



GOLDEN EARS

U N I T E D C H U R C H

An Affirming Christian Community for Faith, Justice and Music
(*)- indicates that the congregation is invited to rise in body or spirit

February 4th, 2024
Fifth Sunday After Epiphany

God Calls Us Together

Greeting:

One: The Peace of Christ be with you!

All: And also with you.

Welcome

Acknowledging the Land

All: As Christ's people, let us be people of Love, of Truth, and of Reconciliation

Threshold

It's sometimes hard to wrap our heads around the idea that God dwelt among us in the flesh, in Jesus, the Christ. Complete with a body, a family, a job, a community. Jesus had friends who stayed through thick and thin, and audiences who didn't get what he was talking about,

and enemies who undermined his every move.
He traveled, and worked, and laughed, and cried, and
prayed, and loved.

**Still today God dwells among us by the Spirit,
inviting us to be Christ's Body in the world;**

Calling us to live Christ's grace
in bodies, families, jobs, communities,
among friends and enemies and people who don't get us;
Teaching us to trust God
as we travel, work, laugh, cry, pray, and love.
**Today may we do more than simply enjoy God's word,
may it touch us deeply and move us to new life.
Amen.**

Adapted from liturgy by Rev. Teri Peterson

Centering Hymn MV 115

"Behold, Behold"

Words: John Bell

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**Behold, (behold,) behold, (behold,)
I make all things new,
beginning with you and starting from today.
Behold, (behold,) behold, (behold,)
I make all things new,
my promise is true,
for I am Christ the way.**

Lighting the Christ Candle

**Let the light shine today,
in and through us,
in and through your word,
in and through the community in which you plant us.
Let your light shine today,
and re-orient us and our habits and our attention,
so that more and more light might shine forth,
making your kingdom way of life not only visible
but accessible.**

**We ask in the name of the One
who is the Light of the world.**

Amen

***Hymn MV 1 (vs 1-3)**

Let us Build a House

Words: Marty Haugen
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**Let us build a house where love can dwell and all
can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell how hearts
learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith
and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.**

**Let us build a house where prophets speak, and
words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's
reign anew.**

**Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol
of God's grace;**

here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

**All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.**

**Let us build a house where love is found in water,
wine and wheat;**

**a banquet hall on holy ground, where peace and
justice meet.**

**Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in
time and space;**

as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:

**All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.**

Prayer for Wholeness and Peace

We confess, that sometimes
we get tripped up by what we have known,
unable to allow others to grow
because we want them to be the person we remember,
unable to grow ourselves because others want us to always
be like we've always been.

(moment for reflection)

We confess that sometimes it feels
as if we are simply swept along,
the system has a mind of its own,
and our only option is the one that tradition
or expectation or reputation dictates.

(moment for reflection)

We confess that sometimes we question your instructions,
unwilling to believe we could ever do
what you're asking us to do,
unwilling to be vulnerable enough
to fully experience your providing.

(moment for reflection)

**Forgive us, loving God,
and open our minds and hearts,
empower our spirits and wills,
move our hands and feet and voices,
to not only silently recognize your power
but to speak up and stand up,
to participate in your purpose.
We ask in the name of Jesus the Christ
who used every avenue to bring your good news
to every place.
Amen.**

Children leave for Sunday School and return for Communion.

God Speaks and We Listen

*Christ, whose insistent call
disturbs our unsettled lives:
give us discernment to hear your word,
grace to relinquish our tasks,
and courage to follow emptyhanded
wherever you may lead;
that the voice of your gospel
may reach to the ends of the earth.
Amen*

Scripture: Mark 6:1-29

He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. On the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown and among their own kin and in their own house." And he could do no deed of

power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff: no bread, no bag, no money in their belts, but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

King Herod heard of it, for Jesus's name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead, and for this reason these powers are at work in him." But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have

your brother's wife." And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests, and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." And he swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." The king was deeply grieved, yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

One: For the Word of God in Scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
For the Word of God within us:

All: Thanks be to God!

REFLECTION

SPECIAL MUSIC

Celebrating God's Gifts – Offering

Offering VU 82

A Light is Gleaming

Words: Linnea Good

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And Jesus showed us a brighter path to walk.

He showed us things we hadn't seen.

**Now we, like Jesus, can help creation shine,
and this will be a sign:**

**A light is gleaming, spreading its arms
throughout the night, living in the light.**

**Come share its gladness, God's radiant love
is burning bright, living in the light.**

Offering Prayer

***Hymn VU 460**

All Who Hunger

Words: Sylvia Dunstan

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**All who hunger, gather gladly;
holy manna is our bread.**

Come from wilderness and wandering.

Here, in truth, we will be fed.

You that yearn for days of fullness,

**all around us is our food.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.**

**All who hunger, never strangers;
seeker, be a welcome guest.
Come from restlessness and roaming.
Here, in joy, we keep the feast.
We that once were lost and scattered
in communion's love have stood.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.**

**All who hunger, sing together;
Jesus Christ is living bread.
Come from loneliness and longing.
Here, in peace, we have been led.
Blest are those who from this table
live their lives in gratitude.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

**This is the table of the heavenly feast,
the joyful celebration of the people of God.
We gather now as one body, joined around the table.
Here we celebrate God's presence among us,
united in Christ's spirit, broken and whole all at once.**

**Nourished and hungry, loved and loving,
sinner and forgiven, we make one circle
of knowing, believing, rejoicing, being,
as God lights and rests among us.**

May God be with you

And also with you

Lift up your hearts

We lift up our hearts to God

Let us give our thanks to God

It is good to give God thanks and praise

GREAT THANKSGIVING

It is a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give
thanks to you, Holy One.

Blessed are you, Holy One:

Out of your love, you birthed all creation;
your love brings light and warmth
to the planet that is our home.

Blessed are you, Holy One:

you sent your Chosen One

to be a messenger of your love for the world,

**A love that reaches the deepest places
of suffering and oppression.**

Blessed are you, Holy One:
your eternal Spirit of wisdom and compassion
lights the path by which we find our way to you.

Blessed are you, Holy One:
you have raised up a great cloud of witnesses,
of loving and courageous persons
to accompany us on our pilgrim path.
Blessed are you.

With all your people on earth and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn

You are holy, you are whole.
You are always evermore
Than we ever understand.
You are always at hand.
Blessed are you coming near.
Blessed are you coming here,
To your church in wine and bread,
raised from soil, raised from dead.

You are holy...
You are wholeness...
You are present...
Let the cosmos praise you God.
Sing hosanna in the highest, sing hosanna,
Hosanna to our God.

BLESSING THE ELEMENTS

Christ invites everyone to eat the bread of life,
to drink the cup of the new covenant.

Jesus said, I am the bread of life.

You who come to me shall never hunger;
you who believe in me shall never thirst.

On the night he gave himself up, Jesus took bread,
and after giving thanks to God, broke it and said,
This is my body, broken for the healing of the world.
Whenever you eat it, do so remembering me.

After supper, Jesus took the cup and said,
This is the cup of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for all.
Whenever you drink it, do so remembering me.

**O Holy One, send down your Spirit
that these gifts of grain and grape,
and work of human hands
may be for us the body and blood of Christ.
Unite us with Christ forever
and bring us with the whole creation
to your eternal realm.**

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

THE PRAYER OF JESUS

**Our Loving Creator,
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, the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

SHARE THE ELEMENTS

The body of Christ, broken for all of us.
Take Christ into your hearts with thanksgiving.
The cup of the new covenant, poured out for the healing of
the world. Drink deeply of it.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION

**God of abundance and mercy,
we give joyful thanks
for your eternal love and healing presence
in our celebration of bread and cup.
Bless this Body of Christ
that we may attend faithfully to our call
to be your servants,**

with each other and throughout the world. Amen.

God Sends Us Out to Love and Serve

LIFE AND WORK OF THE COMMUNITY

***Hymn VU 420**

Go to the World

Words: Sylvia Dunstan

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**Go to the world! Go into all the earth.
Go preach the cross where Christ renews life's worth,
baptising as the sign of our rebirth.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

**Go to the world! Go into every place.
Go live the Word of God's redeeming grace.
Go seek God's presence in each time and space.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

**Go to the world! Go struggle, bless and pray;
the nights of tears give way to joyous day.
As servant Church, you follow Christ's own way.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

**Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,
for I am with you 'til the age shall end,
when all the hosts of glory cry "Amen!"
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

***Commissioning and Blessing**

Go to fulfil Christ's ministry,
bringing good news and healing to the world God so
loves. Trust where God is sending you,
rely on the gifts the Spirit gives you,
and look for the presence of Christ the living word
in each face and place. And as you go...

Postlude

***Amen**

"As You Go Forth"

Words and music by Diane Lines, Sam Ellington, Tony Chamberlist
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**As you go forth, know you're not alone,
And know that you are perfect in the eyes of God.
As you go forth know that you are blessed
and you can be a blessing in the world**

**There is a light and life in all good things,
and you're the hands of God on the earth.
As you go forth, know that you're surrounded by
The boundless love of God.**

**There is a light and life in all good things,
And you're the hands of God on the earth.**

**As you go forth, know that you're surrounded by,
The boundless love, the endless love,
the perfect love of God.**