



FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

JANUARY 29, 2023

9:30 AM



Bethel Lutheran Church

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Great Falls, MT 59404

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Pastor Jessie Obrecht

A congregation of the Montana Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Large print bulletins are available, please see the ushers for a copy.

As we gather for worship and prepare our hearts, we would ask that you please silence your cell phones for the duration of the service.

INTRODUCTION

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.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

ELW 669 Rise Up, O Saints of God! [1,2,5]

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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.**

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.

KYRIE

ELW 154

*Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy; have mercy, O Lord.*

HYMN OF PRAISE

ELW 870 We Praise You, O God [1,2,3]

*1. We praise you, O God, our redeemer, creator;
In grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you;
We bless your holy name; glad praises we sing.*

*2. We worship you, God of our fathers and mothers;
Through trial and tempest our guide you have been.
When perils o'er-take us, you will not forsake us,
And with your help, O Lord, our struggles we win.*

*3. With voices united our praises we offer and
Gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.
With you, Lord, beside us, your strong arm will guide us.
To you, our great redeemer, forever be praise!.*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. 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.**

Jubilate Choir

Blessed are the Peacemakers

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.

Hear what the LORD says:

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

Hear, 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.

“O my people, what have I done to you?
In what have I wearied you? Answer me!
For 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.

O 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.”

“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?

Will 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?”

He 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?

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 15

LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle?

Who may abide upon your holy hill?

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

they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends; they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.

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.

They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes against the innocent. Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.

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.

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

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

Where 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? For 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. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Consider 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. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God,

and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW 172 Hallelujah

Halle, halle, hallelujah. Halle, halle, hallelujah.

Halle, halle, hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

The holy gospel according to Matthew the fifth chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 5:1-12

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice 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.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE AND SERMON

Pastor Jessie Obrecht

HYMN OF THE DAY

LH 548

Do Justice

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**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 THE CHURCH

Merciful God, receive our prayer.

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING/OFFERTORY

BOB 65 Give Thanks

*Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks for the Holy One,
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son,
Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks for 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.
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 with a grateful heart, give thanks for the Holy One,
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son,
Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks for the Holy One,
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son,
Give thanks, give thanks.*

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Liberating God,
**you break the bonds of injustice
and let the oppressed go free.
Receive these offerings in thanksgiving
for all your works of merciful power,
and shape us as people of your justice and freedom.
You we magnify and adore, through Jesus our Savior,
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 our thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give God thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,...and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW 525 You Are Holy

*You are holy, you are whole.
You are always evermore than we ever understand.
You are always at hand.
Blessed are you coming near.
Blessed are you coming here to your church in wine and bread,
raised from soil, raised from dead.*

*You are holy, you are wholeness, you are present.
Let the cosmos praise you, Lord!
Sing hosanna in the highest!
Sing hosanna! Sing hosanna to our God!*

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus first 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 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.**

Invitation to Communion

The Lord's Table is open to believers of all Christian traditions. We believe that Christ comes to us in the bread and cup for the forgiveness of sins and new life. Gluten free wafers are available, please let your server know. Choice of red wine and white grape juice offered.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

<i>LH 515</i>	<i>Freely, Freely</i>
<i>ELW 465</i>	<i>As the Grains of Wheat</i>
<i>ELW 466</i>	<i>In the Singing</i>
<i>LH 232</i>	<i>Thine the Amen, Thine the Praise</i>

COMMUNION BLESSING

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. Holy One,
**we thank you for the healing
that springs forth abundantly from this table.
Renew our strength to do justice,
love kindness,
and journey humbly with you. Amen.**

NEW MEMBER INDUCTION

BENEDICTION

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

SENDING HYMN

ELW 551 The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve [1,3,4]

DISMISSAL

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

And all God's children said: **Amen.**

SERVING TODAY

Accompanist	Connie Titcomb, piano; Sara Graft, djembe
Lay Assistant	Anne Vannatta
Usher	Mary Gernaat
Tech	Adam Elkin
Children's Church	Julia Elkin and Maya Stringer – will be staying for the annual meeting.
Counters	Pam Dougherty and Greg Grosenick

Flowers are given by Steve and Sharon Mueller in remembrance
of Donald and Beverly Finnegan's anniversary.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today at Bethel we celebrate Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

After worship today in our sanctuary is the **Annual meeting**. A quorum is needed for voting (voting members of Bethel will constitute a quorum. Proxy voting is not allowed).

Let us welcome *these sisters and brothers* in Christ to this community of faith. **Christopher Wilson and Jason Gleason, Erica Gettis, and Derinda Carlson.**

Thank you to the **Jubilate Choir led by Jeff Skogley** for the beautiful choir music today.

THIS WEEK

Monday 1/30

- Bethel office closed for recuperation

Tuesday 1/31

- Electric City Bible Study, Zoom meeting 7:00 am
- Men's Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall 7:00 am

Wednesday 2/1

- Bible Study led by Pastor Jessie on Zoom 10:00 am
- Logos Youth 5:30 pm; High School 6:30 pm

Friday 2/3

- Bethel office closed
- Aitz Chaim Friday worship 6:00 pm

Saturday 2/4

- Bethel Brass rehearsal 1:00 pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday 2/5

- Worship led by Pastor Jessie & the LOGOs Youth Ministry in-person & live stream 9:30 am
- Council meeting and retreat at the MT Synod Office 12:00 pm

Monday 2/6

- Financial Peace University Class in the Fellowship Hall 6:00 pm

Tuesday 2/7

- Electric City Bible Study, Zoom meeting 7:00 am
- Men's Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall 7:00 am

Wednesday 2/8

- Bible Study led by Pastor Jessie on Zoom 10:00 am
- Logos Youth 5:30 pm; High School 6:30 pm

Thursday, 2/9

- Executive Board Zoom Meeting 5:30 pm

Friday 2/10

- Bethel office closed

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