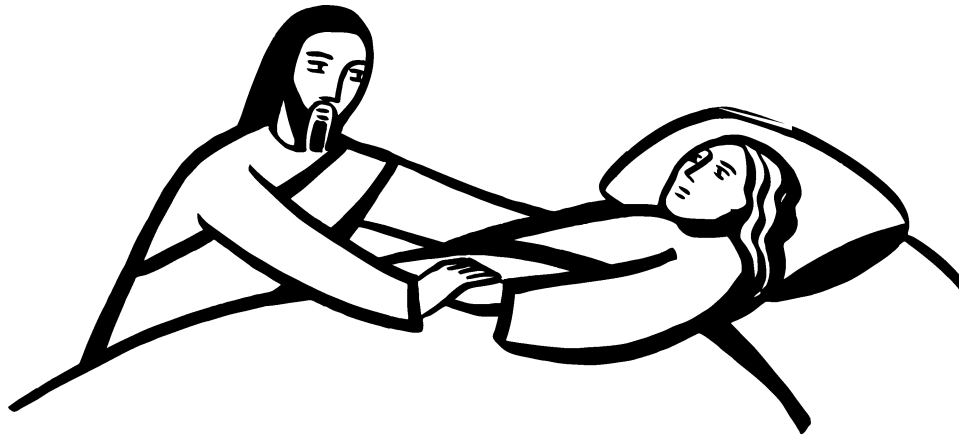


**St John Center Lutheran Church  
East Earl, Pennsylvania**



**February 7, 2021**  
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Rev. Thomas Darr, Pastor 717-320-3642  
Vickie Kissinger, Director of Music, Organist  
**717-445-5505 [office@sjclutheran.org](mailto:office@sjclutheran.org) / website [www.sjclutheran.org](http://www.sjclutheran.org)**

**INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY** In Isaiah 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.

**GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE** "Cantilene" Lani Smith

**C** Please respond to the portions of the service in bold print.

## Gather Us In



1 Here in this place the new light is stream-ing, now is the dark - ness  
 2 We are the young, our lives are a mys - t'ry, we are the old who  
 3 Here we will take the wine and the wa - ter, here we will take the  
 4 Not in the dark of build-ings con - fin - ing, not in some heav - en,



van - ished a - way; see in this space our fears and our dream-ings  
 yearn for your face; we have been sung through - out all of his - t'ry,  
 bread of new birth, here you shall call your sons and your daugh - ters,  
 light years a - way— here in this place the new light is shin - ing,



brought here to you in the light of this day.  
 called to be light to the whole hu - man race.  
 call us a - new to be salt for the earth.  
 now is the king - dom, and now is the day.



Gath - er us in, the lost and for - sak - en, gath - er us in, the  
 Gath - er us in, the rich and the haugh - ty, gath - er us in, the  
 Give us to drink the wine of com - pas - sion, give us to eat the  
 Gath - er us in and hold us for - ev - er, gath - er us in and



blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall a - wak - en,  
 proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so low - ly,  
 bread that is you; nour-ish us well, and teach us to fash - ion  
 make us your own; gath - er us in, all peo - ples to - geth - er,



we shall a - rise at the sound of our name.  
 give us the cour - age to en - ter the song.  
 lives that are ho - ly and hearts that are true.  
 fire . . of love in our flesh and our bone.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: GATHER US IN, Marty Haugen

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## GREETING

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

C And also with you.

P In the beginning was the Word,

C and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

P In the Word was life,

C and the life was the light of all people.

P The Word became flesh and lived among us,

C and we have seen his glory, full of grace and truth.

## SCRIPTURE SONG



☐ Sal-va-tion be-longs to our God and to Christ the Lamb for-ev-er and ev - er.



☐ Great and won-der-ful are your deeds, O God of the u-ni-verse;



just and true are your ways, O Rul - er of all the na-tions.



Who can fail to hon-or you, Lord, and sing the glo-ry of your name?



☐ Sal-va-tion be-longs to our God and to Christ the Lamb for-ev-er and ev - er.



☐ For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One. All



na - tions will draw near and wor - ship be - fore you,



for your just and ho - ly works have been re - vealed.



☐ Sal-va-tion be-longs to our God and to Christ the Lamb for-ev-er and ev - er.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

**P** Let us pray together. **Almighty God, you sent your only Son as the Word of life for our eyes to see and our ears to hear. Help us to believe with joy what the Scriptures proclaim, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

## FIRST LESSON: ISAIAH 40:21-31

A reading from Isaiah, the 40<sup>th</sup> chapter.

<sup>21</sup>Have 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?

<sup>22</sup>It 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;

<sup>23</sup>who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.

<sup>24</sup>Scarcely 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.

<sup>25</sup>To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

<sup>26</sup>Lift 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.

<sup>27</sup>Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel,

“My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God”?

<sup>28</sup>Have 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.

<sup>29</sup>He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.

<sup>30</sup>Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;

<sup>31</sup>but 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.**

## SECOND LESSON: 1 CORINTHIANS 9:16-23

A reading from 1 Corinthians, the ninth chapter.

<sup>16</sup>If 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! <sup>17</sup>For 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. <sup>18</sup>What 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.

<sup>19</sup>For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. <sup>20</sup>To 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. <sup>21</sup>To 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. <sup>22</sup>To 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. <sup>23</sup>I 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 ACCLAMATION

Word of life, Je - sus Christ, all glo - ry to you!

Word of life, Je - sus Christ, all praise to you!

Our hearts burn with - in us while you o - pen to us the Scrip - tures.

Word of life, Je - sus Christ, all glo - ry to you!

Word of life, Je - sus Christ, all praise to you!

## GOSPEL: MARK 1:29-39

The Holy Gospel according to Mark, the first chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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

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

<sup>35</sup>In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. <sup>36</sup>And Simon and his companions hunted for him. <sup>37</sup>When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." <sup>38</sup>He 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." <sup>39</sup>And 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

# HYMN OF THE DAY

WOV 779

## On Eagle's Wings

*Leader or All*

1 You who dwell in the shel-ter of the Lord, who a-bide in this shad-ow for life,  
say to the Lord: "My ref - uge, my rock in whom I trust!"

*Refrain*  
*All*

And he will raise you up on ea-gle's wings, bear you on the breath of dawn,  
make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of his hand.

*Leader or All*

2 The snare of the fowl-er will nev-er cap-ture you, and fam-ine will bring you no  
fear; un-der God's wings your ref-uge, with faith-ful-ness your shield.

*Refrain*

*Leader or All*

3 You need not fear the ter-ror of the night, nor the ar-row that flies by  
day; though thou-sands fall a - bout you, near you it shall not come.

*Refrain*

*Leader or All*

4 For to the an-gels God's giv - en a com-mand to  
guard you in all of your ways; up - on their hands they will  
bear you up, lest you dash your foot a - gainst a stone.

*Final refrain*  
*All*

And he will raise you up on ea-gle's wings, bear you on the breath of dawn,  
make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of his hand.  
And hold you, hold you in the palm of his hand.

Text: Michael Joncas, b. 1957

Music: ON EAGLE'S WINGS, Michael Joncas

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## RESPONSE TO THE WORD

P In Christ, you have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

**C We believe in him and are marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.**

P Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**C 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**

P Build yourselves up on your most holy faith;

**C pray in the Holy Spirit.**

P Keep yourselves in the love of God;

**C look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

P If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:

**C Everything old has passed away;  
behold, everything has become new!**

P God has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

Therefore, let us be reconciled to God and to one another.

P Gracious God,

**C have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown,  
things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you  
in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our  
Lord. Amen**

P The almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, forgiveness and remission of all our sins. **Amen**

## OFFERING MOMENT

P Let us pray our offering prayer, to bless the gifts that we continue to give in response to God's gifts to us.

**Merciful God, in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you embrace our lives with your  
great love for humanity. With joy and gladness we ask that these gifts may be for many**

**a sign of that love, and that we may continue to share in your divine life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

## **THE PRAYERS**

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

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.**

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.**

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.**

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 Marie, Carine, Richard, Bob, Cindy, Doris, Randy, Deb, Elmo, Mary Jean, Anna, Mary, Catharine, Bev, Jane, Maudie*, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

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.**

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**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Let us pray with confidence in the words our Savior gave us:

**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**



# BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen**

## SENDING SONG

LBW 390

### I Love to Tell the Story

1 I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove,  
2 I love to tell the sto - ry: how pleas - ant to re - peat  
3 I love to tell the sto - ry, for those who know it best

of Je - sus and his glo - ry, of Je - sus and his love.  
what seems, each time I tell it, more won - der - ful - ly sweet!  
seem hun - ger - ing and thirst - ing to hear it like the rest.

I love to tell the sto - ry, be - cause I know it's true;  
I love to tell the sto - ry, for some have nev - er heard  
And when, in scenes of glo - ry, I sing the new, new song,

it sat - is - fies my long - ings as noth - ing else would do.  
the mes - sage of sal - va - tion from God's own ho - ly word.  
I'll sing the old, old sto - ry that I have loved so long.

*Refrain*  
I love to tell the sto - ry; 'twill be my theme in glo - ry

to tell the old, old sto - ry of Je - sus and his love.

Text: Katherine Hankey, 1834–1911  
Music: HANKEY, William E. Fischer, 1849–1936

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

**POSTLUDE** “Hornpipe” Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

## **SERVICE PARTICIPANTS**

Rev. Thomas E. Darr  
Organist: Vickie Kissinger

## COMING EVENTS – FEBRUARY

**BIBLE STUDY – FEBRUARY 9** – STUDY ON HEBREWS – 2PM IN FELLOWSHIP HALL, 7 PM ON ZOOM.

**ASH WEDNESDAY – FEBRUARY 17** - I WILL SEND OUT THE INVITES FOR ZOOM. WILL BE VIRTUAL - YOU WILL RECEIVE THE BULLETIN AND ASHES THAT YOU CAN APPLY.

**WEEK OF FEBRUARY 24** - ANOTHER WORSHIP OPPORTUNITY - HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER WILL BE HELD EACH WEEK OF LENT.

**CLUSTER LENTEN SERVICES** WILL BEGIN FEBRUARY 24 AND WILL BE VIRTUAL.

## **PRAYER CONCERNS**

**For those serving in the military...** Conner Allen (Darr's), Christopher Buch (Susie Welsh's grandson), Cody Emrey (Doman's), Trinity Gilkey (Bauer's), Jeremy Reifsnnyder (J Reifsnnyder), Jon Shorr (Darr's), Richard Witwer (Maudie Witwer's grandson)

**For those with ongoing illness...** Cindy Petersheim

**For the homebound...** Mary Martin

**For those afflicted with cancer...** Sandra Bair (M Nuessle), Ritch Bedell (Bauer's), Doris Bewley, Jeff Donahue (P Wallace), Robert Freeman (Mary Hafer), Sharon Fremont (D Lorah), Isaiah Hoar and family (M J Ludwig), Connie Howe (V Haug), Harold Kring, Nate Mohler (Mary Hafer's son-in-law), Matt Sanger (T Wentzel), T Simmons, Jr. (Simmons'), Robyn Wiley (K Wallace)

**For those facing or recovering from a hospitalization...**

**For those in need of strength and comfort..** Richard Burkhart, Steve Cammauf (J Kring), Dan Carpenter (B Wallace), Michael Clause, Sierra Cortez (T Wentzel), Amy DeFalco (J Kring), Bob Dettra, Bernice Dietrich (J Kring), Darlene Ganse (J Kring), Scott Gockley (C Doman), Norma Good, Don Griffith (Raffauf's), Mary Hafer, Tracy Harris (S Good), Randy Haug, Vickie Haug, Allen Kimball (W Kimball), Judy Kring, Deb Lorah, Elmo Lorah, Mary Jean Ludwig, Marie Paul (T Good), Wanda Lutz (T Raffauf), Anna McComsey, Catharine Messner, Israel Newswanger (L Burns), Carolyn Seddon (J Kring), Carine Shorr (Darr's), Bev Simmons, Shaun Sitkowski, Tim Stanley (T Wentzel), Tammy Stiffler (Haug's), Lance Stoudt, Jane Sweigart, Carlos Terres (T Weaver), Tammy Weaver, Darlene Wentzel (T Wentzel), Maudie Witwer, Steve Young (T Weaver)

Underlined indicates names of members of the congregation. **Bold** indicates names added since last week.

**IF YOU ARE IN NEED OF PASTORAL CARE** please contact Pastor Darr at 717-320-3642 or Alvin McCoy at 610-286-9647.

## FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

### Where the Crowd Is

“Have you not known? Have you not heard?” So begins the prophet Isaiah’s marvelous declaration (Isaiah 40:21, 28).

People were stirring in Capernaum, Simon Peter’s seaside fishing town. Apparently the whole city knew and heard; why else, at day’s end, would all the houses have emptied out leaving fish to be cleaned, floors to be swept, children to be bathed, wheat to be ground, and goats to be milked, so people could huddle at his door?

In the morning, crowds were again on the move, this time near the deserted place where Jesus was in prayerful retreat. Apparently everyone knew and heard; why else, at such an hour, would people in neighboring towns have delayed breakfasts, postponed boat launchings, put off opening markets, set aside filling lamps, put down mending, to go searching for him?

Some years ago, theologian Douglas John Hall wrote a provocative book, *Waiting for Gospel*. Its cover pictures an individual standing alone in an open field, looking down, waiting. The book presents a critique and reminder for the church: whole cities, neighboring towns, are crowding doors, searching deserted places for good news, for gospel. But is the church sharing the gospel?

Isn’t someone always selling snake-oil solutions for shriveled hearts, beachfront on a desert seashore, joy from a pill? What are we to believe? Who are we to listen to? When pandemic wobbles the globe, seas rise and economies fall, depressions blossom and hopes wither; when people starve in the shadow of mountains of rotting food, artificial intelligence baits kitchen table wisdom, virtual relationships land knockout blows to authentic community, and “mass” is the prefix to “incarceration,” “migration,” and “destruction”—which door are we to crowd? Where are we to search?

Have we not known? Have we not heard? Good news draws a crowd; the gospel is found in Jesus!