

# Worship in the Home: January 31, 2021

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## Worship in the Home

### **Fourth Sunday after Epiphany, Year B January 31, 2021**

*In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this church are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While you cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer. We offer this brief resource as an aid for prayer in the home. As with our prayers in the gathered assembly for worship, you are encouraged to prepare or adapt them locally for your context.*

In Deuteronomy God promises to raise up a prophet like Moses, who will speak for God; in Psalm 111 God shows the people the power of God's works. For the church these are ways of pointing to the unique authority people sensed in Jesus' actions and words. We encounter that authority in God's word, around which we gather, the word that prevails over any lesser spirit that would claim power over us, freeing us to follow Jesus.

*Find a peaceful place to pray, perhaps a table. You may wish to light a candle and place a bowl of water in remembrance of your baptism. One person may lead this acclamation and then pray the Prayer of the Day.*

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

**Amen.**

Let us pray.

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

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 18:15-20**

*Today's reading is part of a longer discourse in Deuteronomy, an updating of the law for the Israelite community as the people wait to enter the promised land. Here Moses assures the people that God will continue to guide them through prophets who will proclaim the divine word.*

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

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

<sup>2</sup>Great are your <sup>1</sup>works, O LORD,  
pondered by all who delight in them.

<sup>3</sup>Majesty and splendor <sup>1</sup>mark your deeds,  
and your righteousness endures forever.

<sup>4</sup>You cause your wonders to <sup>1</sup>be remembered;  
you are gracious and full <sup>1</sup>of compassion.

<sup>5</sup>You give food to <sup>1</sup>those who fear you,  
remembering forever your covenant.

<sup>6</sup>You have shown your people the power <sup>1</sup>of your works  
in giving them the lands <sup>1</sup>of the nations.

<sup>7</sup>The works of your hands are faithfulness and justice;  
all of your precepts are sure.

<sup>8</sup>They stand fast forever and ever,  
because they are done in <sup>1</sup>truth and equity.

<sup>9</sup>You sent redemption to your people and commanded your covenant forever;  
holy and awesome <sup>1</sup>is your name.

<sup>10</sup>The 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**

*Paul is concerned about the way some Corinthian Christians use their freedom in Christ as license to engage in non-Christian behavior that sets a damaging example to other, impressionable believers. Christians have a responsibility to each other that their behavior does not cause another to sin.*

<sup>1</sup>Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. <sup>2</sup>Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; <sup>3</sup>but anyone who loves God is known by God.

<sup>4</sup>Hence, 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.” <sup>5</sup>Indeed, even though there may be so-called deities in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many deities and many lords—<sup>6</sup>yet 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.

<sup>7</sup>It 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. <sup>8</sup>“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. <sup>9</sup>But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. <sup>10</sup>For 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? <sup>11</sup>So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. <sup>12</sup>But when you thus sin against brothers and sisters in your community, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. <sup>13</sup>Therefore, 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.**

## **Gospel: Mark 1:21-28**

The holy gospel according to Mark.

### **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Forces that would bring death and disease have taken hold of a man, yet they recognize Jesus and know what his power means for them. Jesus commands these forces to leave and people are amazed at his authority.*

<sup>21</sup>Jesus and his disciples went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. <sup>22</sup>They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. <sup>23</sup>Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, <sup>24</sup>and 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." <sup>25</sup>But Jesus rebuked the spirit, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" <sup>26</sup>And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of the man. <sup>27</sup>They 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.' <sup>28</sup>At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **Reflection**

*Having read these readings, think on this:*

There are indeed, right now, false prophets, people who mislead and betray others by what they say, pretending to speak in God's name. We too, as Paul says, can use our religious knowledge to hurt others. How can the fire and the voice of the living God save us from this misuse of religion? Listen. Jesus' teaching ministry begins in an importantly strange way in Mark's Gospel. Nothing is said of what he actually teaches. And he oddly silences the unclean spirit who knows who he is. Religious knowledge is already being re-worked. In Mark that silence continues through the whole Gospel until at last Jesus is finally silenced on the cross. But this crucified Jesus is risen, and by the power of the Spirit he comes to our assemblies and to our homes. He is himself the new teaching, the promised prophet, the fire and voice of God in a way we can encounter. In him God knows us. And the word of this Holy One of God does heal us and turn us in kindness and care toward the others around us.

*If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 886), "Songs of Thankfulness and Praise" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 310). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.*

[Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing](#)  
[Songs of Thankfulness and Praise](#)

*Then pray these intercessions:*

Let us offer to God both our praises and our petitions for all in need, responding to each prayer with the words "Hear us and help us."

*A brief silence.*

Faithful God, we praise you for sustaining the church during this difficult time. We pray that you give to all preachers and teachers the power of your prophetic Spirit, that their words will proclaim the comfort and challenge of Christ. Lead to yourself all those who have become captive to false prophets and empty promises; free them and embrace them in your mercy.

*A brief silence.*

O faithful God, we pray:

**Hear us and help us.**

Bountiful God, we praise you for continuously creating the earth and nourishing its creatures. We pray that you restore lands and waters that have been harmed by human misuse. Raise up advocates for an ecological way of life, and guide us toward an appropriate use of government in preserving the earth's natural resources.

*A brief silence.*

O bountiful God, we pray:

**Hear us and help us.**

Ruling God, we praise you for an inauguration and the days following that were free from violence and marked by hope. We pray that you to give wisdom to our elected and appointed officials, to political parties, and to grassroots organizers, that in all things they endeavor to serve the common good. Guide our nation out of the ways of prejudice and into equality and justice for all.

*A brief silence.*

O ruling God, we pray:

**Hear us and help us.**

Compassionate God, we praise you for each day of health and well-being, and we pray for all who are sick or suffering. Comfort those with mental illness or emotional distress, those institutionalized, or living on the streets, or residing in our homes. We praise you for the development of COVID-19 vaccines, and we pray for their fair and prompt distribution. Increase in our land a commitment to limit contagion to others. Visit all who have contracted the coronavirus and all who are experiencing the long-term effects of COVID-19. Strengthen medical workers and home health aides. Receive our prayers for those we name before you: . . .

*A brief silence.*

O compassionate God, we pray:

**Hear us and help us.**

Reconciling God, we praise you for your Spirit of wisdom and concord. We pray for all who make ethical decisions, whether in homes, in churches, or in societies. Keep families from quarreling over which foods to eat. Instruct us when to preserve the past and when to institute change, when to maintain our own preferences and when to yield to others.

*A brief silence.*

O reconciling God, we pray:

**Hear us and help us.**

Gracious God, we give you praise for your continuous untold blessings, and we offer you now the petitions of our own hearts.

*A longer period of silence.*

O gracious God, we pray:

**Hear us and help us.**

Eternal God, we praise you for your servants of time past whose words and actions have inspired our lives. We mourn those who have died of Covid-19. Unite us with all our beloved dead now through our memories and at the end of time in your presence.

*A brief silence.*

O eternal God, we pray:

**Hear us and help us.**

Into your hands, merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your loving care, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

*If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "There Is a Balm in Gilead" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 614), "O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 610). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.*

[There Is a Balm in Gilead](#)

*Then conclude with these prayers:*

Let us pray.

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

Holy God,

Light of the universe, Teacher of truth, Giver of goodness,  
we hear your Word in the Scriptures,  
proclaiming to us your wisdom

and inviting us to follow your call.  
For speaking this Word, we thank you, O God.

**We thank you, O God.**

Your Word came among us in Jesus, our brother,  
who preached your righteousness, healed the sick,  
and revived the brokenhearted.

For giving us this Word, we worship you, O God.

**We worship you, O God.**

By your Spirit bless all who receive this Word,  
that upheld by the mystery of the body of Christ,  
we may be light for the world,  
revealing the brilliance of your Son.

For sustaining us with your Word, we praise you, O God.

**We praise you, O God.**

Blessed are you, holy God, around us, with us, and in us,  
now and forever. Amen.

**Amen.**

**Offering**

Please remember to mail in your offerings so that Grace can continue to serve you.

**Offering Prayer**

O God, receive these gifts as you receive us: like a mother receives her child, with arms open wide. Nourish us anew in your tender care, and empower us in faithful service to tend to others with this same love, through Jesus Christ, our saving grace. **Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

*Then speak the Blessing:*

God the creator strengthen you;  
Jesus the beloved fill you;  
and the Holy Spirit the comforter + keep you in peace.

**Amen.**

**Devotional Music Links:** For your individual or group devotion, you may choose to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress: "[Jesus Calls Us](#);" "[Holy God, Holy and Glorious](#);" "[Do Not I Love Thee, O My Lord](#)."

**Readings for the Week:**

**Monday** Psalm 35:1-10. **Tuesday** (Presentation of Our Lord) Luke 2:22-40. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Ansgar, Bishop of Hamburg, missionary to Denmark and Sweden, 865) Jeremiah 29:1-14. **Thursday** Psalm 147:1-11, 20c. **Friday** (commemoration of the Martyrs of Japan, 1597) 1 Corinthians 9:1-16. **Saturday** Isaiah 46:1-13. **Fifth Sunday after Epiphany:** Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11, 20c; 1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39.

**Daily Prayer Resources** are available, including simple forms of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer; Responsive Prayer; and prayers for mealtimes and other occasions.

Due to copyright restrictions, we are only able to provide downloadable hymns that are in the public domain and selected hymns for limited use. Other suggestions provided above may be found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. To purchase copies of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and *All Creation Sings* for the home, visit the [Augsburg Fortress website](#) or call 1-800-328-4648. Selected hymns from *All Creation Sings* will be provided for limited use.

Reflection text: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw

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***Thank you to those who clean the Church following worship.***  
**In House Church Services will be resumed on February 7<sup>th</sup>.**

***Please keep in your prayers this week:*** Kevin Johnson, Barbara Metzger, Rob Johnson and Steve Lindberg (Streeter Family Friend's & Kin), Noah Klenken (Fred Fixsen's Nephew), Cal Curtis & Patty Thompson (Carole Holten's Son-in-Law & Sister), Bill Warner, David Warner, Emily (Ben & Casey's Daughter), Terry Newgard, Judy Wingses, Steve Murdock, Bob Broberg.

Mid-week Message for January 27, 2021

### **SIX LITTLE STORIES WITH LOTS OF MEANINGS**

1. Once all villagers decided to pray for rain. On the day of prayer, all the people gathered, but only one boy came with an umbrella. That is faith.
2. When you throw babies in the air, they laugh because they know you will catch them. That is trust.
3. Every night we go to bed without any assurance of being alive the next morning, but still we set alarms to wake up. That is hope.
4. We plan big things for tomorrow in spite of zero knowledge of the future. That is confidence.
5. We see the world suffering, but still we get married and have children. That is love.
6. On an old man's shirt was written a sentence "I am not 80 years old; I am sweet 16 with 64 years of experience," That is attitude.

This was given to me by Bethel folks, have a blessed week!

Pastor Bill Sass