

4th Sunday After Epiphany

Sunday, January 29, 2023

Mark 2:4 Adaptive Worship Service



1812 North Highland Avenue

Clearwater, Florida 33755

Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

727-446-5026

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Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! Who are the blessed ones of 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.

There are a few things to know about this service: you are not required to stand at any point though you can move around anytime you want or need, and Holy Communion is served with gluten-free bread & grape juice.

GATHERING SONG

All Are Welcome

Verses 1 & 3

1 Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safe - ly
live, a place where saints and chil - dren tell how
hearts learn to for - give. Built of hopes and dreams and
vi - sions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the love of
Refrain
Christ shall end di - vi - sions: All are wel - come,
all are wel - come, all are wel - come in this place.

3 Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
Music: TWO OAKS, Marty Haugen
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GREETING

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

Congregation: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: 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.

Congregation: Amen.

FIRST READING

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Introduction to the Lesson: *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.*

Reader: 18 For the message about Christ's death on the cross is nonsense to those who are being lost; but for us who are being saved it is God's power. 19 The scripture says,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise
and set aside the understanding of the scholars.”

20 So then, where does that leave the wise? or the scholars? or the skillful debaters of this world? God has shown that this world's wisdom is foolishness!

21 For God in his wisdom made it impossible for people to know him by means of their own wisdom. Instead, by means of the so-called “foolish” message we preach, God decided to save those who believe. 22 Jews want miracles for proof, and Greeks look for wisdom. 23 As for us, we proclaim the crucified Christ, a message that is offensive to the Jews and nonsense to the Gentiles; 24 but for those whom God has called, both Jews and Gentiles, this message is Christ, who is the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For what seems to be God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and what seems to be God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

26 Now remember what you were, my friends, when God called you. From the human point of view few of you were wise or powerful or of high social standing. 27 God purposely chose what the world considers nonsense in order to shame the wise, and he chose what the world considers weak in order to shame the powerful. 28 He chose what the world looks down on and despises and thinks is nothing, in order to destroy what the world thinks is important. 29 This means that no one can boast in God's presence. 30 But God has brought you into union with Christ Jesus, and God has made Christ to be our wisdom. By him we are put right with God; we become God's holy people and are set free. 31 So then, as the scripture says, “Whoever wants to boast must boast of what the Lord has done.”

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord. **Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 5:1-12

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

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew in the 5th chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus saw the crowds and went up a hill, where he sat down. His disciples gathered around him, 2 and he began to teach them:

3 “Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!

4 “Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them!

5 “Happy are those who are humble; they will receive what God has promised!

6 “Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires; God will satisfy them fully!

7 “Happy are those who are merciful to others; God will be merciful to them!

8 “Happy are the pure in heart; they will see God!

9 “Happy are those who work for peace; God will call them his children!

10 “Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!

11 “Happy are you when people insult you and persecute you and tell all kinds of evil lies against you because you are my followers. 12 Be happy and glad, for a great reward is kept for you in heaven. This is how the prophets who lived before you were persecuted.

After the reading...

Pastor: The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

Let Justice Flow like Streams



1 Let jus - tice flow like streams of spar-king wa - ter, pure,
2 Let righ - teous - ness roll on as oth - ers' cares we heed,
3 So may God's plumb line, straight, de - fine our mea - sure true,



en - a - bling growth, re - fresh - ing life, a - bun - dant, cleans-ing, sure.
an ev - er - flow - ing stream of faith trans-lat - ed in - to deed.
and jus - tice, right, and peace per-vade this world our whole life through.

Text: Jane Parker Huber, b. 1926

Music: ST. THOMAS, Aaron Williams, 1731–1776

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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

A brief silence.

Prayer Leader: 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. Lord, in your mercy, **Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: 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. Lord, in your mercy, **Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: 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, and wisdom to all in need. We pray for those on our prayer list, those suffering from war and terror such as the people of Ukraine and victims of mass shootings, those suffering from natural disasters including hurricanes, blizzards and floods, and those we name now with our lips or in our hearts Lord, in your mercy, **Congregation: hear our prayer.**

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

Congregation: Amen.

OFFERING

Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at Grace-CLW.com (look for the “Donate” button), or (for now) by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. You can fill out your attendance form on our website as well.

OFFERING PRAYER

Prayer Leader: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Worship Leader: Let us pray. 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.

LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in whichever language is closest to our hearts.

Congregation: 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.

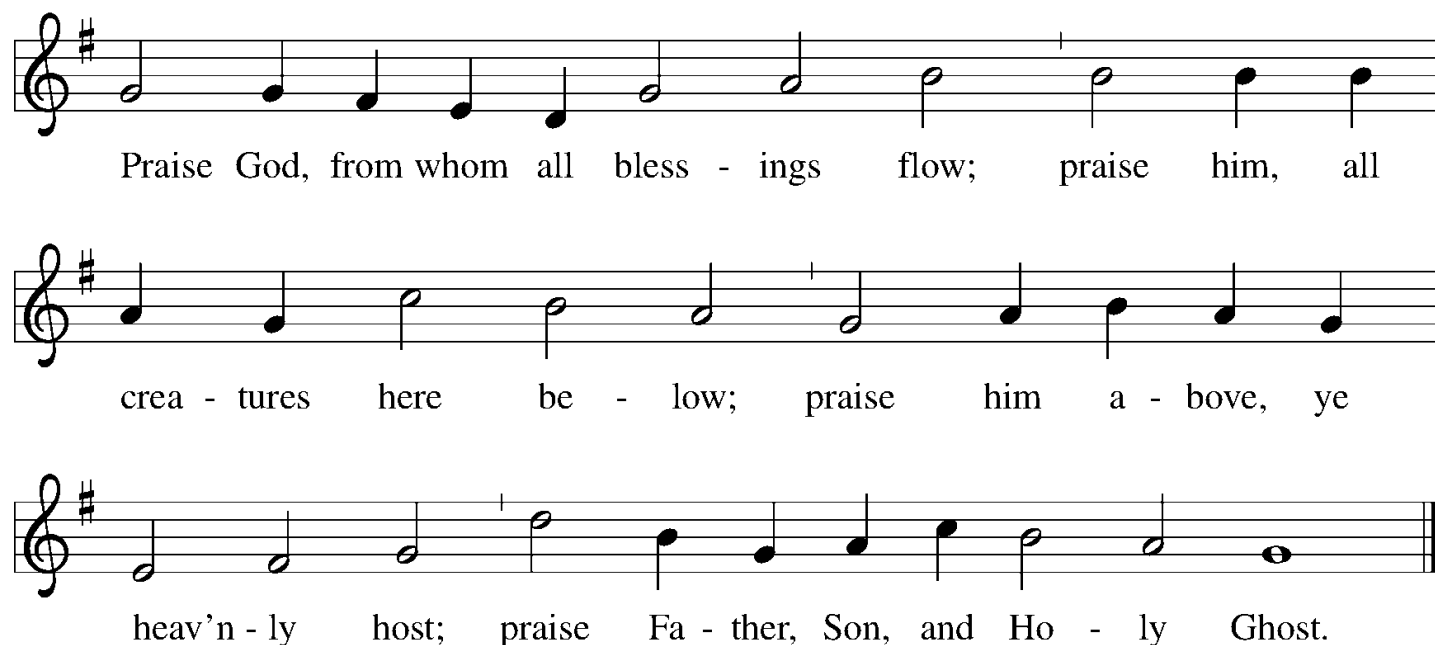
BLESSING

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

Congregation: Amen.

SENDING SONG

The Doxology



The musical notation consists of three staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The first staff contains the lyrics: "Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all". The second staff contains: "crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye". The third staff contains: "heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost." The music ends with a double bar line.

DISMISSAL

Pastor: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now as this service of worship is ending, this week's service to the world is beginning! Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

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