

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
EPIPHANY 2 - CELEBRATING ILLUMINATION
Reverend John R. Hanson
Sunday, January 16, 2022, 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

Julie Hanson

INTRODUCTION

The readings for this week carry themes of love, caring, marriage, and the gifts that are always given when love is present. Our God rejoices over God's people "as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride." By the power of the Spirit, there are gifts for everyone. In Christ Jesus, as the wine, the best is saved for last. The possibilities for exploring how Jesus is revealed in love, and in us when we love, are very exciting.

ANTHEM (10:30)

J Crew

THEME AND VERSE (*Psalm 36:7-9*)

Can we keep still this day? There is joy in this place! God's steadfast love extends to everyone. He reaches out to all in forgiveness and compassion. Thanks to God for all the wonderful blessings we have received. Let us celebrate God's joyful love for us! Amen.

"How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light."

HYMN

"This Is My Father's World"

Green # 554

This is my Father's world, and to my list'ning ears
All nature sings and around me rings the music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world; I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas; his hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world; the birds their carols raise;
The morning light, the lily white, declare their maker's praise.
This is my Father's world; he shines in all that's fair,
In the rustling grass I hear him pass; he speaks to me ev'rywhere.

This is my Father's world; oh, let me ne'er forget
That, though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.
This is my Father's world; why should my heart be sad?
The Lord is king, let the heavens ring! God reigns; let earth be glad!

CCLI Song # 5713909 CCLI License # 1713417

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION God is good. **All the time.**

GOSPEL: John 2:1-11

Turning water to wine at the wedding at Cana is described as the first of Jesus' signs. Jesus reveals that he bears God's creative power and brings his joyful presence into the world.

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." ⁴And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." ⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸He said to

them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. ⁹When the steward tasted the water that had become wine and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." ¹¹Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time.

God is good!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather together to worship

in the name of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Whenever we have turned our Christianity into dull routines and platitudes without zest and laughter, whenever we have resented the enthusiasm of the new convert or the excitement of the idealistic person, whenever we have traded the new wine of the Gospel for the old beverage of religious laws, anxiety, and self-belittling:

O dearest Christ, brother and savior, your abundant forgiveness is ready ages before we seek it; your love already enfolds us long before we become aware of it. Fill us, we pray, with the peace that the powers of this world cannot give us and with the joy that no doubt failure or fear can steal from us. Amen!

Our God does not deal in half measures. Out of God's fullness we have received saving grace heaped upon saving grace. It is Christ who sets us free, therefore we stand free.

In the name of Jesus Christ, with the Father and the Spirit, we pray. Amen!

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON

"Not the Same; Changed."

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Loving God, as most of us come from comfortable homes, surrounded with many possessions, we still yearn for that holy wealth which nothing can buy. We seek the wealth of your abundant light and love. We need the power of your Spirit. Grant us this spirit, we pray, that with rekindled love and awe we may praise and adore you and so doing, find ourselves wonderfully satisfied through Christ Jesus our Savior. Amen.

READING: Isaiah 62:1-5

The “people’s” return to Judah after the exile was marred by economic and political troubles. Nevertheless, the prophet declares, Jerusalem and Judah will be restored. God will rejoice over Jerusalem as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride; and the people are called to the celebration.

¹For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. ²The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. ³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand

of your God. ⁴You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. ⁵For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

READING: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 *The congregation at Corinth experienced division as people were comparing spiritual gifts, thinking some to be superior to others. Paul invites this fractured community to trust that God's Holy Spirit has gifted them all perfectly. The gifts are diverse though God is one, and all are given for the common good.*

¹Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. ²You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. ³Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says, "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

¹¹All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

HYMN

“In Christ There Is No East or West”

Green # 359

In Christ there is no east or west, in him no south or north,
But one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth.

In him shall true hearts ev'rywhere their high communion find;
His service is the golden cord close-binding humankind.

Join hands then people of faith, whate'er your race may be.
Who serves my Father as a child is surely kin to me.

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SERMON - *Use the gifts you have received. We've received a partnership and tools to do the task at hand with specific abilities to aid. That's God's promise!*

HYMN

"I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

Blue # 649

I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus.

***In him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.***

I want to see the brightness of God. I want to look at Jesus.
Clear Sun of Righteousness, shine on my path, and show me the way to the Father.

I'm looking for the coming of Christ. I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race, we shall know the joy of Jesus.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

At this meal we discover anew and accept with assurance that we are who God says we are — holy and redeemed people who belong to the Lord. Thank you for changing our name. Let us take up our new name with new confidence to live as the people of God so that others may seek God's face because of his work in us. Make us more like Jesus until we also find the joy in sharing and giving, helping and forgiving. Amen.

BENEDICTION & SENDING

Take the sign of the stone jars of cold water that are turned into new wine, it is a sign of hope for the strong and weak, the middle-aged, the old and young, the downcast and the buoyant, and for those with largish faith or very diminished faith.

We pray for the power to serve him gloriously.

By the grace of Messiah Jesus, go out from this place with more than you brought in. The blessing of the one generous God sustaining, liberating, and fulfilling all things will be with you now and always.

Amen! We go, may we love and serve with Christ!

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Worship, as an action, continues to change.

Use this space to guide your thoughts as the Spirit may lead you.

Use this time to center your distractions in order to help activate your worship.

God's love for God's people, and God's commitment to care for all of humanity are described and celebrated throughout the Scriptures. Many of the readings for this week draw on the wedding metaphor – the celebration of Jerusalem like a groom who rejoices over his bride; the song of a God who loves unfailingly; the first sign of John's Gospel, performed at the wedding feast.

In the midst of all of these images is the truth that Paul describes in his letter to Corinthians – love always delights to give gifts to its beloved. As has been famously stated: “You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.” What this week in Epiphany seeks to show us is the complete, unconditional, self-giving love of God revealed in Jesus, but also the warning – the extent of our following Christ in the way of love is revealed by the extent of our giving. No giving, no love!

Every week in our churches an offering is received “for the work of God.” The Gospel question that we must face is this: How much of this offering is used to give to those who most need it – to uplift the surrounding community or to make some small contribution toward addressing the world's crises – and how much is used to benefit only the church which receives it? All too often the message we send as Church is that our giving to God is much like paying taxes – not a gift of love, but a burden to be avoided or at least mitigated, as much as possible. Yet, as we allow the season of Epiphany to reveal to us again the Christ who died for love of us, we cannot help but recognize that our poverty in giving is a reflection of the poverty of our love. This applies not just to churches, or to the financial gifts that are given. It also applies to our families, neighborhoods and communities, and to the way we hoard our time, our energy, our true selves, and our spiritual gifts.

As we learn to live the loving way of Christ, we cannot help but become freer with ourselves, making our resources, abilities and time available to others, and opening ourselves up in such a way that we make ourselves a gift to those with whom we have strong and deep relationships. May the revealed Christ teach us to love truly – practically, sacrificially, generously, extravagantly.

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