

Welcome to worship in your homes. Use these pages to guide your worship. God is with you! -Pastor Liz

Jan 3:

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Gospel: John 1:[1-9] 10-18

[¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

This is one of my favorite passages of scripture. In it, I hear a description of a God beyond our power and understanding, the source of all life, coming down to be among us so that we might know this God better. The unknowable became someone knowable. The Creator of all became someone you could have a coffee with.

Sometimes we think of Jesus' birth as Jesus' beginning, but this passage puts the life of Jesus among us as a midpoint. Jesus- the Word- was there at the very beginning, creating life out of nothing. Jesus- the incarnate (human fleshed) Word- was born in Palestine, taught, healed, and died on the cross. He was raised from the dead. This same Jesus- the Word- lives now with God and with us, continuing to create life, healing, and hope, and promising to bring us through his own resurrection into eternal life. Jesus- the Word- will act again in the future to restore all creation with his power to bring life out of chaos and death. He is the source of our hope.

Prayer

As we celebrate Christmas, we join the praise of the cosmos, and we intercede for the church, the earth, the world, and all in need. These bids invite your prayers, either silently or aloud.

We pray for the church around the globe.

We pray for peace between and within the nations of the world.

We pray for all who are alone on this holiday.

We pray for our families and friends.

We pray for those in need – those near, those far away.

Finally, we pray for the desires of our own hearts.

We praise God for the lives of all those who have died in the faith.

Holy God,
everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, wonderful Counselor,
at the birth of time your Word brought light into the world,
and throughout the ages, you proclaim newness of life.
For your wondrous Word, we thank you, O God. **Amen.**

Offering

We set aside our time, work, and finances to serve God. If you're able, this may include supporting the church with your money. It may also mean supporting God's work through your prayers, your service to others, and your love to your neighbors. Take a moment to reflect on how God has cared for you this week and give thanks.

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.

Blessing

Almighty God,
who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary,
proclaimed joy through the angels,
sent the shepherds with good news,
and led the magi by a star,
bless us this day + through the Word made flesh. **Amen.**

Epiphany: Jan 6

On Epiphany, we celebrate the arrival of the Magi to the home of young Jesus. This marks the completion of the Christmas season, twelve days after Christmas. It's becoming popular across denominations to bless the outside of your home on this day. During this pandemic, it's a wonderful way to remember that God is with us in our daily lives, and isn't found only at a church building. Take a piece of chalk, or tape up a piece of paper, above your door to do this blessing as a household. (If there is more than one person in your household, you can share the parts: L= leaders; C= community)

L: The Lord is with you;

C: And also with you.

All: Peace be to this house and to all who live, work, and visit here.

L: The three wise men came to Bethlehem in search of the Lord. They brought to him precious gifts: gold to honor the newborn king, incense to the true God in human form, and myrrh to anoint his body, which one day would die like our own.

L: Let us pray. O God, you once used a star to show to all the world that Jesus is your Son. May the light of that star that once guided wise men to honor his birth, now guide us to recognize him also, to know you by faith, and to see you in the epiphanies of the daily experiences of our lives.

L: Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord — Jesus born of Mary — shall be revealed.

C: And all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

All: As the Wise Men once sought your brilliant light, O Lord, so may we seek to live and work in your splendor.

L: O God of Light, bless this (our) house and this (our) family. May this be a place of peace and health. May each member of this family cultivate the gifts and graces you have bestowed, dedicating our talents and works for the good of all.

L: Make this house a shelter in the storm and a haven of rest for all in need of your warmth and care. And when we go out from this place, may we never lose sight of that Epiphany star.

C: As we go about our work, our study, our play, keep us in its light and in your love.

A Blessing of the Chalk for Marking the Door

L: Lord Jesus, through your Incarnation and birth in true human form, you have made all the earth holy. We now ask your blessing upon this simple gift of your creation — chalk. We use it as a tool to teach our children, and they use it as a tool in their play and games. Now, with your blessing, may it become a tool for us to mark the doors of our home with the symbols of your wise servants who, so long ago, came to worship and adore you in your first home.

People in turn mark the doorway with one or more of the symbols:

20 C + M + B 21

(The letters C M B come from the traditional (9th century) names for the "three kings" -- Caspar, Melchior & Balthazar. Some also suggest "Christus Mansionem Benedicat" which means "May Christ bless this dwelling!")

L: May we, in this house, and all who come to visit, to work, and to play, remember these things throughout the coming year. May all who come and go here find peace, comfort, joy, hope, love, and salvation, for Christ has come to dwell in this house and in these hearts.

All: May we be Christ's light in the world. Amen.

Adapted from a liturgy of blessing for the home by Sister Marta Elena Ceballos

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/an-epiphany-blessing-of-homes-and-chalking-the-door>

Jan 10:

Prayer of the Day

Holy God, creator of light and giver of goodness, your voice moves over the waters. Immerse us in your grace, and transform us by your Spirit, that we may follow after your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Gospel: Mark 1:4-11

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem

were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Reflection

I often think about how powerful it must have been for Jesus to hear these words of affirmation at the beginning of his ministry, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." Consider: this is the BEGINNING of Jesus' work as recorded in the Gospels. He hasn't actually done anything yet.

In many of the ways that we judge our own work, we look at what we have produced once it's finished. We can see the mistakes, where things didn't quite match our hopes, and we can see the outcome of long hours of dedication. It's at the end that we decide if we deserve acclamation or not.

Here, Jesus starts with God's acclaim. He hasn't done much to deserve it. That's where I want you to rest a bit. God starts out with the promise that Jesus is beloved and God is pleased with Jesus' simple existence. There's nothing conditional about it. It's a baseline existence statement. God's assured value of Jesus will accompany Jesus through the hard days and years ahead. He'll always be able to remember this moment of experiencing God's affirmation without the burden of God's expectation.

Jesus loves you in this same way. You are God's beloved: not because God has seen your final product and you ended up doing ok. You are God's beloved because God has promised to love you. No matter what. Take comfort and strength in God's affirmation.

Prayer

We join the praise of the cosmos, and we intercede for the church, the earth, the world, and all in need. These bids invite your prayers, either silently or aloud.

We pray for all who minister in the church.

We pray for the well-being of plants and animals.

We pray for an end to prejudices of all kinds.

We pray for our neighborhood.

We pray for all who suffer from the coronavirus.

Finally, we pray for the desires of our own hearts.

We praise God for the lives of all those who have died in the faith.

In the fullness of time, your Word became flesh,
to shine in our world's darkness,
to speak peace to all peoples,
and to welcome us as members of your family.
For your loving Word, we adore you, O God. **Amen.**

Offering

We set aside our time, work, and finances to serve God. If you're able, this may include supporting the church with your money. It may also mean supporting God's work through your prayers, your service to others, and your love to your neighbors. Take a moment to reflect on how God has cared for you this week and give thanks.

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.

Blessing

God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved assure you;
and the Holy Spirit the comforter ✝ keep you in peace. **Amen**

Jan 17

Prayer of the Day

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, most 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.

Gospel: John 1:43-51

⁴³The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." ⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." ⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" ⁴⁸Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." ⁴⁹Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" ⁵⁰Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." ⁵¹And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Reflection

I love the movement in this Gospel. Have you ever watched a video of dominos being knocked down, or set them up and knocked them down yourself? That's what I imagine this scene was like. First one person met Jesus and followed him, then he told another person who met Jesus and followed him, and so forth. Each interaction is personal and small, just one to one conversations, but the effect is huge! Eventually, thousands of people will come out of their homes and their daily routines to see Jesus for themselves, and many will decide to follow him.

Sometimes we think of evangelism, sharing about Jesus, as something that has to be big and flashy, or draw a crowd. But the gospels show us that word about Jesus spread among people who knew and trusted each other. It was simply sharing about this new source of hope and purpose who had come into their lives. When we think about it that way, I think it's a lot easier to try! One by one, invite people to meet the Jesus who gives you joy in faith.

Prayer

We join the praise of the cosmos, and we intercede for the church, the earth, the world, and all in need. These bids invite your prayers, either silently or aloud.

We pray for our congregation.

We pray for peace between and within the nations of the world.

We pray for all elected government officials.

We pray for those in need – those near, those far away.

Finally, we pray for the desires of our own hearts.

We praise God for the lives of all those who have died in the faith.

Grant us now the gift of your Spirit,
that held, nourished, and protected by your Word,

we may live as your children,

bearing your goodness throughout the world.

For your powerful Word, we praise you, O God.

Amen.

Offering

We set aside our time, work, and finances to serve God. If you're able, this may include supporting the church with your money. It may also mean supporting God's work through your prayers, your service to others, and your love to your neighbors. Take a moment to reflect on how God has cared for you this week and give thanks.

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.

Blessing

God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved assure you;

and the Holy Spirit the comforter ✝ keep you in peace. **Amen.**

Jan 24

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service. Strengthen us by your Spirit, and make us worthy of your call, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

¹The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying, ²"Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." ³So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. ⁴Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" ⁵And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

¹⁰When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed God's mind about the calamity that God had said God would bring upon them; and God did not do it.

Reflection

If you have time, get your Bible and read the entire book of Jonah. It's not long or complicated, and it's quite the story! Jonah is an amazing character: over the top and yet all his pouting and anger can hit close to home for me. His sense of fairness is steeped in a desire to watch people get what they deserve. He wants justice that justifies his own choices and sacrifices.

God responds with mercy and love. This book is all about grace- and about how sometimes we have a difficult time accepting grace is for others and for us. God doesn't give up on Jonah or the Ninevites, and God doesn't give up on us. God continually speaks God's great love to us, so that we might live in the joy of knowing God's love and mercy.

Prayer

We join the praise of the cosmos, and we intercede for the church, the earth, the world, and all in need. These bids invite your prayers, either silently or aloud.

We pray for an increase of justice in every land.

We pray for an end to prejudices of all kinds.

We pray for our families and friends.

We pray for those in sorrow or despair.

O God, Majesty on high, Word of salvation,

Power of glory, on this holy day we ask you to receive our prayers and to visit the world with your love, granting new life to the earth and its peoples. through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Offering

We set aside our time, work, and finances to serve God. If you're able, this may include supporting the church with your money. It may also mean supporting God's work through your prayers, your service to others, and your love to your neighbors. Take a moment to reflect on how God has cared for you this week and give thanks.

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.

Blessing

God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved assure you;

and the Holy Spirit the comforter ✝ keep you in peace. **Amen**

Jan 31

Prayer of the Day

Compassionate God, you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Bring wholeness to all that is broken and speak truth to us in our confusion, that all creation will see and know your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Gospel: Mark 1:21-28

²¹[Jesus and his disciples] went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught.²²They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean

spirit, ²⁴and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” ²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” ²⁶And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” ²⁸At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

Reflection

A new teaching! Everyone is surprised by Jesus. They won't always like what he has to say, but they can tell there is something different about him. Jesus' ministry will upset the balance of power and the status quo, but it will always be for the sake of those in need of healing and restoration.

It's easy to become numb to suffering: the ever-increasing numbers of people sickened and dead because of COVID-19, the long lines at the food pantry, and the protests of those wanting an end to injustices. Jesus wakes us up to those in need and demands that we do something about their struggle. It's not always easy to figure out how we can best help, but when we work together towards the well-being of others, we are following Jesus in faith.

Prayer

We join the praise of the cosmos, and we intercede for the church, the earth, the world, and all in need. These bids invite your prayers, either silently or aloud.

We pray for the church around the globe.

We pray for an increase of justice in every land.

We pray for those in need – those near, those far away.

We pray for the sick and the dying.

Finally, we pray for the desires of our own hearts.

We praise God for the lives of all those who have died in the faith.

In the fullness of time, your Word became flesh,

to shine in our world's darkness,

to speak peace to all peoples,

and to welcome us as members of your family.

For your loving Word, we adore you, O God. **Amen.**

Offering

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on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.

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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.

Blessing

God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved assure you;
and the Holy Spirit the comforter ✝ keep you in peace. **Amen**