

Jan 17 2021 Second Sunday after Epiphany
Worship with Holy Communion

Preparing for worship:

*We will have Holy Communion together - separately this worship time.
You will need either wine or grape juice and bread of some kind.
You may use what cups & plates you have – do not go out & purchase.
Here is a list: a white cloth, large cup or individual ones, a large paten(plate) for bread or small – depending on the size of your family.
A cross and a candle.*

Good morning – welcome to worship,

Gather everyone in your household together this morning. If you are not alone - assign parts of this beforehand. If you don't have a Bible you can google the scripture readings and print them out too. Perhaps print out copies of this for everyone present. This Liturgy is from the Lutheran Book of Worship and the modified prayers this morning are based on those from Sundays & Seasons Hymns are from the ELW & LBW.

Shut off all the distractions in your home. Sit in the quiet for a bit – take some deep breaths. Light the candle.

GATHERING TOGETHER

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

Hymn: LBW 393 or ELW 665 – Rise, Shine You People

The Lord be with you – and also with you

The Prayer of the day: Thanks be to you, 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.

THE WORD

1 Samuel 3:1-10

Psalms 139: 1-6,13-18

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

SERMON: Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

Synod of Alberta and the Territories

Welcome to this sermon series that our Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada is providing for congregations throughout the Sundays after Epiphany. I am Larry Kochendorfer and I serve as the Bishop of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories. It is great to be with you this Sunday.

Let us pray:

*Come, Holy Spirit, that we may see and taste the grace of God afresh.
Come, Holy Spirit, that we might share the grace of God with others.
Come, Holy Spirit, that we might bear witness with our whole lives to the
grace of God made manifest and available to us in Jesus. Amen.*

It was a Thursday. It was a moment so alive that it was almost unbearable. It was so simple really. I had brought our niece, Amanda, who was fifteen at the time, and our youngest son, Jordan, who was then four, over to the church on a Thursday afternoon and while I was in my office returning a couple of telephone calls they were in the sanctuary.

With the phone calls completed I threw on my coat and walked into the sanctuary where I stopped in a moment of epiphany, a moment of revealing, a moment filled with the glory of God – God’s presence – wonderful and mysterious.

Amanda was sitting at the piano playing while Jordan was distributing communion to his invisible congregants who were kneeling at the altar rail.

After a moment he saw me standing at the door to the sanctuary and he yelled out to me, “We’re playing communion, Dad!”

And I looked at this four-year-old dressed in grey sweats, with a face still partially covered with lunch, and his face glowing with an utterly new discovery. He was sharing communion.

And I saw a glimpse of God’s presence, a revelation of God’s work – the father, the pastor in me saw, in a fleeting moment, the emerging worshipper, communion sharer, worship leader in our son – something so touching, so incandescent, so alive that it was almost beyond bearing – and I was changed – transformed.

Is it simply too ordinary? Too unsuspecting? Too unexpected? Or is it too wonderful, this moment of clarity, of unveiling, of revealing, of God's presence?

We have entered the season of Epiphany. A season of revealing. Of appearance. Of manifestation. Epiphany: an immediate and meaningful understanding of something. Surprising. Sudden. Profound. Epiphany: an illuminating discovery, realization, or disclosure. A revelation.

What is revealed in this season is what it means that God became human. That God entered our world, no longer satisfied just to be with us but now is one of us. When that happens, when the incarnation happens, we change too. Our humanity changes. Suddenly, who we see ourselves to be can no longer remain the same because we have seen God in who we are.

We tend to expect that Epiphany is only about the revelation of Jesus. About seeing Jesus, of witnessing Jesus in various revealing moments. It is not supposed to be about being found ourselves.

But John's Gospel invites us to imagine that these can be one and the same. That is, seeing Jesus in those revelatory moments, those unexpected moments is also when you find yourself — who you are, who you are called to be. In those moments of seeing Jesus you realize your identity as a follower, a disciple; and you see a glimpse, perhaps a new glimpse of something you have not seen before when it comes to your own faith story, your own understanding of what it means to be a disciple, your answering of your baptismal call: "follow me."

Maybe this epiphany season might take on a mirror effect. That is, when you hear these texts, when you look for Jesus, when you experience these revelatory moments of Jesus, you simultaneously see something about yourself, and ask what does this mean?

John's Gospel is full of these moments of epiphany, and of what following Jesus will look like.

For this Gospel writer it will mean taking John 3:16 seriously. It will mean taking the witness of the woman at the well seriously. It will mean finding those who have been cast out of communities for their courage to confess their faith in Jesus...like the man born blind (John 9:34). It will mean believing that the Spirit is indeed your very breath as Jesus sends you out into the world (John 20:21-22). It will mean being thrown out yourself (16:2), rejected for insisting that God's love for the world and everyone in it — everyone — is actually true.

The incarnation of Jesus changes everything. The revealing of Jesus changes us. These epiphanies transform people.

Listen to Martin Luther King, Jr., who we will remember tomorrow, and his description of an epiphany and his response in his book, *Stride Toward Freedom*:

I was ready to give up. With my cup of coffee sitting untouched before me, I tried to think of a way to move out of the picture without appearing a coward. In this state of exhaustion, when my courage had all but gone, I decided to take my problem to God. With my head in my hands, I bowed over the kitchen table and prayed aloud.

The words I spoke to God that midnight are still vivid in my memory. "I am here taking a stand for what I believe is right. But now I am afraid. The people are looking to me for leadership, and if I stand before them without strength and courage, they too will falter. I am at the end of my powers. I have nothing left. I've come to the point where I can't face it alone."

At that moment, I experienced the presence of the Divine as I had never experienced God before. It seemed as though I could hear the quiet assurance of an inner voice saying: "Stand up for justice, stand up for truth; and God will be at your side forever." Almost at once my fears began to go. My uncertainty disappeared. I was ready to face anything.

(Martin Luther King Jr, *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*, 1st edition [©1958 Harper & Brothers], 124–125.)

Martin Luther King, Jr. was transformed by this epiphany often referred to as his "vision in the kitchen."

Nathaniel's epiphany, in which he saw who Jesus was, changed Nathaniel, who, then, proclaimed Jesus as: Rabbi, Son of God, King of Israel.

It was a Thursday – it was a moment so alive that it was almost unbearable.... "We're playing communion Dad!"

I suspect that most of us glimpse these moments of epiphany, of aliveness, of revelation, of unveiling – of God's presence – the Spirit's work – in the regular, ordinary patterns of life: in a blinding moment of conversion; in a moment of deepened awareness of the presence of God; in a moment of realizing the truth and call of Christ; in the play ritual of a child; through parents, ever so lovingly, showing a child how to swing a bat; through our children singing "You Are Holy, You are Whole,"

“Beautiful Savior,” “O Come All Ye Faithful”; in the hike up a mountain to pray; in a word of absolution; in an act of justice and peace; in a moment of sacramental meeting – when we hear the drops of water drowning and bringing with the Word new life – when the bread in our hands and the wine on our lips suddenly acquires a flavor and a vintage which takes us out of time and out of our human limitations and intoxicates us with God.

As we glimpse God at work, this unveiling, this revelation, this epiphany – we hold it in our heart and we return to life, different, transformed ourselves because for one shining, mysterious moment we have seen.

These glimpses do not evaporate our doubts or tell us what to do next, nothing will be visibly different but beloved people of God, siblings in Christ – it does make a difference to have seen, even for a moment, a taste, a glimpse, something so alive that it is almost beyond bearing, for we return to daily life, back to work, back to ministry, to family, to this time of COVID pandemic. Different, changed, transformed, back to where mission and ministry is engaged, where the love of God is shared, and where grace is gifted.

Where we are invited to live out our baptismal calling, to follow Jesus, in the midst of our daily lives:

to live among God’s faithful people,

to hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s supper,

to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,

to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,

and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

(Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Affirmation of Baptism. ©2006 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Augsburg Fortress, p. 236.)

Epiphany is a short season. Expect to discover many things about Jesus. And in the process, anticipate learning something about yourself. Sometimes the change is monumental. Sometimes incremental. Either way, something will happen. Something epiphanous!

Let us pray:

Into your hands, almighty God, we place ourselves: our minds to know you, our hearts to love you, our wills to serve you, for we are yours.

Into your hands, incarnate Savior, we place ourselves: receive us and draw us after you, that we may follow your steps; abide in us and enliven us by the power of your indwelling.

Into your hands, O hovering Spirit, we place ourselves: take us and fashion us after your image; let your comfort strengthen, your grace renew, and your fire cleanse us, soul and body, in life and in death, in this world of shadows and in your changeless world of light eternal, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn: ELW 798 - Will You Come and Follow Me?

Our Response

The Apostles' Creed:

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.***

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE - LED BY JOY STATHAM

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.

For the body of Christ gathered throughout the world and for all servants of the gospel, that following Jesus, the church lives out its calling every day, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For the well-being of creation, for plants and animals, and for all that God has marvellously made, that we serve as wise stewards of Earth, our home, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For police officers and firefighters, for attorneys and paralegals, for peacekeepers and military personnel, and for the leaders of governments, that they provide protection to all people, especially the most vulnerable, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For those lacking food or shelter, for those who are sick or grieving, and for those who are imprisoned or homebound (*especially*), that God console all who suffer, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For our neighborhoods, for visitors joining us for the first time on the internet, that all who seek to know God are nourished by word and sacrament, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

In thanksgiving for the saints who have gone before us, that their lives give us a vision of the gospel in action, 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 Peace of Christ be with you always - and also with you.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. Water and word, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Nourish us through these gifts, that we might proclaim your steadfast love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation. **Amen.**

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Faithful God,

have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.

We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways.

We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves.

We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims:

Your sins are forgiven in the name of ✝ Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world. **Amen.**

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name.

In the night in which he was betrayed,

our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,

and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Please take time now to have your Communion at home.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us with food beyond compare, the body and blood of Christ. Lead us from this place, nourished and forgiven, into your beloved vineyard to wipe away the tears of all who hunger and thirst, guided by the example of the same Jesus Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

HYMN: ELW 677 – This Little Light of Mine

BLESSING

Mothering God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

Thanks be to God.