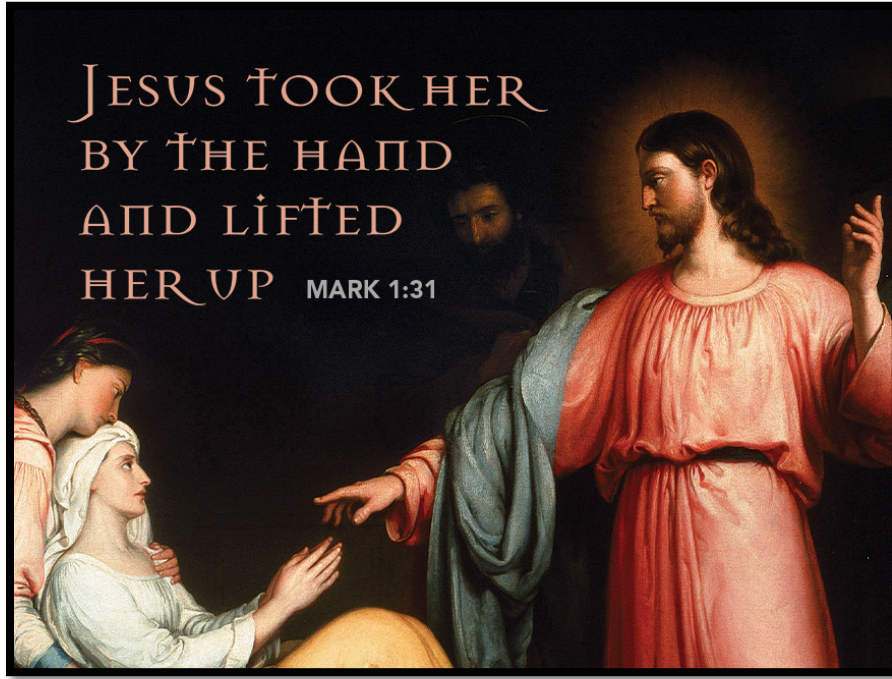


Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

February 7, 2021

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany



Introduction to the Day

In the opening responses taken from the book of Isaiah we affirm the one God who sits above the earth and numbers the stars also strengthens the powerless. So in Jesus' healing work we see the hand of the creator God, lifting up the sick woman to health and service (*diakonia*). Like Simon's mother-in-law, we are lifted up and healed to serve. Following Jesus, we strengthen the powerless; like Jesus, we seek to renew our own strength in quiet times of prayer.

We gather each week to worship and pray on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish Peoples. For thousands of years they have walked the land and paddled the waters of the Salish Sea. We are grateful to the Squamish and the Tsleil-Waututh Nations for their stewardship of these lands and adjoining waters throughout the ages.

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Land Acknowledgement

Opening Responses - Isaiah 40: 28-31

Have not you known?
Have not your heard?
Our God is an everlasting God,
the Creator of all the earth.
God never grow faint or weary,
with wisdom that is unsearchable.

**Those who rest in God shall renew their strength
they shall soar up with wings like eagles,
that shall run and not become weary,
they shall walk and never faint.**

Gathering Hymn: # 886 - O for a Thousand Tongue to Sing verses 1,3, 4 and 5



- 1 Oh, for a thou-sand tongues to sing my great Re-deem-er's praise,
- 2 My gra-cious Mas-ter and my God, as-sist me to pro-claim,
- 3 The name of Je-sus charms our fears and bids our sor-rows cease,
- 4 He speaks, and lis-t'ning to his voice, new life the dead re-ceive;



the glo-ries of my God and king, the tri-umphs of his grace!
to spread through all the earth a-broad the hon-ors of your name.
sings mu-sic in the sin-ner's ears, brings life and health and peace.
the mourn-ful, bro-ken hearts re-joice, the hum-ble poor be-lieve.

- 5 Look unto him, your Savior own,
O fallen human race!
Look and be saved through faith alone,
be justified by grace!
- 6 To God all glory, praise, and love
be now and ever giv'n
by saints below and saints above,
the church in earth and heav'n.

Acclamation

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit is with us all. **Amen.**

Prayer of the Day:

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: 1 Corinthians 9:16-23

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.

Word of God, word of life.

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 rebuilds Jerusalem,
and gathers the exiles 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 mighty 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 heavens with clouds
and prepares rain for the earth, making grass to grow upon 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. Hallelujah!

Gospel: Mark 1:29-39

The holy gospel according to Mark

Glory to you, O Lord.

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. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon: Bishop Sid Haugen, Saskatchewan Synod

The church of four fishermen

The Holy Gospel for the fifth Sunday after Epiphany is from the Gospel According to Mark, the first chapter, beginning at the 29th verse.

And at once on leaving the synagogue, he went with James and John straight to the house of Simon and Andrew. 30 Now Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed and feverish, and at once they told him about her. 31 He went in to her, took her by the hand and helped her up. And the fever left her and she began to serve them. 32 That evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were possessed by devils. 33 The whole town came crowding round the door, 34 and he cured many who were sick with diseases of one kind or another; he also drove out many devils, but he would not allow them to speak, because they knew who he was.

The Gospel of the Lord.

People of God, I’m glad you are gathering together today. It might be again an uncomfortable gathering—gathering in community but separately—sitting at our kitchen tables. Or perhaps gathering in our worship spaces but masked and 6 feet apart. So glad you pushed through the discomfort of these times to gather anyway. Let me center with you today on the Word. The Word that we have

shared as church in good times, in hard times: in times of war, times of peace, times of growth and prosperity, times of uncertainty. I invite you to walk with me today into the Word that holds us. If you are at home today, I'd invite you to open your Bibles to the beginning of the Gospel According to Mark where our text is found this morning. And dwell with me in that so deep, so beautiful Gospel. Mark chapter 1.

Please join with me in prayer:

*May these words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be
acceptable in your sight,
O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.*

First let me begin with a word about the Gospel according to Mark among the Gospels. In the Gospels we love The Good Samaritan story, the prodigal son story. We know them by heart. Both stories are in the Gospel according to Luke. Luke's gospel fires our imagination about a gracious God. In the Gospels, we love Matthew's gospel because in Matthew's Gospel Jesus gives us clear directions. In Matthew, Jesus tells the faith community about prayer, about love, about how to be church—even how to handle conflict step by step. But Mark. . .Mark's gospel is different.

Mark's gospel is often a puzzling narrative filled with unanswered questions. For example, as you make your way into Mark, often Jesus will heal someone and then command them in no uncertain terms to tell no one about it! Why Jesus would reject good advertising! And do you know what? For 2000 years theologians have been wondering why he said that. Various solutions have been suggested. But we still don't know. We are not quite sure what God is up to in the story. Maybe neither was Mark.

Maybe that is why I'm so drawn to this narrative—because in fact, our lives are so much like that aren't they? We are not always sure what God is up to in the events of our lives, of our world either. Maybe that is particularly the case in the last past year as we walk through this pandemic.

I'd invite you to turn to Mark chapter 1. As we begin, remember that the three similar Gospels, referred to collectively as the Synoptic gospels tell broadly a similar story of Jesus. Matthew Mark and Luke all share a simple geographical order. Each gospel speaks at length of Jesus' one-year ministry in Galilee—the north province of Palestine; then tells of his journey to Jerusalem for the last week of his ministry, from Palm Sunday through Good Friday to Easter Day. So each Gospel presents a year in Galilee; then a week in Jerusalem. And each Gospel also includes a Prologue to give the readers a hint of where the story will go.

Turn for a moment to Mark's Prologue. To start with, notice what isn't there: no stable in Bethlehem, that's in Luke; no magi following the star, that's in Matthew. Mark's prologue is really brief. It is just 12 verses long and the first 8 verses are spent introducing John the Baptist. Verse 9 introduces Jesus and it does it like this:

It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John.

That's it. Jesus just arrives a grown man from Nazareth in Galilee. He comes from Nazareth, which is to say, he comes from nowhere of importance as far as people knew—it's Jesus in blue jeans if that image helps you imagine it.

Then as you walk through chapter 1, he meets John the Baptist and is baptized. As the water runs down his body he hears the voice of God affirming that he is God's son and God is pleased with them. Then immediately following his baptism in verse 12, the Spirit drives him into the desert. Notice. . .the Spirit doesn't advise

Jesus to go into the wilderness. The Spirit doesn't simply guide him to the wilderness. The Spirit drives him in the desert where Jesus remains for 40 days and is put to test by the Satan. Why does the Spirit drive Jesus into the wilderness? Mark doesn't say.

Again, if you might be expecting a long conversation with the Satan tempting him to throw himself from the top of temple or turn stones into bread—it's not there. That's in Luke and Matthew. What does he go through in the desert? Mark doesn't say. What does the Satan say? Mark doesn't say. Just that he was driven into the lonely place and was tested for 40 days. Then this

And afterward the angels served him.

The Greek word for served here is *diakoneo*, the word behind our word "deacon." The angels literally ministered to him. They served him so that he could continue the journey.

With the Prologue complete we move into the long Galilean ministry section that continues till chapter 11 when Jesus will enter Jerusalem. Mark says, verse 15, that Jesus went into Galilee and proclaimed this message:

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel.

What does the kingdom of God look like? Many groups in Jesus' time were putting forward a way to the "kingdom of God," to God's new world. The Zealots called for an armed rebellion against the Roman overlords to bring in a new world. They wanted to storm the Capitol! The Essenes called the people to withdraw from the world into a colony and follow the Scripture together and wait for God's Kingdom to break in. The Pharisees and Sadducees each had a plan for meeting the Kingdom of God, for God's new world to break in. What does the kingdom of God Jesus proclaims look like? Mark doesn't say.

But in the Galilean section, right at the outset, the narrative does clarify one thing about how that new world, that kingdom of God Jesus proclaimed was coming. Jesus immediately gathers together a community. The community he gathers is always surprising. It was not the religious leaders of the time, nor was it the most prominent secular leaders.

While Jesus was walking along by the Lake of Galilee, he meets two fishermen: Simon and Simon's brother Andrew. Jesus calls them to follow him. Mark says:

And at once they left their nets and followed him.

It is the same story, just down the lakeshore, were two other fishermen, James and John. Jesus calls them as well and immediately get up and follow Jesus. Why did they find themselves following Jesus? Mark doesn't say. The fishermen don't tell us, either. Only that Jesus called them and they found themselves following after him.

I wonder if they were wondering what the Kingdom of God Jesus was announcing was going to look like, too. What were they being brought into? Were they going to be an army? Or a cloister? Or something else.

Now our Gospel text is located during one day of the life of this Church of Four Fishermen. The sabbath day begins with the church of four fishermen following Jesus into Capernaum where Jesus preaches in a synagogue. Mark says that the people marveled at his words. What did he teach? Mark doesn't say. Then after preaching Jesus meets a person we would describe as sick in body and mind and soul. Jesus heals him.

So from the outset, the little church of four fishermen are beginning to know what this Kingdom of God was going to be about: it would be about gathering and teaching and it was going to be about bringing healing to the broken and rejected.

On leaving the synagogue, Jesus and his church of four fishermen went to the home of Simon's mother-in-law. She was in bed with a fever. The church had said, "Jesus, is there something you can do for Simon's mother-in-law?" Does that sound familiar? The church of Jesus prays for each other. And yes, they didn't just pray, they go on the road with Jesus to where the need is.

Listen to what happens at the house. Mark in so few words tells it beautifully.

Jesus went in to her, took her by the hand, lifted her up, and the fever left her.

It was a ministry of presence. He went to see her. It was a ministry of touch. He "took her by the hand." It was a ministry of healing: he "lifted her up." The little church of four fishermen was learning that this kingdom of God Jesus was proclaiming was not about leading an uprising against the Romans. Nor was it withdrawing from the world. It would be about dwelling deeply in the world. It would be about "drawing near" to people. It would be about "lifting people up." It would be about bringing healing.

Finally, the moment at the house closes so simply—you could almost miss it.

Then she served them.

The Greek word for "serving" here is *diakoneo*—the same word used for how the Angels ministered to Jesus after his 40-day temptation. Simon's mother-in-law got up and did angels' work—she ministered to Jesus and this little church of four fishermen—the church now of four fisherman and one mother-in-law.

The healed had become the healer. Those lifted up became those who lifted up others.

Finally, the day closes for the little church like this. The text reads:

That evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were possessed by devils. The whole town came crowding round the door, and he cured many who were sick with diseases of one kind or another; he also drove out many devils, but he would not allow them to speak, because they knew who he was.

People were gathering around this Jesus. He healed many. . .but just many—not all. Why was that? Why only some? Mark doesn't say. Maybe he doesn't know why either. Neither do we, come to think of it. Finally, Jesus told them not to tell anyone about the healing. Why are they to tell no one? Mark doesn't say.

As the gospel story closes, I believe that the Word, this story, will take its place in your life and speak. It may speak to you today or much later—without comment from me. That is the way of the Word. It will have its way. But I would share one place where the story takes me in this particular time of our lives.

I'm struck today, by the unpredictable journey of the church of four fishermen. I'm so struck by the questions they are obliged to walk with. Why did Jesus tell those healed not to tell anyone? They don't know. Why were only some healed? They don't know. Why did Jesus choose simple down to earth fisherman to lead his church? They don't know that either.

The questions on the journey for people of faith are still here with us, aren't they? What is this pandemic all about? What are we learning from it? What is God doing in the middle of all this? But like the church of four fishermen, we find ourselves following Jesus down the road day by day.

Barbara Brown Taylor in *Gospel Medicine* shares this. She says,

*On Sunday mornings a great division takes place among American people: **some** go to church, and **most** stay home.*

She adds the ones who stay home just see no particular value in the church gathering on Sunday. It looks like an hour a Sunday that would be more efficiently used if you did something constructive: mow the grass, shovel the drive, learn a skill. But for us who gather, she says, we know something else. She continues:

This is how we learn how we fit.

*This is how we locate ourselves between the past and the future;
between our hopes and our fears, between the earth and the stars.*

*This is how we learn who we are and what we are supposed to be doing:
by coming together to sing and to pray, to be silent and to be still,*

***by peering into the darkness together and telling each other what we will see
when we do.***

That's how important this following Jesus is for us. Isn't it!

I leave you the story of the church of four fishermen walking with Jesus. Walking each day learning how to be church. Walking each day with unexpected blessings and, yes, with unanswered questions.

But, I think, if you asked them about what walking with Jesus meant. . .they would say. . .“Everything.”

Everything.

As do we.

Amen.

Hymn of the day: A hymn by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette -

As Simon Was Casting His Net in the Water

ASH GROVE 6.6.11.6.6.11 D to the tune of ELW 881 - "Let All Things Now Living"

As Simon was casting his net in the water,
you called him to leave there the life that he knew.
He changed his priorities, went with his brother,
and started a new life of following you.
Yet when he rose up and left fishing behind him,
he still had a home and a mother-in-law;
Our family relationships that we have woven
are part of our life, Lord, and part of your call.

O Lord, as you went to that house to bring healing,
You showed us the heart of God's purpose and plan.
With love and with care, you brought health — so revealing
That lives are made whole by God's word and command.
In that present moment, you showed us God's future,
Where love is much greater than things that destroy.
May all homes be places where families can treasure
Your gifts of community, healing and joy.

In healing a woman, you put aside boundaries —
For women were often forgotten, unseen.
You reached out to bless her and showed grace and mercy
To one who was sick and considered unclean.
O Lord, she was glad for acceptance and healing!
She rose up to serve when her health was restored.
May we make our homes to be places of welcome
As you have reached out with your welcome, O Lord.

Prayers of Intercession

Trusting in God's power to heal, let us offer our prayers for all who are in need, responding to each petition with words from today's psalm, "We await your steadfast love."

A brief silence.

We pray for the church's many ministries of healing; for hospital, hospice, and military chaplains; for those serving in prisons, camps, and institutions; and for bishops and pastors facing illness of which we are unaware.

A brief silence.

We pray to you, saving God:

We await your steadfast love.

We give thanks for the Lutheran World Federation's Augusta-Victoria-Hospital on the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem and their healing ministry to the Palestinian people living in the West Bank. We give thanks that their staff has been vaccinated against covid-19 and join our prayers in solidarity with theirs - that those living in Gaza and the West Bank not be neglected but receive equal access to the vaccine together with all other low-and middle-income countries.

A brief silence.

We pray to you, provident God:

We await your steadfast love.

We give thanks for activists in so many countries standing up against corruption, greed and violence. We remember the people of Hong Kong, Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia. We give thanks for the prophetic witness of Aleksei Navalny - continue to encourage him as he speaks truth to power. Strengthen his supporters and family, especially his children as they endure the unjust imprisonment of their father. Be with all people who dedicate their lives to creating cultures of peace, justice and healing.

A brief silence.

We pray to you, sovereign God:

We await your steadfast love.

As we commemorate Black History Month, we give thanks for the contributions that Black people have made, and continue to make, in building the country we now call Canada. May we recognize and repent from our own racist attitudes and biases. Help us to listen, learn and foster greater understanding and compassion every day in our interactions with family members, colleagues, friends.

A brief silence.

We pray to you, all-embracing God:

We await your steadfast love.

On this last day of the **Week for Interfaith Harmony**, help us who follow your Son Jesus Christ, draw ever closer towards his humble and hospitable way . . . so that we may also draw closer to our neighbours, that together with them we might share more fully in the peace and harmony that is your will for each one.

A brief silence.

We pray to you, compassionate God:

We await your steadfast love.

We pray for all who are sick and suffering; for those with chronic pain; for those experiencing despair; and for all whom we name here: Tilly, Billy, Pastor Larry, Aud, Estelle and others whom we name in the silence of our hearts _____

that the Spirit of Christ may renew the gift of life within them and bring healing to their mind, body, and spirit.

A brief silence.

We pray to you, consoling God:

We await your steadfast love.

We praise you for the faithful departed and for their lives of service to others; especially your servant *Michael Rogers*, and we pray that despite sickness and death, at our end we join with them to find our wholeness in you.

A brief silence.

We pray to you, eternal God:

We await your steadfast love.

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Thanksgiving for the Word

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Holy God,
Light of the universe, Teacher of truth, Giver of goodness,
we hear your Word in the Scriptures,
proclaiming to us your wisdom
and inviting us to follow your call.

For speaking this Word, we thank you, O God.

We thank you, O God.

Your Word came among us in Jesus, our brother,
who preached your righteousness, healed the sick,
and revived the brokenhearted.

For giving us this Word, we worship you, O God.

We worship you, O God.

By your Spirit bless all who receive this Word,
that upheld by the mystery of the body of Christ,
we may be light for the world,
revealing the brilliance of your Son.

For sustaining us with your Word, we praise you, O God.

We praise you, O God.

Blessed are you, holy God, around us, with us, and in us,
now and forever. Amen.

Amen.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Save us from the time of trial,
 and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours,
 now and forever.
 Amen.

The Blessing

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

Sending Hymn: #807 – Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing



1 Come, thou Fount of ev - 'ry bless-ing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
 2 Here I raise my Eb - en - e - zer: "Hith-er by thy help I've come";
 3 Oh, to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be;



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud-est praise.
 and I hope, by thy good plea-sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.
 let that grace now like a fet - ter bind my wan-d'ring heart to thee.



While the hope of end-less glo - ry fills my heart with joy and love,
 Je - sus sought me when a strang-er, wan-d'ring from the fold of God;
 Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.



teach me ev - er to a - dore thee; may I still thy good-ness prove.
 he, to res - cue me from dan-ger, in - ter - posed his pre-cious blood.
 Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

Dismissal

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



Thank-you to the following people who share their gifts today to make this service happen: Pastor Vida Jaugelis, Sonja Koruga, Al Jaugelis, the Assam Family, Kathleen Stoll, and Jim Berger

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Announcements:

Our Annual General Meeting - AGM has been set for March 7, 2021 and will be held via Zoom. If the Health orders change by then, we will hold the meeting in house with the option of joining via Zoom.

Don't forget to 'like' our page on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GDLCNV to stay up to date on everything that is happening.

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Church Council Chair: Candace Storm

Vice Chair: Ken Parkinson

Church Council Members: Shelley Meglaughlin, Maureen Kerfoot,

Gail Berger, Kathleen Stoll