



The Presbyterian Church of Llanerch

Celebrating The Third Sunday After Epiphany

Sunday, January 24, 2016

11:00 a.m.

A SERVICE FOR HOME USE—FOR STAYING WARM AND SAFE IN THE STORM

Gathering

As you come to worship, take a few moments to bring yourself before God—your present state of mind and preoccupations, as well as your desire to meet God during this time.

Questions for reflection, before, during, and after this morning's service:

The Old Testament “year of jubilee” to which Jesus refers in his first sermon—what some have called his “mission statement”—was a time set aside every fifty years to forgive financial debt and redistribute the land among the people. Why do you think God envisioned a year of jubilee, and what might that look like in our world today?

CALL TO WORSHIP (Read responsively, if there are more than one voice; if you are alone, speak the “Many” part out loud. Continue the pattern through the rest of the service. If there is more than one participant, you can share the readings, or trade off on the other parts.)

One: God built the heavens, the earth, and everything in them.

Many: God calls us to be builders as well.

One: God calls us to build our lives:

Many: to restore broken places and continue to grow.

One: God calls us to build our faith:

Many: to study the Word and ponder its interpretation.

One: God calls us to build our community:

Many: to build bridges of understanding and systems of justice.

One: God calls us to build history by fulfilling the promises of Scripture:

Many: to preach the good news of God's love and liberation for all people.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Living God, with your Holy Spirit you anointed Jesus of Nazareth to proclaim the time of your favor. Help us to

proclaim Christ— so that the oppressed may be free, the blind may recover their sight, the captives may find release, and the poor may hear good news; through Christ, your Word fulfilled. **Amen.**

* OPENING HYMN

772
“Live into Hope”

Truro

[You can use this link <http://www.hymnary.org/hymnal/GG2013> to access an on-line version of our hymnal. You can access mp3 files to play the hymns, one verse at a time. Even if you don't have music, the “sung parts” can be read or said aloud.]

CALL TO CONFESSION

When we pass through deep waters [or deep snows?] or go through times of fiery trial, the Lord our God is with us.

God loves us and calls each of us by name!

Let us confess our sin as an offering of our trust in God's love and forgiveness for us. Let us pray together the prayer of confession printed in our bulletin:

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Prayer is read in unison)

God of our Restoration, whenever we come home to you, we realize how far we have strayed and how much we have forgotten of your law and your love. We have not loved you with our whole hearts or loved our neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us, heal us, and restore us to our relationship with you; through Jesus Christ, in whom we trust. Amen.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

One: Do not fear, says the Lord, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

Many: Thanks be to God.

* SUNG RESPONSE 673

“Jesus, Light of Joy” Verse 3

Lauda Anima

♪ **“With the saints we lift our voices, God of power, God of might. All creation shines with glory, singing praises day and night: Alleluia, alleluia, holy, holy, holy light.”** ♪

* PASSING OF THE PEACE

The angels said, “Do not be afraid!” Emmanuel—God is with us!

A God who creates second chances. A God who leads us to recognize new possibilities. A God who shines light in our darkness's, and shepherds us.

Brothers and sisters—the peace of Christ is among us. Therefore we may let go of darkness and live into light.

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you!

Word

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Creator of all that is in the heavens and on the earth, quiet the chatter of our minds and still the anxiety of our hearts so we can hear your wisdom, in all its rich variety, and in hearing, let that deep wisdom sink into our lives, so that we may joyfully bear your light in all we do and say. Amen.

THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING:

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

¹All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel. ²Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. ³He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

⁵And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. ⁶Then Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

⁸So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

⁹And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. ¹⁰Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

THE SECOND SCRIPTURE READING:

Luke 4: 14-21

¹⁴Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

¹⁶When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: ¹⁸"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." ²⁰And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

One: Powerful and full of majesty is the voice of the Lord.

Many: Thanks be to God.SOME THOUGHTS FOR A SERMON AND SOME PRACTICE --
from Rev. David Stipp-Bethune

"Jesus' Solemn Declaration of Mission in the World"

The first thing I might tell you about today's gospel reading is that "it goes with next week's reading." So if you're reading *this* instead of being in Church, it's bound to come up again, next Sunday! But between now and then, there are some things to think about and "practice."

In Luke's story, we're between Jesus' baptism and the launch of Jesus' ministry. And for a moment, Jesus has stopped back in Nazareth to share the news about what to expect. We find him in the synagogue, reading scripture aloud—the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah—just as you can do now.

The HEART of this reading is Jesus speaking the words of the Prophet: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." These are the words that Jesus uses to define his ministry and mission.

Good news. Release. Recovery. Freedom. Favor.

What Jesus begins to say to them is, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

What Jesus doesn't say is, "It is accomplished." And to "Follow Jesus" doesn't mean to be in the crowd behind him, walking in and expecting everything to be completed ahead of us. To "Follow Jesus" as believers and disciples is to participate in the ministry Jesus proclaims for us. These words he claims for himself are also words that he claims for

us.

We, too, can become agents of good news, release, recovery, freedom, and favor.

If you're reading this, and you're not in Church because of the storm, one way you might consider "practicing" this agency would be to use the telephone to contact a friend or neighbor and be a voice of "good news." Connecting when we're all "hunkered down in the storm" is a great way to remind someone that they are loved. But the tasks that are ahead, speak to other aspects of the agency of release, recovery, freedom, and favor—literally. Making sure friends and neighbors are "shoveled out" or that they have what they need, lets us help and connect.

This particular "practice" in time of serious need, helps us know what we can do regularly, too. Jesus says literally, "I'm here to do these things for you." We can be the same things for the people around us.

Want to participate in making the world better and be an agent of the ministry of Jesus?

Take it a step further. Right now, especially if you're hunkered down, write a thank you card to your volunteer fire department. Send a note to your police department to encourage and support officers. Write a "THANK YOU" to the public works department and ask that they post it for all the plow drivers and people who are working extra overtime this weekend to help us.

And then notice these same kind of people in your daily life when we get done with all the snowing and blowing. The people you work with. The people you know are struggling. The people who "serve" you—a waiter/waitress or just the clerk in the department store. Write down their name and write them a note of support or appreciation.

You see, like Jesus, these words can move us from believing to real agency. We can literally become and be good news, release, recovery, freedom, and favor.

And we're always mindful that while we're "doing for others," we are the embodiment of the good news, release, recovery, freedom and favor we want to see in our lives. God is at work in us, among us, for us, and through us. Sometimes it's through us, that helps us see and know even more how much God is for us.

How can you take Jesus' words, reclaimed from the Prophet, and live them—so that they might be fulfilled in your hearing them and doing them? How can you practice in making them so?

When you've spent some time reflecting or even "practicing," you can conclude with this prayer:

—+ O Mighty One, who scatters the proud and fills the hungry, by your Holy Spirit let your word leap in us and bring to our yearning the joy that comes with new beginnings and renewed lives. **Amen.**

Our Response in Faith

* PROFESSION OF FAITH

--The Confession of Belhar

We believe that the unity of the people of God must be manifested and be active in a variety of ways: that we share one faith, have one calling, are of one soul and one mind; have one God and Father, are filled with one Spirit, are baptized with one baptism, eat of one bread and drink of one cup, confess one name, are obedient to one Lord, work for one cause, and share one hope. AMEN.

* HYMN

459

Munich

"O Word of God Incarnate"

Our Response in Action

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND OUR LORD'S PRAYER

[Our prayers of the people will take the form of a bidding prayer, with a responsive refrain concluding each petition; time will be offered for the congregation to share personal prayers aloud or in silence, and we'll conclude our prayers with the Lord's Prayer.]

One: The Lord be with you. **Many: And also with you.**
One: Lift up your hearts. **Many: We lift them to the Lord.**
One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **Many: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

God of prophets and apostles, you call us to restore that which is broken and to proclaim your vision of a world made new. Create in us new hearts and strong voices as we pray. Revealing God: **fill us with the power of your Spirit.**

We pray for those who have been anointed or chosen as leaders of people, that they may attend to the voices of their people and be guided by you. Revealing God: **fill us with the power of your Spirit.**

We pray for pastors and teachers of the church, that they may faithfully interpret your Word for others. Revealing God: **fill us with the power of your Spirit.**

We pray for those who are poor and in need of assistance, and for ourselves, that we may open our hearts to their cries for help. Revealing God: **fill us with the power of your Spirit.**

We pray for those who are the captives of war and the victims of violence; may we bring them good news both in word and deed. Revealing God: **fill us with the power of your Spirit.**

We pray for those with physical challenges and spiritual struggles; make us agents of healing and hope. Revealing God: **fill us with the power of your Spirit.**

We pray for those who are oppressed by powers beyond their control; give us courage to work to set them free. Revealing God: **fill us with the power of your Spirit.**

God of the Jubilee, make us the body of the risen Christ, united, in all our diversity. Animate us by your Holy Spirit that together we may work toward your coming kingdom. And hear us, as we continue to pray individually and out loud, for those things that are on our hearts and in our minds. If you have prayers that you would like to share aloud, please do so now:

... [Add your own prayers and petitions here. We are also praying for the people/places indicated below:]

For the victims of Gun violence and any kind of violence | For the gift of Peace on Earth which so many struggle against or with | For James Brennan (Barbara Pretz's newborn grandson—Barbara teaches in our Preschool) | **For Phoenix Hoyle** (June Hoyle's new grandson, born 5 weeks early with Downs Syndrome) | **For Kelly Diiorio** (still recovering from surgery) | **For David Pokorny** (who is recovering from knee surgery) | **For Steve Zane** (who is in hospice care) | **For Judy Turnbull | For Matthew | For Ben | Thanksgiving and safe-keeping for first responders, good neighbors, helping people, and disaster planning | For our congregation in our New Beginnings discernment small group meetings | For our congregation, our elders and deacons, our pastor | Our Church Staff: Kelly Dilorio, Georgia Schrom, David Pokorny, and Rev. David Stipp-Bethune | Our Preschool staff, students, and families | For the Families, Friends, Communities, and our nation in the wake of the circumstances that led to the loss of life—that justice may roll down like waters. |**

One: And, as Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray together:

All: 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO PRESENT GOD'S TITHES, OUR GIFTS, AND OFFERINGS

Each one of us is essential to the life and well-being of the whole body of Christ.

So we come now to share our gifts and resources in order to care for one another and, without dissension, for the world Christ came to save.

You can use our website to make an online gift, using the secure, Presbyterian Mission Exchange portal. Use this link http://web.llanerchpres.org/?page_id=55 to access our "Donate" page on our website.

* SUNG RESPONSE #608 "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" *Praise God*

♪ "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all people here below; praise Holy Spirit evermore; praise Triune God, whom we adore." ♪

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Gathering God, you create us and redeem us; you call us by name and we are precious in your sight. This good news overwhelms us with joy. With gratitude we give you all that we have and all that we are. May these gifts be expressions of your great delight for your people in all the places of the earth. **Amen.**

Sending

* HYMN

692

Wild Mountain Thyme

"Spirit, Open My Heart"

* BLESSING & CHARGE

Go on your way, eat the fat, drink sweet wine, and send portions of them to those who have none.

This day is holy to our God, so let us all be filled with joy!

Sisters and brothers: The Spirit is still at work among us, disciples of Christ—sending us to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to those in captivity, to be healers and a freedom force against all oppression,

So, go boldly as disciples, trusting in the Spirit's guidance.

While our worship service ends, our Christian service is just beginning...

Service Notes for This Morning's Worship Service:

1. Our Call to Worship, Prayer of Confession, Prayers of the People, the Invitation to the Offering, and our Benediction and Charge were crafted in whole or in part using the Feasting on the Word worship companion : liturgies for Year C / edited by Kimberly Bracken Long.



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