

# Worship in the Home: February 7, 2021

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## Worship in the Home

### Fifth Sunday after Epiphany, Year B

### February 7, 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 Isaiah the one God who sits above the earth and numbers the stars also strengthens the powerless. So in Jesus' healing work we see the hand of the creator God, lifting up the sick woman to health and service (*diakonia*). Like Simon's mother-in-law, we are lifted up and healed to serve. Following Jesus, we strengthen the powerless; like Jesus, we seek to renew our own strength in quiet times of prayer.

*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.*

Everlasting God, you give strength to the weak and power to the faint. Make us agents of your healing and wholeness, that your good news may be made known to the ends of your creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

#### **First Reading: Isaiah 40:21-31**

*The Judeans in exile have a good reason to be hopeful: the one who will bring them to freedom is the God who created the world, the God who subdues the rulers of the earth and gives strength to those who are weary.*

<sup>21</sup>Have you not known? Have you not heard?

Has it not been told you from the beginning?

Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

<sup>22</sup>It is God who sits above the circle of the earth,

and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;  
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,  
and spreads them like a tent to live in;  
<sup>23</sup>who brings the great to naught,  
and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.  
<sup>24</sup>Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,  
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,  
when God blows upon them, and they wither,  
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.  
<sup>25</sup>To whom then will you compare me,  
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.  
<sup>26</sup>Lift up your eyes on high and see:  
Who created these?  
The one who brings out their host and numbers them,  
calling them all by name;  
because God is great in strength,  
mighty in power,  
not one is missing.  
<sup>27</sup>Why do you say, O Jacob,  
and speak, O Israel,  
"My way is hidden from the LORD,  
and my right is disregarded by my God"?  
<sup>28</sup>Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
The LORD does not faint or grow weary;  
the understanding of God is unsearchable.  
<sup>29</sup>The LORD gives power to the faint,  
and strengthens the powerless.  
<sup>30</sup>Even youths will faint and be weary,  
and the young will fall exhausted;  
<sup>31</sup>but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
they shall run and not be weary,  
they shall walk and not faint.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Psalms 147:1-11, 20c**

<sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! How good it is to sing praises <sup>1</sup>to our God!

How pleasant it is to honor <sup>1</sup>God with praise!

<sup>2</sup>The LORD re- <sup>1</sup>builds Jerusalem,  
and gathers the exiles of Israel.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD heals the <sup>1</sup>brokenhearted  
and binds <sup>1</sup>up their wounds.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD counts the number <sup>1</sup>of the stars  
and calls them all <sup>1</sup>by their names.

<sup>5</sup>Great is our LORD and mighty in power;  
there is no limit <sup>1</sup>to God's wisdom.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD lifts <sup>1</sup>up the lowly,  
but casts the wicked <sup>1</sup>to the ground.

<sup>7</sup>Sing to the LORD <sup>1</sup>with thanksgiving;  
make music upon the harp <sup>1</sup>to our God,

<sup>8</sup>who covers the heavens with clouds

and prepares rain for the earth, making grass to grow upon the mountains.

<sup>9</sup>God provides food <sup>l</sup> for the cattle

and for the young ravens <sup>l</sup> when they cry.

<sup>10</sup>God is not impressed by the might <sup>l</sup> of a horse,

and has no pleasure in the speed <sup>l</sup> of a runner,

<sup>11</sup>but finds pleasure in those who <sup>l</sup> fear the LORD,  
in those who await God's steadfast love. <sup>20c</sup> <sup>l</sup> Hallelujah!

### **Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:16-23**

*God entrusted Paul with the responsibility of bringing the gospel to diverse people. Hence the focus of Paul's ministry is not his own rights or privileges as an apostle but the privilege of serving God by freely sharing the good news of Christ with others.*

<sup>16</sup>If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! <sup>17</sup>For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. <sup>18</sup>What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel.

<sup>19</sup>For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. <sup>20</sup>To the Jewish people I became as a Jew, in order to win the Jewish people. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. <sup>21</sup>To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. <sup>22</sup>To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. <sup>23</sup>I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Gospel: Mark 1:29-39**

The holy gospel according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Everywhere Jesus goes, many people expect him to set them free from oppression. Everywhere he goes, he heals people and sets them free. Disease, devils, and death are running for their lives. The forces that diminish human life are rendered powerless by Jesus.*

<sup>29</sup>As soon as Jesus and the disciples left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. <sup>30</sup>Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. <sup>31</sup>Jesus came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

<sup>32</sup>That evening, at sundown, they brought to Jesus all who were sick or possessed with demons. <sup>33</sup>And the whole city was gathered around the door. <sup>34</sup>And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

<sup>35</sup>In the morning, while it was still very dark, Jesus got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. <sup>36</sup>And Simon and his companions hunted for him. <sup>37</sup>When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." <sup>38</sup>Jesus answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." <sup>39</sup>And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **Reflection**

*Having read these readings, think on this:*

Mark wants to say in every way he can that God's salvation is hidden in the cross. This is what scholars have called "the messianic secret." There are two instances of the secret in today's text:

Jesus silences the demons because they know who he is; and, after “the whole city” has been gathered at his door, he goes away alone to a deserted place. But this hidden Jesus then goes on to all the neighboring towns. In our day, the salvation that is in the cross is still hidden. But we proclaim that the crucified one is risen and goes on to all the world. He comes here to the house of our church and to our own homes. We are the weak ones, sick with a fever. In the power of the Spirit, Jesus is the presence of the God who strengthens the weak. Jesus is himself the gospel given away for free. We are healed now, so that we — like Peter’s mother-in-law — may rise to serve others.

*If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty” (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 858/859), “God, Whose Almighty Word” (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 673). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.*

[Praise to the Lord, the Almighty  
God, Whose Almighty Word](#)

*Then pray these intercessions:*

Trusting in God’s power to heal, let us offer our prayers for all who are in need, responding to each petition with words from today’s psalm, “We await your steadfast love.”

*A brief silence.*

We pray for the church’s many ministries of healing; for hospital, hospice, and military chaplains; for those serving in prisons, camps, and institutions; and for bishops and pastors facing illness of which we are unaware.

*A brief silence.*

We pray to you, saving God:

**We await your steadfast love.**

We pray for the health of the earth; for its myriad animals and their habitats; and for all created life that has been harmed by human misuse.

*A brief silence.*

We pray to you, provident God:

**We await your steadfast love.**

We pray for the health of people around the globe, especially for the people of Ethiopia and India; for international health organizations; for local and national medical services; and for school officials and teachers facing the pandemic.

*A brief silence.*

We pray to you, benevolent God:

**We await your steadfast love.**

We pray for wholeness in our nation; for the safety of our nation’s elected leaders; for an end to domestic violence; for an end to prejudice; and for an end to civic terrorism.

*A brief silence.*

We pray to you, sovereign God:

**We await your steadfast love.**

We pray for a halt to the pandemic; for all who have contracted Covid-19; for health workers; for the prompt distribution of vaccines; and for all who today will die from the virus.

*A brief silence.*

We pray to you, compassionate God:

**We await your steadfast love.**

We pray for all who are sick and suffering; for those with chronic pain; for those experiencing despair; for infants born impaired and for the aged in decline; and for all whom we name here: . . .

*A brief silence.*

We pray to you, consoling God:

**We await your steadfast love.**

We pray finally for ourselves; for steady trust in your power; and for health in our weakness.

*A longer period of silence.*

We pray to you, loving God:

**We await your steadfast love.**

We praise you for the faithful departed and for their lives of service to others; and we pray that despite sickness and death, at our end we join with them to find our wholeness in you.

*A brief silence.*

We pray to you, eternal God:

**We await your steadfast love.**

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, 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 "I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 860 / This Far By Faith 191), "We Come to You for Healing, Lord" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 617), "Guide My Feet" (All Creation Sings 987 / This Far By Faith 153), "Cast Out, O Christ" (All Creation Sings 1016). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.*

[I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me](#)

[Guide My Feet](#)

*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: "[O God of Light](#);" "[The Healing of the Nations](#);" "[Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing](#)."

**Readings for the Week:**

**Monday** Psalm 102:12-28. **Tuesday** 2 Kings 8:1-6. **Wednesday** Mark 3:7-12. **Thursday** Psalm 50:1-6. **Friday** 1 Timothy 1:12-20. **Saturday** Luke 19:41-44. **Transfiguration of Our Lord** (commemoration of Cyril, monk, 869; Methodius, bishop, 885; missionaries to the Slavs) 2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9.

**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 Wings, Steve Murdock, Bob Broberg, Carole Holten.

Pastor Bill's mid-week message

Here's a neat-o article from the current Focus on the Family magazine for your perusal:

"Trusting God in dreary places;" Spiritual insights from Focus on the Family in the Middle East; by Sami Yacoub

"Elijah was burned out, completely exhausted, and Queen Jezebel had just threatened his life. Elijah told God, "The people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away" (1 Kings 19:10). He was scared and felt alone. It was time to quit.

Christians can find themselves in similar dreary places where we have no control over our circumstances. In the midst of stress and faulty introspection, we may believe we're not making a difference. Like Elijah, we may conclude that we have no value and should just give up.

When we feel this way, we must remember that God doesn't always allow His servants to see the results of their work. He *may* do so, but when He doesn't, He wants us to walk by faith. When we walk only by sight, we lose the ability to trust God. But when we trust in His plan for our lives, His words will not be in vain (Isaiah 55:11).

The Lord responded to Elijah in 1 Kings. He didn't speak through the mighty power of nature but rather in a whisper. His quiet voice reminded Elijah that He was still in control. During difficult times, I remember how God has shown up for me and my family. Like millions around the world, we have faced tremendous challenges in our lives, ministry and work. But God has provided for our needs during these times. That helps me realize what it means to walk by faith, recognizing that my sufficiency comes from the Lord.

God is still God, and He is in control. Knowing that, I don't fear what the future holds. Instead, I open my heart and ask, "What would You like me to do next?" I hope you will ask that question for yourself, too."