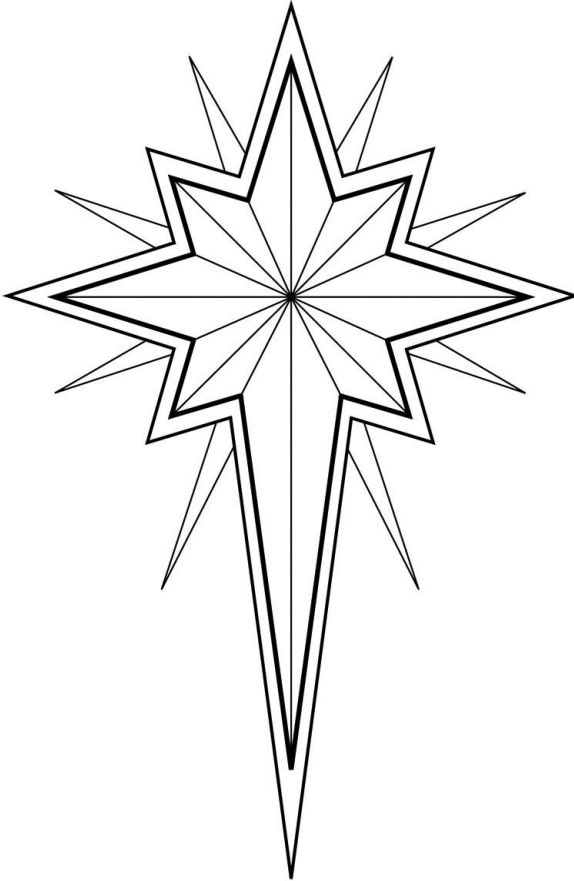


**FOURTH SUNDAY
AFTER EPIPHANY**

28 JANUARY 2024



**OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP, SETTING 4

The liturgy is in the front of the ELW starting on page 147.

The hymns begin in the middle of the ELW with numbers at the top of the pages.

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the Holy Trinity, one God, creator of darkness and light, word of truth, wind sweeping over the waters.

C: Amen.

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

P: God, our rock and refuge,

C: we pour out our hearts before you.

We have known you but have not always loved you.

We have wounded one another and sinned against you.

We have not always recognized the Holy Spirit dwelling in each of us.

Remember your covenant.

Renew your creation.

Restore us,

that we might proclaim your good news to all.

Amen.

P: The voice of the Lord is upon the waters. God has spoken: The time of grace is now. In Jesus, the reign of God has come near. By the authority of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. You are God's beloved.

C: Amen.

HYMN #886 "OH, FOR A THOUSAND TONGUES TO SING"

GREETING [PAGE 147]

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.

KYRIE [PAGE 147]

HYMN OF PRAISE [PAGE 149] *“THIS IS THE FEAST...”*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray. (*concluding...our Savior and Lord.*)

C: Amen

READINGS

DEUTERONOMY 18:15-20

PSALM 111

1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-13

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION [PAGE 151] *“ALLELUIA...”*

GOSPEL [MARK 1:21-28]

P: The Holy Gospel according to Mark, the 1st chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

YOUTH SERMON – REV. LEAH HOLLOWAY-NILSEN

SERMON – REV. LEAH HOLLOWAY-NILSEN

HYMN #310 “SONGS OF THANKFULNESS AND PRAISE”

CONFESSION OF FAITH: APOSTLES’ CREED

P: With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**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 INTERCESSION

P: As we celebrate Christ embodied in human form, we pray for
God's blessing on the church, the world and all of creation.

(Each petition ends: P: God of grace, C: receive our prayer.)

P: Knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we offer these prayers
and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of our Savior,
Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY PRAYER

P: Let us pray. *(concluding ...our Savior and Lord.)*

C: Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING [PAGE 152]

PREFACE [PAGE 153]

P: It is indeed right...and join their unending hymn:

C: ♪ “Holy, holy, holy...”

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

Holy Communion is celebrated today.

*All who are baptized into Christ Jesus are invited to receive Holy Communion
Gluten-free wafers and white grape juice are available.*

COMMUNION [PAGE 154] "LAMB OF GOD..."

HYMN #612 "HEALER OF OUR EVERY ILL"

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen

POST COMMUNION HYMN

♪ **Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.**

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

P: Let us pray. (*concluding... Jesus Christ our Lord.*)

C: Amen.

BLESSING

P: Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

HYMN #434 “JESUS SHALL REIGN”

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. You are God's beloved.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

RINGING OF THE BELL

POSTLUDE

Pastor: Rev. Leah Holloway-Nilsen

Organist: Jason Boussetot or Linda Whitman

Acolyte: Kara Olson

Lector: Joe Morehead

Communion Assistant: Dan Burke

Usher: Brian Boussetot

Cleaners: Dan and Cindy Burke

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This Week At A Glance

Wednesday	6:00 pm	Confirmation at Faith
	7:00 pm	Bible Jam at Faith
Saturday	9:00 am	Council/Committee Meeting at Faith
Sunday	8:00 am	Worship service at Faith
	9:25 am	Sunday School at Our Savior's
	10:30 am	Worship service at Our Savior's

Those to keep in prayer: Diane Christensen, Mallory Boussetot, Diane Sievers; the homebound: Carol Christensen, Ron Gasper, Delores Lahann, Lucy Lee Petersen, Myrna Kay Peterson, Rusty Porth, Betty Schau, Bus Seastrand and Vera St. John; and those serving in the military.

You can help the four youth planning to attend the **2024 ELCA Youth Gathering** by becoming a stockholder. Shares cost \$50 each. Investors will receive mail from the youth while at the Gathering and an invitation to a supper when they return. Forms can be found at both churches. Contact Heather Grau (563-424-0507) or Pastor Leah (262-914-9392) if you have questions.

Annual meetings will be held today following worship service.

The First Victory Over the Powers of Evil

Mark 1:23-28 There was in the synagogue a man in the grip of an unclean spirit. Immediately he broke into a shout. "What have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth?" he said. "Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are you are The Holy One of God." Jesus spoke sternly to him. "Be silent," he said, "and come out of him." When the unclean spirit had convulsed the man and had cried with a great cry it came out of him. They were all so astonished that they kept asking each other, "What is this? This is a new kind of teaching. He gives his orders with authority even to unclean spirits and they obey him." And immediately the report about Jesus went out everywhere over the whole surrounding district of Galilee.

If Jesus' words had amazed the people in the synagogue, his deeds left them thunderstruck. In the synagogue there was a man in the grip of an unclean spirit. He created a disturbance and Jesus healed him.

All through the gospels we keep meeting people who had unclean spirits and who were possessed by demons or devils. What lies behind this?

The Jews, and indeed the whole ancient world, believed strongly in demons and devils. As Harnack put it, "The whole world and the circumambient atmosphere were filled with devils; not merely idolatry, but every phase and form of life was ruled by them. They sat on thrones, they hovered around cradles. The earth was literally a hell."

Dr. A. Rendle Short cites a fact which shows the intensity with which the ancient world believed in demons. In many ancient cemeteries skulls were found which had been trepanned. That is to say, a hole had been bored in the skull. In one cemetery, out of one hundred and twenty skulls, six had been trepanned. With the

limited surgical technique available that was no small operation. Further, it was clear from the bone growth that the trepanning had been done during life. It was also clear that the hole in the skull was too small to be of any physical or surgical value; and it is known that the removed disc of bone was often worn as an amulet round the neck. The reason for the trepanning was to allow the demon to escape from the body of the man. If primitive surgeons were prepared to undertake that operation, and if men were prepared to undergo it, the belief in demon-possession must have been intensely real.

Where did these demons come from? There were three answers to that question. (i) Some believed that they were as old as creation itself. (ii) Some believed that they were the spirits of wicked men who had died and were still carrying on their malignant work. (iii) Most people connected the demons with the old story in Genesis 6:1-8 (compare 2 Peter 2:4-5).

The Jews elaborated the story in this way. There were two angels who forsook God and came to this earth because they were attracted by the beauty of mortal women. Their names were Assael and Shemachai. One of them returned to God; the other remained on earth and gratified his lust; and the demons are the children that he begat and their children.

The collective word for demons is mazzikin, which means one who does harm. So the demons were malignant beings intermediate between God and man who were out to work men harm.

The demons, according to Jewish belief, could eat and drink and beget children. They were terrifyingly numerous. There were, according to some, seven and a half millions of them; every man had ten thousand on his right hand and ten thousand on his left. They lived in unclean places, such as tombs and spots where there was no cleansing water. They lived in the desert where their howling could be heard--hence the phrase a howling desert. They were specially dangerous to the lonely traveller, to the woman in child-birth, to the bride and bridegroom, to children who were out

after dark, and to those who voyaged at night. They were specially active in the midday heat and between sunset and sunrise. There was a demon of blindness and a demon of leprosy and a demon of heart-disease. They could transfer their malign gifts to men. For instance, the evil eye which could turn good fortune into bad and in which all believed was given to a man by the demons. They worked along with certain animals--the serpent, the bull, the donkey and the mosquito. The male demons were known as shedim, and the female as lilin, after Lilith. The female demons had long hair and were the enemies of children. That is why children had their guardian angels (Matthew 18:10).

It does not matter whether or not we believe in all this; whether it is true or not is beside the point. The point is that the people in New Testament times did. We still may use the phrase Poor devil! That is a relic of the old belief. When a man believed himself to be possessed he was "conscious of himself and also of another being who constrains and controls him from within." That explains why the demon-possessed in Palestine so often cried out when they met Jesus. They knew that Jesus was believed by some at least to be the Messiah; they knew that the reign of the Messiah was the end of the demons; and the man who believed himself to be possessed spoke as a demon when he came into the presence of Jesus.

There were many exorcists who claimed to be able to cast out demons. So real was this belief that by A.D. 340 the Christian church actually possessed an Order of Exorcists. But there was this difference--the ordinary Jewish and pagan exorcist used elaborate incantations and spells and magical rites. Jesus with one word of clear, simple, brief authority exorcised the demon from a man. No one had ever seen anything like this before. The power was not in the spell, the formula, the incantation, the elaborate rite; the power was in Jesus and men were astonished.

What are we to say to all this? Paul Tournier in *A Doctor's Casebook* writes, "Doubtless there are many doctors who in their struggle against disease have had, like me, the feeling that they were confronting, not something passive, but a clever and resourceful enemy." Dr. Rendle Short comes tentatively to the

conclusion that “the happenings in this world, in fact, and its moral disasters, its wars and wickedness, its physical catastrophes, and its sicknesses, may be part of a great warfare due to the interplay of forces such as we see in the book of Job, the malice of the devil on one hand and the restraints imposed by God on the other.”

This is a subject on which we cannot dogmatize. We may take three different positions. (i) We may relegate the whole matter of demon-possession to the sphere of primitive thought and say that it was a primitive way of accounting for things in the days before man knew any more about men's bodies and men's minds. (ii) We may accept the fact of demon-possession as being true in New Testament times and as being still true today. (iii) If we accept the first position we have to explain the attitude and actions of Jesus. Either he knew no more on this matter than the people of his day, and that is a thing we can easily accept for Jesus was not a scientist and did not come to teach science. Or he knew perfectly well that he could never cure the man in trouble unless he assumed the reality of the disease. It was real to the man and had to be treated as such or it could never be cured. In the end we come to the conclusion that there are some answers we do not know.

Barclay's Daily Study Bible (NT) – Public Domain