

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN "BLUE" CHURCH

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Fourth Sunday after Epiphany ✠ January 31, 2021

PRELUDE – "O GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST" – JOHN BARR

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

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.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination

Holy God,
you search us and know us. You are acquainted with all our ways. 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; 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.**

HYMN #521 *O DAY OF REST AND GLADNESS*

GREETING

The boundless grace of our LORD Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God, and the light of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray...Compassionate God, you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Bring wholeness to all that is broken and speak truth to us in our confusion, that all creation will see and know your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and LORD. **Amen.**

FIRST LESSON

DEUTERONOMY 18:15-20

PSALM 111

¹Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.

²**Great are your works, O LORD, pondered by all who delight in them.**

³Majesty and splendor mark your deeds, and your righteousness endures forever.

⁴**You cause your wonders to be remembered; you are gracious and full of compassion.**

⁵You give food to those who fear you, remembering forever your covenant.

⁶**You have shown your people the power of your works in giving them the lands of the nations.**

⁷The works of your hands are faithfulness and justice; all of your precepts are sure.

⁸**They stand fast forever and ever, because they are done in truth and equity.**

⁹You sent redemption to your people and commanded your covenant forever; holy and awesome is your name.

¹⁰**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who practice this have a good understanding. God's praise endures forever.**

SECOND LESSON

1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-13

The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 1st Chapter.
Glory to you, O Lord.

THE HOLY GOSPEL: MARK 1:21-28

The Gospel of the LORD.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN #311 *HAIL TO THE LORD'S ANOINTED*

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.**

THE PRAYERS

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER *The pastor offers the prayer.*

LORD'S PRAYER

**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**

HOLY COMMUNION

BLESSING

The Body and Blood of our LORD Jesus Christ strengthen you and
keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER

A: Let us pray...Christ Jesus, at this table we have feasted on your
very life and are strengthened for our journey. Send us forth from this
banquet nourished in body and in spirit to proclaim your good news
and serve others in your name. **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved fill you; and the
Holy Spirit the comforter ✕ keep you in peace. **Amen.**

HYMN #655 *SON OF GOD, ETERNAL SAVIOR*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE – “PRAISING THE ALMIGHTY” – EDWARD BROUGHTON

✕ ✕ ✕

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permission.

WELCOME TO ALL IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!

We especially welcome those who are visiting. We invite you to sign our guest
register in the narthex. Blank envelopes in the pews are for visitors.
*“God’s purpose for St. Paul’s Lutheran Blue” Church is to spread the Good
News of Christ’s love for all people in the Southern Lehigh community and
beyond.* –Blue Church Mission Statement, adopted 2012

THIS DAY IN THE CHURCH YEAR: EPIPHANY 4

*In Deuteronomy God promises to raise up a prophet like Moses, who
will speak for God; in Psalm 111 God shows the people the power of
God’s work. For the church these are ways of pointing to the unique
authority people sensed in Jesus’ actions and words. We encounter
that authority in God’s word, around which we gather, the word that
trumps any lesser spirit that would claim power over us, freeing us to
follow Jesus.*

ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE READINGS.....

DEUTERONOMY 18:15-20: *Today’s reading is part of a longer
discourse in Deuteronomy, an updating of the law for the Israelite
community as the people wait to enter the promise land. Here Moses
assures the people that God will continue to guide them through
prophets who will proclaim the divine word.*

1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-13: *Paul is concerned about how some Corinthian Christians use their freedom in Christ as license to engage in non-Christian behavior that sets a damaging example to other, impressionable, believers. Christians have a responsibility to each other that their behavior does not cause a sister or brother to sin.*

MARK 1:21-28: *The story has barely begun, and already the battle is joined. Jesus sides with humanity against every force that would bring death and disease. These forces recognize Jesus and know what his power means for them. This, however, is only the first fight. The war will go on much longer.*

THE CHARTS TO SPONSOR ALTAR FLOWERS, BULLETINS, SANTUARY CANDLE AND WINE FOR 2021 ARE NOW ON THE BULLETIN BOARDS IN THE NARTHEX. Please check the appropriate charts.

BLUE CHURCH PRAYS FOR... Bill Exner, Lillian Frey, Ann Greensweig, Shirley Hildebrand, Walt Lehr, Jerry Smith, Hattie Smith, Bob Storat, Sue Storat, Dean Stover

Other concerns: Kevin Jones, deployment; Todd and Dottie.
Note: This is a short-term list, for those who are in "acute care" situations—hospitalized or in recovery, dying, facing the recent death of a loved one, or presently facing a severe life crisis. The names of those for whom we pray will be kept on the list for one month. If you wish to have them placed back on the list please contact the church office.

WEEKLY GIFTS, PRESENTED TO THE GLORY OF GOD...
ALTAR FLOWERS... by Anne Nichols in honor of Jeff Nichols Birthday.
COMMUNION BREAD... by Warren and Lois Adams.

LEADING OUR WORSHIP

CELEBRANT	The Rev. James Hammond
ORGANIST	Dr. Jennifer Dodd
ASSISTING MINISTER	Dick Storat
LECTOR	Dick Storat
GREETER	Maggie Fried
CHURCH COUNCIL REP	Greg Storat

LOOKING AHEAD

MONDAY, FEB. 1 – 7 – 8 PM – Girl Scouts Mtg.
SUNDAY, FEB. 7 – 10:30 AM Worship/Scout Sunday.
MONDAY, FEB. 8 – 7 PM Church Council Meeting.

PRAYER OF THE DAY... Jesus is the Lord through whom I live. (1st Corinthians 8:6)

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK... God our redeemer, you have shown your graciousness to all who look upon Jesus Christ. Strengthen us in our struggle with the powers of evil that we may be light for the world. Amen.

THE ANNUAL COAT DRIVE - Blue Church is collecting gently used coats for the winter season to help those who can use them. You can bring in coats and drop them in the bin in the narthex. Many thanks to all those who have already donated coats.

BLUE CHURCH NOTES **IN-PERSON WORSHIP**

- Masks must be worn at all times properly covering one's nose and mouth.
- There will be no formal collection of offering or passing of the peace. Receptacles will be provided in the narthex area for worshippers to deposit their offering envelopes (which may also be mailed in to the church office).
- In order to provide a sanitary and safe Holy Communion experience we are using pre-filled Communion chalices.
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PLEASE NOTE – *If you would like to help defray the extra expense of the Communion cups you can use your Communion envelope in your box of offering envelopes or a plain envelope marked "Communion" with your name.*

WE ARE STILL COLLECTING DETERGENT DONATIONS FOR BETTY LOU'S FOOD PANTRY. They can be left at the side entrance to the church (red door) and someone will put them inside. Thanks again for being so generous with all your donations and volunteering to help those in need in our community!

Stewardship Snippets

January 31, 2021 (Fourth Sunday after Epiphany)
"But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak."– 1 Corinthians 8:9

Christians enjoy great freedom, but we are also responsible to and for one another. Just as new runners start out gently, so new Christ followers may need our careful and loving guidance as we all train in the faith.

LESSONS

Deuteronomy 18:15-20 – 1 Lesson

15 The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet* like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet.* 16 This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: 'If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die.' 17 Then the LORD replied to me: 'They are right in what they have said. 18 I will raise up for them a prophet* like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet,* who shall speak to them everything that I command. 19 Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet* shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. 20 But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word

1 Corinthians 8:1-13 – 2nd Lesson

8 Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that 'all of us possess knowledge.' Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. 2 Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; 3 but anyone who loves God is known by him.

4 Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that 'no idol in the world really exists', and that 'there is no God but one.' 5 Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords— 6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

7 It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. 8 'Food will not bring us close to God.'* We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. 9 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling-block to the weak. 10 For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? 11 So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed.* 12 But when you thus sin against members of your family,* and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling,* I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them* to fall.

Mark 1:21-28 - Gospel

21 They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²²They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴and he cried out, 'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.' ²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him!' ²⁶And the unclean spirit, throwing him into convulsions and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, 'What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He* commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.' ²⁸At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

St. Paul's Lutheran "Blue" Church
Prayers ✠ The Fourth Sunday after Epiphany ✠
January 31, 2021

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

“Have mercy, O God.”

A brief silence

A: For all who share the gospel and proclaim freedom in Christ throughout the world: prophets, teachers, pastors, deacons, and lay leaders; for the church and its ministries, let us pray.

“Have mercy, O God.”

A brief silence

A: For skies and seas, for birds and fish, for favorable weather and clean water, and for the well-being of creation, that God raise up advocates and scientists to guide our care for all the earth, let us pray.

“Have mercy, O God.”

A: For all God's works in creation: plants and animals, water and soil, forests and farms; and for those tasked with protecting our natural resources and all that exists, let us pray.

“Have mercy, O God.”

A: For government and leaders: cities and nations, rescue professionals and legal aid attorneys, elected officials and grassroots organizers; for all responsible for the well-being of civil society, let us pray.

“Have mercy, O God.”

A: For those who suffer in mind, body, or spirit: those who are sick and hospitalized, those living with HIV/AIDS, or those struggling with mental illness, those who are hungry or homeless, and all in need; for caregivers, hospice workers, and home health aides. Today we pray especially for: Clifford, Bill, Lillian, Ann, Shirley, Walt, Jerry, Hattie, Bob, Sue, Dean, Kevin, Todd, Dottie, and everyone who has asked for our prayers or known only to the Lord. Let us pray.

“Have mercy, O God.”

A: For the concerns of Blue Church: those who travel, those absent from worship, those celebrating birthdays or anniversaries; for the people of God in this place and for other needs in our community, let us pray.

“Have mercy, O God.”

A: For the covenant God made with us in the waters of baptism, in thanksgiving for the baptized who have died in the Lord, 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.