

Epiphany 2, January 17, 2021, Order of Worship

Greeting In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Call to Worship, Psalm 139:1-5, 7-16, 23-24 O Lord, **you have searched me and known me.** You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down, and **are acquainted with all my ways.** **Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely.** You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me (this is not an obstruction or a holding back; rather, it's God's protection). . . . **Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol (the pit, a place where Jews had believed God didn't/couldn't go), you are there. If I take the wings of the morning (the east) and settle at the farthest limits of the sea (the Mediterranean), even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you. For it was you who formed my inmost parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed. . . . Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.** [A Christmas cartoon that I couldn't use then but that fits here shows a little boy writing a letter: "Dear Santa, before I try to explain myself, how much do you already know?"]

Confession and Forgiveness for the season of Epiphany

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, whose voice is upon the waters, whose mercy is poured out upon all people, whose goodness cascades over all creation. **Amen.** Let us confess our sin, trusting in the abundant grace of God. Holy God, **you search us and know us. You are acquainted with all our ways** (Psalm 139:1a, 3b). **We confess that our hearts are burdened by sin—our own sins and the broken systems that bind us. We turn inward, failing to follow your outward way of love. We distrust those who are not like us. We exploit the earth and its resources and fail to consider generations to come. Forgive us, gracious God, for all we have done and left undone. Even before the words are on our tongues, you know them** (Psalm 139:4); **receive them in your divine mercy. Amen.**

How vast is God's grace! Through the power and promise of Christ Jesus, our sins are washed away and we are claimed as God's own beloved. Indeed, we are forgiven. In the wake of God's forgiveness, we are called to be the beloved community living out Christ's justice and the Spirit's reconciling peace. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn

O Zion, Haste (public domain)

LBW 397, ELW 668

***O Zion, haste, your mission high fulfilling, to tell to all the world that God is light;
That he who made all nations is not willing one soul should perish, lost in shades of night.***

Refrain *Publish glad tidings, tidings of peace, tidings of Jesus, redemption, and release.*

***Publish to every people, tongue, and nation that God, in whom they live and move, is love.
Tell how he stooped to save his lost creation and died on earth that we might live above. Ref.***

The Kyrie In peace, let us pray to the Lord. For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. 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. For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord. For all these things we pray: Lord, have mercy. Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer of the Day Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, most merciful redeemer, for the countless blessings and benefits you give. May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day praising you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

A reading from 1st Samuel 3:1-10 At a time when visions are rare and unexpected, the Lord comes to Samuel (who had been dedicated to God's service before his conception) and calls him to speak the divine word. Though just a boy, Samuel responds to God obediently, as Eli the priest has taught him to respond. (*Sundays & Seasons*, 2020, p. 78).

The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions. One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down. Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening. Word of God, word of life.

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Alleluia *Alleluia! Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia!*

The holy Gospel according to John, the 1st chapter (1:43-51), Sermon (page 6)

Hymn of the Day *The Son of God, Our Christ* (text CCLI 706169) LBW 434
Sing to Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart

*The Son of God, our Christ, the Word, the Way,
shared human life and toiled throughout the day.
From common folk he called the twelve to be
Co-workers in his sacred ministry.*

*Today, as then, Christ summons us to dare
To follow boldly and his work to share,
To help and heal the sick, the blind, the lame,
Declaring to the world his holy name.*

*In city street, in town, or on the soil,
May each serve Christ in faithful daily toil,
And in each thought and kindly word and deed,
Obey Christ's call and go where he shall lead.*

The Apostle's 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.

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Prayers (from *Sundays and Seasons*, 2020, p. 78)

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

We pray for the body of Christ, your holy Christian Church, distanced yet gathered throughout the world; and for all servants of the gospel, that in our daily living we may we follow Jesus. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the well-being of creation, for plants and animals, and for all that God has marvelously made. May we serve as wise stewards of the Earth, our home. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for police officers and firefighters, for attorneys and paralegals, for peacekeepers and military personnel, and for the leaders of all governments, that they provide protection to all people, especially the most vulnerable. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the sick and those who provide medical care. As the pandemic continues to rage, turn the hearts of all people to a willingness to work for protection of others and themselves. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of justice, we pray for the imprisoned and those who show them mercy; for the lonely and those who provide companionship; for all who suffer in any way. Shower your compassion on all who are in any kind of need. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of all wisdom and righteousness, our nation is broken and divided. May truth be spoken by all leaders, and may the hearts and minds of all who have accepted lies as truth be opened. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for the faithful departed who now rest from their labors. May their witness give us a vision of the gospel in action. Bestow your comfort on all who grieve for lost ones. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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, who taught us to pray, saying **Our Father . . .**

Closing Hymn

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise (public domain)

LBW 90

***Songs of thankfulness and praise, Jesus, Lord, to thee we raise;
Manifested by the star to the sages from afar,
Branch of royal David's stem in thy birth at Bethlehem:
Anthems be to thee addressed, God in flesh made manifest.***

***Manifest in making whole palsied limbs and fainting soul;
Manifest in valiant fight, quelling all the devil's might;
Manifest in gracious will, ever bringing good from ill:
Anthems be to thee addressed, God in flesh made manifest.***

***Grant us grace to see thee, Lord, present in thy holy Word;
Grace to imitate thee now and be pure, as pure art thou;
That we might become like thee at thy great epiphany,
And may praise thee, ever blessed, God in flesh made manifest.***

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and provide us with your continual help, that in all our works, begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name and finally, by your mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction: May God the creator strengthen you; may Jesus the beloved fill you; and may the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, keep you in perfect peace. **Amen.**