
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

February 3, 2019

AS WE GATHER... Our worship today declares the depth, breadth, and height of God's love for the world. God's love has the power to transform us as well. In our worship we make ourselves ready to receive God's love once again and share it with those around us.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING BLESSING

P: Holy God! Fill us this day with new breath! And we shall be living words of praise!

C: Amen.

OPENING UP ABOUT OURSELVES

P: Embraced by the love of God through our Baptism into Christ, we confess our sin before God and one another.

A time of silence is observed.

P: Captive to sin, we have sinned against You, God of love, in thought, word, and deed.

C: In Your great love for us in Christ, forgive our sins and renew our lives.

P: We have shown lack of trust in Your loving purpose for our lives.

C: In Your great love for us in Christ, forgive our sins and renew our lives.

P: We have failed to immerse ourselves in Your Word and to speak it freely in the world.

C: In Your great love for us in Christ, forgive our sins and renew our lives.

P: We have failed to love You and to love one another, even using our faith as an excuse not to love our neighbors.

C: In Your great love for us in Christ, forgive our sins and renew our lives.

P: We have been envious, boastful, arrogant, rude, insistent, irritable, and resentful.

C: In Your great love for us in Christ, forgive our sins and renew our lives.

P: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

SONG OF PRAISE: “I Love You Lord”

I love You, Lord, and I lift my voice
To worship You, O my soul, rejoice!
Take joy, my King, in what You hear:
May it be a sweet, sweet sound in Your ear.

I love You, Lord, and I lift my voice
To worship You, O my soul, rejoice!
Take joy, my King, in what You hear:
May it be a sweet, sweet sound in Your ear.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray, O Lord, You showed Your love for humanity through Jesus, Your beloved Son, who cast out demons and healed the sick.

C: Empower us by Your Spirit to love You with our whole heart, and to love our neighbors as ourselves,

P: so that the light of Your love may so shine before others through us that they glorify You;

C: through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

HEARING FROM GOD'S WORD

First Reading:

1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13

All about love

And I will show you a still more excellent way.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them." So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.

The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON SONG: "Amazing Grace"

LBW 448

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
'Tis grace has bought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me;
His Word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

SERMON

“Loving the Unlovely”

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

C: I believe in God, who has created all things and continues to create new life within us... I believe in Jesus, son of God, son of man, the Savior of the world. By His life, His death and resurrection, I can know the true depth of human possibility, and experience the true joy of an abundant life...I believe that the Holy Spirit is present, now and always, calling us to faith, giving us gifts and empowering us for service...I believe that the community of believers called the church can experience the fullness of life through the word, the sacraments, and all that we do.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

P: Embraced by the love of God for us in Jesus, let us bring our prayers to God, trusting in His promise to deliver us in the midst of trouble. God, whose love is patient and kind, empower Your Church throughout the world and our community to show forth the Gospel everywhere with patience and kindness. Give the leaders and all the people of the Church a full measure of patience and kindness in interactions with one another. Preserve us from discord and public arguments that bring out the worst in us. Let the love You have shown us so embrace our lives that the world may notice and turn to You. God of love,

C: hear our prayer.

P: God, whose love is not envious or boastful, bless the leaders of nations, our president and congress, our governors, and local leaders. Move all leaders to cease envy and boastfulness, injustice and corruption. Guide our leaders to be honorable people who do not neglect the poor and who strive toward the flourishing of all human beings. Bless those who serve in our armed forces and lift up refugees and all victims of war. Bring peace between us and our enemies and let Your peace in Christ reign over this broken world. God of love,

C: hear our prayer.

P: God, whose love is not arrogant or rude, come to the aid of all who are in need. As Jesus humbly entered this world as a vulnerable baby, help all of us to humbly enter the lives of those who are sick, facing surgery, or dying to offer comfort and hope, [*especially . . .*]. Bring healing according to Your will and peace to those whose suffering endures. Thank You for the work of doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals who work toward healing and restoration of wholeness. Guide scientists searching for cures for diseases that bring so much suffering to the world, that their work lead to healing for many. God of love,

C: hear our prayer.

P: God, whose love is not irritable or resentful, let Your joy, forgiveness, and peace flow freely in and among both the families of this congregation and all families. Empower parents and grandparents to love their children and children to love their parents. Watch over all who travel, and comfort families who are separated by many miles. Guide families, that their homes be places where Your love is demonstrated to strangers as well as to friends. God of love,

C: hear our prayer.

P: In addition to these prayers that we have spoken, we know that You, O Lord, know the thoughts of our hearts, and hear also those prayers that come to You in sighs too deep for words. All of our prayer we entrust to Your abiding love in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

CHOIR ANTHEM:

“Come Find Forgiveness and Love”

By Don Besig

*Come to the table, Jesus is there.
Come to the banquet the Lord has prepared.
Bring all your troubles, each worry and care.
Come find forgiveness and love.*

*Come to the table, Jesus is near.
Come feel His presence surrounding you here.
Lay down your burdens, your sorrow and fear.
Come find forgiveness and love.*

*The bread has been broken, the cup has been poured
And now they are offered to you.
The promise is spoken and hope is restored.
You are redeemed. All is made new.*

*Come to the table, all who believe.
Come and remember, His grace makes you free.
Cherish this moment, this gift you receive.
Come find forgiveness and love.*

*Softly and tenderly Jesus invites us,
touching each heart and each soul.
Now, in communion, our Savior unties us,
Cleansing and making us whole.
Come take the bread, come share the cup.
Come find forgiveness and love.*

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

DISTRIBUTION

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

“Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me”

LBW 333

Lord, take my hand and lead me Upon life's way;
Direct, protect, and feed me From day to day,
Without your grace and favor I go astray;
So take my hand, O Savior, And lead the way.

Lord, when the tempest rages, I need not fear;
For you, the Rock of Ages, Are always near.
Close by your side abiding, I fear no foe,
For when your hand is guiding, In peace I go.

Lord, when the shadows lengthen And night has come,
I know that you will strengthen My steps toward home,
And nothing can impede me, O blessed Friend!
So, take my hand and lead me Unto the end.

“Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me”

LBW 334

Jesus, Savior, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rock and treacherous shoal;
Chart and compass come from thee
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

As a mother stills her child,
Thou canst hush the ocean wild;
Boist'rous waves obey thy will
When thou say'st to them: “Be still.”
Wondrous sov'reign of the sea,
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

When at last I near the shore,
And the fearful breakers roar
Twixt me and the peaceful rest,
Then, while leaning on thy breast,
May I hear thee say to me:
“Fear not, I will pilot thee.”

“Children of the Heavenly Father”

LBW 474

Children of the heav’nly Father
Safely in his bosom gather,
Nestling bird or star in heaven
Such a refuge ne’er was given.

God his own doth tend and nourish,
In his holy courts they flourish,
From all evil things he spares them,
In his mighty arms he bears them.

Neither life nor death shall ever
From the Lord his children sever;
From all evil things he spares them,
In his mighty arms he bears them.

Though he giveth or he taketh,
God his children ne’er forsaketh;
His the loving purpose solely
To preserve them pure and holy.

A CLOSING BLESSING

CLOSING SONG: “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

LBW 543

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation!
Let all who hear Now to his temple draw near,
Joining in glad adoration!

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things is wondrously reigning
And, as on wings of an eagle, uplifting, sustaining.
Have you not seen All that is needful has been
Sent by his gracious ordaining?

Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work and defend you;
Surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend you.
Ponder anew What the Almighty can do
If with his love he befriend you.

Praise to the Lord! Oh, let all that is in me adore him!
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him!
Let the amen Sound from his people again.
Gladly forever adore him!

DISMISSAL

P: Go in Peace. Serve the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!