

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Let us come together to worship the Messiah, our God and King!

We come to worship the Savior of the world. We come to worship the Messiah.

Jesus promised to be wherever two or more are gathered. Christ is with us now.

God calls us to turn back his love and mercy for us.

We turn to God, our merciful Redeemer. We are thankful for Jesus, Emmanuel, who comes to change the world.

Let us worship together as we meet with Jesus in this place. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Almighty God, you know us inside and out. You are always with us and you never leave us or forsake us. We cannot escape your love. You formed us and you know us before we were born. You watch over us and always hear our prayers. We come before you now wanting to hear your voice. Forgive us for the times we have turned away from you and bring us closer to your Spirit once again. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

God of Love, **We confess that we have turned away from you. We have trouble trusting your promises for us. We let worry and fear overwhelm us. We do not always treat our neighbors with the love that you call us to give. For the sake of your Son, have mercy on us. Forgive us for our shortcomings, refresh us in this new year, and lead us in the way of Christ, so that we may glorify your holy name in all that we say and do. Amen.**

God so loved the world that he sent, Christ to save us and redeem our sinful ways.

As a minister of the church of Christ, I declare to you that through Christ, God forgives you all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

God loves us beyond all understanding. Come back to God's loving arms, with joyful hearts, ready to accept God's gift of grace. **Amen.**

GREETING

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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together.... **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.

- ²¹Have 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?
- ²²It is he 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;
- ²³who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.
- ²⁴Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.
- ²⁵To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One.
- ²⁶Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these?
He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name;
because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing.
- ²⁷Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel,
“My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God”?
- ²⁸Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.
- ²⁹He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.
- ³⁰Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;
- ³¹but 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.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 147:1-11, 20c

- ¹Hallelujah! How good it is to sing praises | to our God!
How pleasant it is to honor | God with praise!
- ²**The LORD re- | builds Jerusalem, / and gathers the ex- | iles of Israel.**
- ³The LORD heals the | brokenhearted / and binds | up their wounds.
- ⁴**The LORD counts the number | of the stars / and calls them all | by their names.**
- ⁵Great is our LORD and might- | y in power; / there is no limit | to God’s wisdom.
- ⁶**The LORD lifts | up the lowly, / but casts the wicked | to the ground.**
- ⁷Sing to the LORD | with thanksgiving; / make music upon the harp | to our God,
- ⁸**who covers the heav- | ens with clouds
and prepares rain for the earth, making grass to grow up- | on the mountains.**
- ⁹God provides food | for the cattle / and for the young ravens | when they cry.
- ¹⁰**God is not impressed by the might | of a horse,
and has no pleasure in the speed | of a runner,**
- ¹¹but finds pleasure in those who | fear the LORD,
in those who await God’s steadfast love. ^{20c} | 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.

¹⁶If 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! ¹⁷For 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. ¹⁸What 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.

¹⁹For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. ²⁰To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. 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. ²¹To 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. ²²To 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. ²³I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL: Mark 1:29-39

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.

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

³²That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. ³³And the whole city was gathered around the door. ³⁴And 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.

³⁵In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. ³⁶And Simon and his companions hunted for him. ³⁷When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." ³⁸He 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." ³⁹And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

Rev. Althea Albright

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. Almighty God, **You bless us with all that we have. You have blessed our lives forever with the love of your Son and your gift of grace. Empower us to change the lives of others with your Good News. Bless our congregation, this community, and all the offerings we give back to you for your holy work, through Jesus Christ, our Messiah. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Pastor: Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

A brief silence.

Leader: For the church: for ministries of healing and wholeness, for hospital, hospice, and military chaplains, for those serving in prison ministry, for all who proclaim freedom and release in the name of Christ, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Leader: For creation: for insects in the grass, clouds on the mountaintops, for cattle and the rainwater they drink, for the humility to take our place among all creatures of the earth, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Leader: For the nations: for all who lead in cities and towns, states and countries; for community organizers, school officials, and CEOs; for international health organizations, that in times of trial, fear, or hopelessness, they find freedom in service to those most in need, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Pastor: For all wearied by life's burdens: for those who are poor, for those lacking supportive relationships, for those crushed by debt, for those struggling with chronic pain or other sickness, for those exhausted from overwork or stress, and for all who cry out to you (*especially*), let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Leader: For this congregation: for outreach and social ministries centered here (*especially*); for parish nurses and visitors; for ministries of companionship and support, for the young people in this place who open us to new understandings, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Leader: In thanksgiving for the faithful departed, who were called by name and now rest from their labors, that their lives serve as witnesses to the goodness of God, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

Pastor: Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.

SENDING PRAYER

Let us pray. Dear God, in this time of holy worship you have refreshed us. Guide our lives with your holy Word. Bring joy back into our journey with you. Send us forth now as witnesses of the Good News of your birth, that we also may be light for the world, in the name of Jesus, the Messiah. **Amen.**

BLESSING

May God bless you and keep you. Know that God is always by your side.

May Jesus' love guide and inspire you in all you do. May the Holy Spirit shine in you and bring others closer to God's love and ✠ give you joy! **Amen**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace and serve our Messiah with love for others! **Thanks be to God!**