

Salem Lutheran Church

115 N. Washington Ave., Albert Lea

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

January 29, 2023

Who are the blessed ones of God? For Micah, they are those who do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. For Paul, they are the ones who find wisdom in the weakness of the cross. For Jesus, they are the poor, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who mourn, and those who hunger for righteousness. In baptism we find our blessed identity and calling in this countercultural way of living and serving.

Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Prelude

Announcements

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who makes all things new,
whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy One, source of our renewal,
**we confess that we are wrapped up in sin,
and cannot free ourselves.**

We have not practiced your righteousness.

Our hearts have turned away from you.

**For the sake of the world you so love,
forgive us,**

**that we may be reconciled to one another
for the glory of your holy name.**

Amen.

Thus says our God:

"The former things have come to pass
and new things I now declare."

God's mercy makes us new.

We are forgiven in the name of † Christ our Savior.

Amen.

HYMN

Rise, Shine, You People!

#665

GREETING

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

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Micah 6:1-8

With the mountains and the foundations of the earth as the jury, God brings a lawsuit against Israel. God has "wearied" Israel with a long history of saving acts. God does not want or expect lavish sacrifices to attempt to earn divine favor. Rather God empowers the people to do justice, to love loyalty to God, and to walk shrewdly in God's service.

¹Hear what the LORD says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

²Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the LORD,
and you enduring foundations of the earth;
for the LORD has a controversy with his people,
and he will contend with Israel.

³"O my people, what have I done to you?
In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

⁴For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,
and redeemed you from the house of slavery;
and I sent before you Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam.

⁵O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the LORD."

⁶“With what shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?

⁷Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

⁸He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 15

LORD, who may abide upon your holy hill? (Ps. 15:1)

¹LORD, who may dwell in your | tabernacle?
Who may abide upon your | holy hill?

²**Those who lead a blameless life and do | what is right,
who speak the truth | from their heart; R**

³they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil | to their friends;
they do not cast discredit up- | on a neighbor.

⁴**In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those who | fear the LORD.
They have sworn upon their health and do not take | back their word.**

⁵They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes a- | gainst the
innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be | overthrown. **R**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

According to the world's standards of power and might, the message of the cross seems stupid and offensive. Yet this word reveals the paradoxical way God has chosen to work power and salvation through weakness, rejection, and suffering. Hence the message of the cross becomes true wisdom and power for believers.

¹⁸The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to

Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

²⁶Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no one might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 5:1-12

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus opens the Sermon on the Mount by naming those who are blessed in the reign of God.

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

The gospel of the Lord,

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Pastor Mark Boorsma

HYMN

Although I Speak with Angel's Tongue

#644

APOSTLE'S 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

Called together to follow Jesus, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Cultivate humility in your church. In gatherings of every size, teach us to boast only in the cross. Shape your church to be people of kindness, generosity, and justice.

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

The foundations of the earth bear witness to your faithfulness; the mountains and hills echo with your holiness. When we mistreat your creation, show us the error of our ways. Inspire us with reverent awe to honor all you have made.

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

You make foolish the wisdom of the world. Raise up honorable leaders who seek justice, love mercy, and pursue peace. Frustrate plans that are corrupt, wicked, and self-seeking. Prosper the work of peacemakers.

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Bless all whom the world rejects. Accompany those who are regarded as foolish, weak, low, and despised; reveal your power and presence at work where it is least expected. Give your life, strength, healing and wisdom to all in need especially Woody, Larry, Susan, Shirley, Bob and all others on our hearts and minds this day.

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

As with your people Israel, remind this congregation of your saving acts. Remind us how your faithfulness brought us through difficulties and sustained us despite our weaknesses. Establish the cross as the center of our life together.

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Praise to you for your blessed saints in every time and place. Trusting you accompanied them in poverty, persecution, and in every trial, we trust you abide with your people always.

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

We bring to you our needs and hopes, O God, trusting your wisdom and power revealed in Christ crucified.

Amen.

PEACE

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

Thanksgiving

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offering

*We very much appreciate your continued giving and generosity at this time.
Offering can be placed in the offering plate at the door.*

OFFERTORY

Create In Me a Clean Heart

#186

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

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 trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Blessing

The God who faithfully brings forth justice
and breaks the oppressor's rod
✠ bless, strengthen, and uphold you,
today and always.
Amen.

HYMN

Go, My Children, With My Blessing

#543

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Follow the way of Jesus.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude

~~~~~ **Welcome** ~~~~~

**Please pray throughout the week for the following:** Woody Hestness, Larry Enderson,  
Susan Storlie, Shirley Eustis, Bob Cotton.

**Thank you** to Bev Lombardi for the beautiful organ music this morning.

**Flowers near the altar** are given in memory of my daughter, Caron by Audrey Johannsen.

### **Assisting in Worship:**

Worship Assistant: Deb Stolarcek

Ushers: Mark & Marcia Gayken

Coffee Servers: Cynthia Nelson & Deb Stolarcek

**This Week at Salem -**

Tuesday, January 31: 9:00 a.m. Staff Meeting

Friday, February 3: 6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study

Sunday: February 5: 9:00 a.m. Fellowship coffee hour  
10:00 a.m. Worship Service

**Pick up** your financial giving statement placed in your mailbox at the back of the church.

**Noisy Offering** for January & February will be going to the Little Free Pantry.