from ill:
 that we might be - come like thee at thy great e - piph - a - ny,



an - thems be to thee ad-dressed,
 an - thems be to thee ad-dressed, God in flesh made man - i - fest.
 an - thems be to thee ad-dressed,
 and may praise thee, ev - er blest,

Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing



1 Oh, for a thou-sand tongues to sing my great Re-deem - er's praise,
 2 My gra - cious Mas - ter and my God, as - sist me to pro - claim,
 3 The name of Je - sus charms our fears and bids our sor - rows cease,
 4 He speaks, and lis - t'ning to his voice, new life the dead re - ceive;



the glo - ries of my God and king, the tri - umphs of his grace!
 to spread through all the earth a - broad the hon - ors of your name.
 sings mu - sic in the sin - ner's ears, brings life and health and peace.
 the mourn - ful, bro - ken hearts re - joice, the hum - ble poor be - lieve.

5 Look unto him, your Savior own,
 O fallen human race!
 Look and be saved through faith alone,
 be justified by grace!

6 To God all glory, praise, and love
 be now and ever giv'n
 by saints below and saints above,
 the church in earth and heav'n.

There Is a Balm in Gilead

Refrain



There is a balm in Gil-e-ad to make the wound-ed whole;



there is a balm in Gil-e-ad to heal the sin-sick soul.



- 1 Some - times I feel dis - cour-aged and think my work's in vain,
- 2 If you can - not preach like Pe - ter, if you can-not pray like Paul,
- 3 Don't ev - er be dis - cour-aged, for Je - sus is your friend;

Refrain



but then the Ho - ly Spir - it re - vives my soul a - gain.
you can tell the love of Je - sus and say, "He died for all."
and if you lack for knowl-edge, he'll ne'er re - fuse to lend.

From All That Dwell Below the Skies



- 1 From all that dwell be - low the skies let the cre -
- 2 E - ter - nal are your mer - cies, Lord; e - ter - nal



a - tor's praise a - rise; let the re - deem - er's
truth at - tends your word; your praise shall sound from



name be sung through ev - 'ry land, in ev - 'ry tongue.
shore to shore, till suns shall rise and set no more.