

St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS)
8948 N 1900 Ave Geneseo, IL 61254
309-949-2516

February 7, 2021 Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

The order of worship is based upon Divine Service Setting One, Lutheran Service Book p. 151.

Confession and Absolution

Hymn of Invocation: 684 Come unto Me, Ye Weary



1 "Come un - to Me, ye wea - ry, And I will give you rest."
2 "Come un - to Me, ye wan - d'ers, And I will give you light."
3 "Come un - to Me, ye faint - ing, And I will give you life."
4 "And who - so - ev - er com - eth, I will not cast him out."



O bless - ed voice of Je - sus, Which comes to hearts op-pressed!
O lov - ing voice of Je - sus, Which comes to cheer the night!
O cheer - ing voice of Je - sus, Which comes to aid our strife!
O pa - tient love of Je - sus, Which drives a - way our doubt,



It tells of ben - e - dic - tion, Of par - don, grace, and peace,
Our hearts were filled with sad - ness, And we had lost our way;
The foe is stern and ea - ger, The fight is fierce and long;
Which, though we be un - wor - thy Of love so great and free,



Of joy that hath no end - ing, Of love that can - not cease.
But Thou hast brought us glad - ness And songs at break of day.
But Thou hast made us might - y And strong - er than the strong.
In - vites us ver - y sin - ners To come, dear Lord, to Thee!

Stand

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just,

will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

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.

Service of the Word

Introit

Psalm 13:3-5; antiphon: v. 6

I will sing to the LORD,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.
**Consider and answer me, O LORD my God;
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,
lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him,"
lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.
But I have trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

I will sing to the LORD,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

Kyrie

P In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C Amen.

Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray.

O Lord, keep Your family the Church continually in the true faith that, relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace, we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Sit

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 40:21-31, on back of bulletin

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual

Psalms 117:1-2a; 96:8

Praise the Lord, all nations!

Extol him, all peoples!

**For great is his steadfast love toward us,
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.**

**Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts!**

Epistle

1 Corinthians 9:16-27, on back of bulletin

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

Verse of the Day

Mark 1:39

P Alleluia. [Jesus] went throughout all Galilee,

C preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.
Alleluia.

Holy Gospel

Mark 1:29-39, on back of bulletin

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the first chapter.

C Glory be to You, O Lord.

After the reading

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

Sit

Hymn of the Day: 398 Hail to the Lord's Anointed



1 Hail to the Lord's a - noint - ed, Great Da - vid's great - er Son!
2 He comes with res - cue speed - y To those who suf - fer wrong,
3 He shall come down like show - ers Up - on the fruit - ful earth;
4 Kings shall fall down be - fore Him And gold and in - cense bring;
5 O'er ev - 'ry foe vic - to - rious, He on His throne shall rest,



Hail, in the time ap - point - ed, His reign on earth be - gun!
To help the poor and need - y And bid the weak be strong;
Love, joy, and hope, like flow - ers, Spring in His path to birth.
All na - tions shall a - dore Him, His praise all peo - ple sing.
From age to age more glo - rious, All bless - ing and all - blest.



He comes to break op - pres - sion, To set the cap - tive free,
To give them songs for sigh - ing, Their dark - ness turn to light,
Be - fore Him on the moun - tains Shall peace, the her - ald, go;
To Him shall prayer un - ceas - ing And dai - ly vows as - cend;
The tide of time shall nev - er His cov - e - nant re - move;



To take a - way trans - gres - sion And rule in eq - ui - ty.
Whose souls, con - demned and dy - ing, Were pre - cious in His sight.
And righ - teous - ness in foun - tains From hill to val - ley flow.
His king - dom still in - creas - ing, A king - dom with - out end.
His name shall stand for - ev - er— That name to us is Love.

Sermon



Nicene Creed

C I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living
and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and
glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life † of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Church

- P** Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.
- P** In thanksgiving for sending Christ Jesus into our flesh; for His preaching of the Gospel and His casting out of the corrupting works of sin and Satan, which we could not overcome; and that, by His Word, He would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** Lord, have mercy.

P For the Church, that God would give joy to His servants on whom He has laid the necessity to preach the Gospel, that many would be saved in every nation, and that together we may share in the blessings of Christ, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For all Christian homes, and for the endurance that comes from Your Holy Spirit; for husbands and wives, parents and children, that they may be disciplined and self-controlled in their duties, run their course in this life, and continue to the end in the holy Christian faith, ready to receive the imperishable wreath of eternal life, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For our land, that the Lord who created this world's foundations and holds might over the powers of nature and the rulers of the earth would graciously preserve it with its produce and industry; and for our leaders and our people, that God would not disregard us for our sins, but renew us, that our lives may be peaceful and our country governed according to His will, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For those whom You have given healing and improvement, especially, Casey, we thank You gracious Lord and ask that Your ongoing care be upon them. For those in any need, that in our prayers they would be brought to the Great Physician of body and soul whose hand turns away demon, disease and every ill effect of sin, and especially for Lonnie, Linda, Joseph, Pam, Paula, Jim, Don, John, Lois, Betty, Justin, Delores, Arlyn, Derek, Harley, Lillian, Lynne, Clinton's Family, Crystal, Carol, Fred, Jodi, Glenn, Mike, Virginia, Jim, John, Marilyn, Jim, Laurie, Drew, Kathleen, Glenda, Kelly, Carolyn, Carolyn, and Karen, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For those who commune, that we would come to Christ's Supper believing that where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation; and that the blood of Christ, which atoned for our sins, would make us whole, strengthen us against every spiritual attack of the devil, turn us in love toward our neighbor, and preserve us in body and soul to life everlasting, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P All these things and whatever else You know that we need, grant us, Father, for the sake of Him who died and rose again and now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever.

C Amen.

Lord's Prayer

- C** 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.

Benediction

- P** The grace of our Lord ✠ Jesus Christ and the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
C Amen.

At this time the live streaming of the service will end. If anyone does not feel comfortable receiving the Lord's Supper at this time they are welcome to depart. The worship concludes with the Service of the Sacrament.

Service of the Sacrament

Preface

- P** The Lord be with you.
C And also with you.
P Lift up your hearts.
C We lift them to the Lord.
P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C It is right to give Him thanks and praise.
P It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times
and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father,
everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; for what had been
hidden from before the foundation of the world You have made known
to the nations in Your Son. In Him, being found in the substance of
our mortal nature, You have manifested the fullness of Your glory.
Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of
heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising
You and saying:

Sanctus

- C** Holy, holy, holy Lord God of power and might:
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

The Words of Institution

- P** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed,
took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave
it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body,
which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He
had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of
you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for
you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of Me."

Prayer of Thanksgiving

- P** Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had
mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten
Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With
repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the
all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg
You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your
Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink
His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us
together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with
all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom,
which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and
preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and
worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and
forever.

- C** Amen.

Pax Domini

- P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C Amen.

Agnus Dei

- C** Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have
mercy on us.
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have

mercy on us.
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

Distribution

- P** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart † in peace.
- C Amen.**

Post-Communion Collect

- P** Let us pray.
We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C Amen.**

Benediction

- P** The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and † give you peace.
- C Amen.**

Today we receive the gift of Holy Communion. Communion is an expression of faith and agreement. If you're our guest this morning, we don't want to place you in a position of agreement with our beliefs before you've had opportunity to study them. Therefore, if you're not a member of a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregation, we invite you to speak with our pastor about this special opportunity, and request that you not partake of the Communion today. Thank you.

Acknowledgements

Hymn 684: Text and tune: Public domain
Hymn 398: Tune and text: Public domain

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ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH-LCMS

churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org
Website: www.stjohnsgeneseo.org
https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo
https://www.facebook.comSt.JohnGLY

HEARING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

Rev. Timothy Nerud

Pastor

309-949-2516 (Office)
309-949-2517 (Home)
612-940-8138 (Cell)

+In God's Grace—In God's Service+

Elder: Mike Dahl

Videographer: Joel Werling

Ushers: Jason Dahl, Brad Gehn

Organist: John Neumann

Today's Readings: Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 40:21-31
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 9:16-27
Holy Gospel: Mark 1:29-39

WE PRAY: Divine Creator, from whose hand man came in glorious perfection, according to Your will for us be Physician or Comforter or Inspiration to us when there are laid on our bodies, minds, or souls burdens to difficult for us, that we might in them and beyond them see Your hand and heart; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with You and the Holy Spirit are one God with dominion over us forever. Amen.

WELCOME TO ALL!

We are anxious to share with you the Christ-centered ministry at St. John's. Our Liturgy follows closely the pattern of Word and Lord's Supper handed down from the ancient Church. It is our hope that you will make the Church's life of prayer your own. If you have difficulty following our order of service, please ask someone sitting near you for assistance. We pray that you will receive rich spiritual blessings from your presence here. May the peace and power of our risen Christ be yours always.

IF YOU DESIRE a visit or call from Pastor Nerud, please contact the church office (309-949-2516).

OFFICE HOURS

Terri's hours (Monday—Friday) 8 am—12 pm
Pastor's hours **(Monday, Pastor's day off)**
(Tuesday) 9 am—12 pm
(Thursday) 9 am—12 pm & 1 pm—4 pm
(Wednesday & Friday) please call ahead.

LIVE STREAMED SERVICES are available on St. John's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/> and posted on Monday on the church website: www.stjohnsgeneseo.org found under the 'Sermon' tab and

ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY

Sunday school—10 Adult Bible Class—8 Worship—28

OFFERING

Offering last week	\$5,802.00
Weekly Budget needed	\$3,967.56

THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

Today	8:45 am	SS/Adult w/Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship/Communion
	11:00 am	Quarterly Voter's Assembly
Tuesday	1:00 pm	LWML
	6:30 pm	Council meeting
Wednesday	5:00 pm	Confirmation
Next Sunday	8:45 am	SS/Adult w/Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship

One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and seek him in his temple.
Psalm 27:4

1 CORINTHIANS 9:25 -- "Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable." Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit – for the desires of the flesh are at war with the desires of the Spirit. Having received the new life in Christ by his grace, he now calls us to follow him deliberately, with self-control, with intention.

PLEASE CHECK the attendance sheet for you and your family members, marking each one attending the worship service and taking communion when being served. Thank you for your help.

QUARTERLY VOTER'S ASSEMBLY is **TODAY**. This meeting will begin promptly after the worship service. Your voice is needed. Please plan to attend.

LWML—Weather permitting, we will meet this Tuesday at 1 pm. We will spend time in God's Word, enjoy wonderful fellowship and conduct a short meeting. *ALL ladies of the congregation are invited to attend.*

NEW FLOWER CHART has been put up. Please help with donating flowers for a Sunday. The cost is \$20. You will find yellow envelopes on the flower chart to be used for your donation. Please list the special event and date you wish to give flowers. Also, sign the flower chart next to the appropriate Sunday. The flowers will be ordered and picked up for you.

CAMP CILICA—It is time to think about summer camping. Information of

summer camps is on the bulletin board between the mailboxes. Early Bird Discount registration is going on now until March 31. **DON'T MISS OUT!**

PRAYER MINISTRY

Remember God's love and will for children and families:

MISSION—*Pray for orphanages around the world*, that they might receive proper funding, food, resources and godly caregivers so that they can provide the best care possible to the children entrusted to them.

ST. JOHN'S—Mrs. Carmen Sette—We offer before You our common request for the well-being of Your church throughout the world that it may be so guided and governed by Your good Spirit that all who profess themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Specifically, we pray for Steve and Carmen and ask your blessing on them.

ST. JOHN'S FAMILY—O Lord, You are the great Physician of soul and body. We pray that You would show mercy to Your servants:

Drew Schillinger	Jim Rahn	Carolyn Wildermuth
Arlyn Helke	Lois Esterlein	Lynne Johnson
Derek Helke	Lillian Hock	Jim Dahl
Carolyn Werner	Betty Firch	John Erdman
Paula Chapa	Fred Magerkurth	Linda Aper
Andrew Hill, Sarah, John, Daniel (2019/2020 Seminary Student)		
Don Eggers (son of a friend of Marilyn Woods)		
Mike Miller (friend of Bob & Sherry Wechsler)		
Jodi Martins (daughter of Gary & Darla Johns)		
Jon & Anita Clausing (missionaries in Kenya)		
Marilyn Potts (wife of Cal Potts, former St John Laborer For Christ)		
Pam Bennett (friend of Dan/Roselyn Maeltzer)		
Karen Wright (wife of Pastor Gary Wright)		
Virginia Miller (mother of Jamie Werling)		
Kelly Wechsler (cousin of Bob Wechsler)		
Kathleen VanDeRostyne (friend of Bob & Sherry Wechsler)		
Joseph Baamonde (Friend of Paula Mooney)		
Clinton Kane Family (son of Sandy Kane)		
Jim Neumann (father-in-law of Brad Gehn's son)		
Harley Hepner (cousin of Sarah Hock)		
Delores Gonion (mother of Michele Barry)		
Glenn McAdam (friend of Bob & Sherry Wechsler)		
Justin Fowler (son of Kathy & Kurt Gehn)		
Lonnie Anderson (employee of Brad Gehn)		
Laurie Sanford (sister of Jan Dahl)		
Carol Leaneagh (sister of Jan Dahl)		

MILITARY—We pray for those serving in our military and their families:
Mandy & Richard Davila (daughter & son-in-law of Dale & Linda Aper)
Luke & Nicole Thompson (son & daughter-in-law of John & Kindra Thompson)
Ken Willeford (husband of Alicia Willeford)

Tyler Hynes (nephew of Mark Ague)
Karl Flynn (son of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Flynn)
Zachary & Tiffany Gardner (nephew & wife of Bob & Lois Esterlein)
Casey Powers Jr. (step son of Lisa Powers)

LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

“If your boyfriend or girlfriend won’t go to church with you while you are dating, he or she probably won’t when you’re married either. How long can you keep your faith life going if your spouse thinks praying, Bible reading, and churchgoing are stupid wastes of time? Abraham went to great lengths to find a believing wife for Isaac.” *Pastor Mark Jeske, Time of Grace – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRY—90 years ago, October 1930, the course of Christian broadcast history was changed when Dr. Walter A. Maier stepped behind the microphone to launch The Lutheran Hour®. Families gathered in their living rooms each week to hear the hopeful message of the Gospel provided by the radio broadcast. You are invited to join us to learn from Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, Speaker of the Lutheran Hour®, in a virtual presentation how we are using new technologies to share the same message of hope to all, especially in these difficult times. Come to the Central Illinois LLL District Convention on Saturday, March 6 at St. John Lutheran Church, 901 W Jefferson Ave. in Effingham.

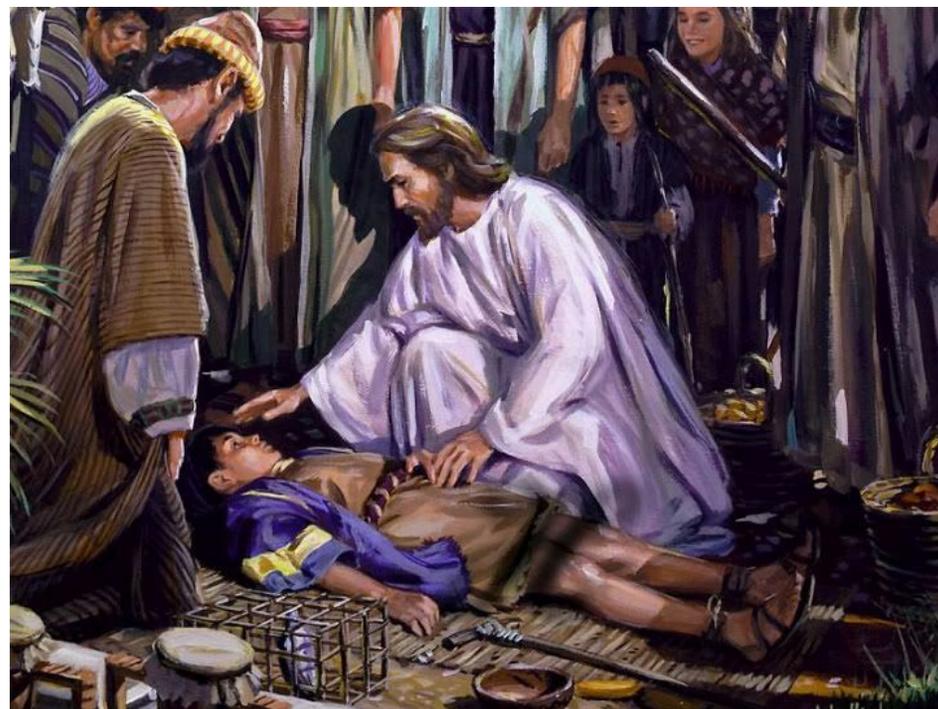
Registration is \$15 per person, with students and children free. Included in your registration cost is a catered lunch and refreshments. You will also learn more about LHM’s Households of Faith resources and materials along with updates from CID LCMS and LWML representatives and Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty.

Register today – check the church office for a registration information or contact Deloris Blessman, by phone (309)361-1461 or by email delorisblessman@yahoo.com. For more information you can contact <church ambassador/CID LLL VP Dale Wetherall by phone 217-259-4728 or by email dalewet51@gmail.com. > Registration is due by February 25, 2021.

*Jesus, grant that balm and healing
In Your holy wounds I find,
Ev’ry hour that I am feeling
Pains of body and of mind.
Should some evil thought within
Tempt my treach’rous heart to sin,
Show the peril, and from sinning
Keep me from its first beginning.*

*Ev’ry wound that pains or grieves me
By Your wounds, Lord, is made whole;
When I’m faint, Your cross revives me,
Granting new life to my soul.
Yes, Your comfort renders sweet
Ev’ry bitter cup I meet;
For Your all atoning passion
Has procured my soul’s salvation.*

LSB #421 vs. 1 & 4



The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany
February 7, 2021

Sermon Text: Mark 1:29-39 (Gospel)

Other Texts: Isaiah 40:21-31 (Old Testament Reading); 1 Corinthians 9:16-27 (Epistle)

“True Healing”

The Father’s grace, mercy, and peace, fully manifested in His Son Christ Jesus, be yours through the Holy Spirit’s gift of faith.

Today’s Gospel reading comes right off the heels of last week’s.ⁱ Jesus, along with Peter, Andrew, James, and John, after leaving the synagogue where Jesus had just taught and cast a demon out of a man, now go to Peter’s house for the Sabbath meal that was customary at the time. But no festive meal awaited them because Peter’s mother-in-law was exceptionally ill, running a high fever, dangerous to anyone, all the more so for an elderly woman. Finding this out, they immediately let Jesus know the situation, no doubt hoping that He would help her as He has already helped others. And they were *not* disappointed.

Finding the fever-ravaged woman lying down, perhaps on what might become her deathbed, Jesus reaches out, taking her hand in His, lifts her up, and the fever leaves her. And being immediately and fully healed, she does what she can to express her love and thanksgiving, helping to serve Jesus and His disciples that Sabbath meal after all. Surely this dear woman is an example to us all, that after we have received the divine healing of our souls, we too should immediately use our body with all its members as slaves of righteousness,ⁱⁱ serving our Lord by serving others in love, especially our fellow believers, though not limited to them.

This text should draw us into the profound, yet so beautiful mystery of the incarnation of our Lord. For to heal this feverish woman instantaneously and completely reveals the divinity that is present in the flesh of Jesus. Yet, His humanity is not unimportant, a mere afterthought. For even as He rebukes the fever with His words spoken by His mouth as St. Luke records, so also in great tenderness He reaches out to the sick woman, touching her, *His flesh becoming the means of bringing His divine healing unto her*. This must not be passed over lightly!

For while only God can bring the healing of body and soul that we need, it is not by the bare divinity that such occurs, as that would destroy us. Truly, it is God in His bare divinity that has unleashed these many sufferings upon us, illnesses of the body, of the mind, of the soul even unto demonic possession, all as righteous judgments upon our sins. But in the divinity veiled in Christ Jesus, the one Mediator between God and menⁱⁱⁱ, we find God’s grace, mercy, and tenderheartedness towards us. God *enfleshed* looks upon our suffering and is filled with compassion for us, saying “Enough!” Yet, not by mere word, for justice must be fulfilled. But instead touching us by taking on our human nature so that He can receive into Himself our diseases and infirmities, yes, our very sins for which they are but the symptoms of and temporal judgments. Taking our sins to that He, God *enfleshed*, may die upon the cross and pay for them.

And so it is that the flesh of Jesus is the bread of life which gives life to the world, His flesh hung upon the cross as His lifeblood flows from the wounds that cover His body. *There* is God’s healing to you and to me, dear Christians. And He still reaches out in tenderness, touching us as

His body and blood is placed upon our lips to eat and to drink to give to us true healing, the forgiveness of sins.

That evening, after the sun went down, huge crowds from all over Capernaum gathered, bringing to Jesus those suffering from various natural illnesses and demonic possession. They waited until evening so that the Sabbath would be over, for according to the Jewish reckoning a new day began at sundown, hearkening back to the creation as recorded in Genesis, “There was evening and there was morning” and so a day.^{iv} And so, having been instructed by Pharisaical legalism, the people feared they would break the Third Commandment if they physically worked to bring people to be healed, even fearing that healing itself would be breaking the Sabbath Law.

Of course such was a wrong understanding of the Sabbath and Jesus would have numerous controversies and conflicts with the Pharisees over this very issue (as well as others). But recognizing that the people were like sheep without a shepherd, He has pure compassion on them and so, despite their wrong understanding, He heals all those who were brought to Him. And so our dear Lord gave to them and to us today a picture of His victory over sin and Satan, for, as stated before, diseases are part of God’s curse upon us because of the Fall into sin, even as is the world being under Satan’s tyranny. And so these healings not only declare His divinity (which they certainly do!) but they are prophetic, anticipating the final consummation when Christ Jesus returns in glory and ushers in the new creation, casting Satan and his demons into the lake of fire and sulfur, and all diseases are ended as death itself is thrown into the flames.^v

All of this is wonderful and the people loved it. So much that they were hoping Jesus would stay, already looking for Him the next morning no doubt as more people were hoping to bring their ill loved ones. But, no doubt rather surprisingly, Jesus did not plan on staying there. After time in intense prayer, likely seeking guidance from His heavenly Father, He says to Simon Peter and the others, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.”^{vi}

Here are the words that disappoint people then and now, as Jesus makes it clear that, while they were a part of His ministry, His miracles were only a part and, honestly, *the less important* part. For while the miracles were wonderful, bringing relief from immediate earthly suffering, they could not bring the true healing that mankind needed, but could only hint at it.

For those who were sick would get ill again later. Those who were demon possessed could be repossessed, as Jesus Himself warned on a different occasion,

“When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.”^{vii}

Even the dead who had been raised, Jairus’s daughter, the Widow of Nain’s son, Lazarus, they still died again.^{viii} To praise God for, even to pray for, a miracle is right, but to make such our focus will condemn us. For these ailments of body and mind, these demonic assaults upon our

souls, such are God's judgment upon sin and so are preludes to the horrific punishments that await sinners in eternity. While the miracles point to the great restoration in heaven's glory, they do not actually provide it. That requires hearing the Gospel in faith, which then requires the preaching and teaching of the Gospel by which faith comes.^{ix} And so it is that from the first time God spoke the promise of a coming Savior to Adam and Eve even unto today and until the Savior's return that the ministry of the Word is what is central.

Yet, do we not too easily fall into the same trap of those early Jews who witnessed Jesus's miracles? Do we not too readily think of God in terms of what He can do for us, fixing our problems, bringing healing to us, whether that be our bodies, our minds, our relationships, or our finances?

Is this tendency in us not proven when we are slow to pray except in times of trouble? Is it not revealed when our prayers are answered with "Yes" and a quick thank you is all we offer before getting back to our daily life? Is it not revealed when our prayers are answered with a "Yes" but when the next problem comes along we feel as if we're all alone once again, as if God's deserted us, so quickly forgetting His help in the past? Is it not revealed when our prayers are answered with "No" and so then we think prayer is useless because God wasn't the genie in the bottle we expected Him to be? Is it not revealed when our prayers are answered with "Wait" but we are so impatient that we just assume it's a "No" and so our prayers just sputter to a stop?

Such is the problem when God is viewed as nothing more than the "Heavenly Handyman" to fix our problems here on earth. A handyman who is to perform to our specifications and, if He falls short, is apparently not worthy of our praise, our love, our obedience. One cannot help but wonder if such an attitude is, at least at times, why our prayers are not answered the way we desire. For we are not really praying to the true God, our heavenly Father at such times, but are really praying to an idol concocted by our own selfish desires!

Dear Christians, don't reduce God to a fixer of your earthly problems. Why? First, because to treat Him as such, as said, is idolatry, a sin of great offense indeed which will only bring even more punishments in time and in eternity. But also because to do such is to miss out on the true and full healing that the risen Christ purchased and freely gives. The spiritual healing of our soul by cleansing us of the disease of sin and removing Satan's rule, the spiritual healing that gives the full healing of the soul, when all sin and evil is finally removed, as well as that full healing of the body in the resurrection of glory that goes as beyond all of our prayers for healing that we offer now. Truly, goes beyond them as heaven is higher than the earth!

Friends in Christ, do not view hearing the Word and receiving the Lord's Supper as a letdown! Instead, see them as the means that brings the greatest, most miraculous healing that could ever be received, *for that is what they are*. For through them the Holy Spirit brings to you all that Christ Jesus has won for you: the true healing of your soul by the forgiveness of your sins and, consequently, all the miracles of heaven that your heavenly Father has in store for you!

May we always gladly hear the Word with faith and so with great hope and joy. Amen!

ⁱ Mark 1:21-28.

ⁱⁱ Romans 6:19.

ⁱⁱⁱ 1 Timothy 2:5.

^{iv} E.g. Genesis 1:5.

^v Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10, 14.

^{vi} Mark 1:38. All quotes are from *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

^{vii} Matthew 12:43-45.

^{viii} Mark 5:21-43; Luke 7:11-17; John 11:1-44 respectively.

^{ix} Romans 10:17.