

### Jesus-Style Peacemaking

Teach us, Jesus, about what it means to be seen as blessed in your eyes. We so often imagine the opposite. Don't we admire the rich in spirit? The comfortable? The confident? The secure?

How would we frame the peacemakers Jesus calls blessed? We might imagine them to be the people who walk gently through life, navigating complex personal and organizational relationships without creating a fuss, leaving everyone happy in their wake. Would these be the type Jesus calls "children of God"?

Probably not. Jesus himself was hardly a lukewarm presence in his world. It is true that he healed many, and no doubt kissed a few babies in his day. But he also flipped tables in the temple and publicly chastised the religious leaders of his time. He was not above using a bit of sarcasm to make a point, and he tended to hang around with people of questionable reputation. He openly challenged the prevailing piety of his tradition.

Jesus' kind of peacemaker focuses more on justice and less on placating powerful people or persistent tradition. Jesus' kind of peacemaker takes into account the needs of all people, not just the ruling majority. Jesus' kind of peacemaker has a vision of a world that reflects God's mercy and God's justice for the whole creation. And, like Jesus, this kind of peacemaker is committed to a deep and lasting peace, even if it is very costly.

Can we find the courage to be such a peacemaker? Could we risk reputation, confidence, security, or comfort for the sake of the good news of God's love for all? When we are full of the Spirit, when we are at our faithful best, we will. And when we fall short, as we will, we can trust that Jesus will welcome us all the same, forgiven and blessed.

### First St. John Lutheran Church

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Rev. Jerald K. Rayl

Annette Slater - Music Director

Dr. Anthony Pattin - Organist

Toni Wilbarger - Secretary



*Therefore* confess your SINS  
to each other and PRAY  
for each other so that you may  
be HEALED. The PRAYER of  
a righteous PERSON is  
POWERFUL and EFFECTIVE.

—

James 5:16



*Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community*

January 31, 2021

**January 31, 2021**

**Fourth Sunday of Epiphany**

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! Please review some of our guidelines below.

Masks must be worn. We have some available to take if you don't have one. Some are cloth masks and can be taken home to wash and reuse. There are also disposable masks.

Please do not congregate in the Narthex (entrance area) either as you arrive or leave.

To minimize direct contact, we will use the outside aisles only for entry and exit. The center aisle will be used for communion, special needs, or emergency exit.

Ushers will fill the pews from the front to the back of the church and dismiss from the back to the front. Please follow their directions. We are sorry everyone cannot have their usual seat.

NOTE: We can speak the congregational responses behind our masks. Dr. Tony and Annette Slater will provide music. The service will be recorded and published to the website. We are now live streaming the service on our church website, [www.firststjohn.com](http://www.firststjohn.com)

Elders will wear gloves. You can get a bulletin at the check-in table when you walk in. Please do not leave your bulletin in the pew when you exit; take it home or put it in the recycling bin at the front door.

There is a small wooden church just to the right of the main door when you come in. It has a slot for your offering.

Restrooms are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take the left set of steps down. The ladies room is at one end of the hallway, and the men's room is at the other. Return to the Narthex using the opposite set of stairs. Please, one person only in the restroom area.

Diaper Changing: A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

Flowers: If you would like to sign up for flowers for a Sunday, please call the church office during the week to check on availability.

## PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY

**Please purchase full size items.**

dish soap	shampoo, child	toothbrush, child
paper towels	laundry soap	tampons
toilet paper	fabric softener sheets	sanitary pads
tissues	body lotion	band aids
deodorant	body soap	toothpaste, adult
shampoo, adult	toothbrush, adult	toothpaste, child
disposable razors		

This is a list of the items that will provide a month's worth of hygiene supplies to families or individuals in our neighborhood to help them stay clean and healthy. We always welcome any donations from our congregation members. **If you would like to donate items, please donate only full size products as sample sizes will not last a month.** If you would prefer a Pantry volunteer to do the shopping for you, we welcome monetary donations. Please make out checks to First St. John Lutheran Church and write Personal Needs Pantry on the memo line.



## ORDER OF WORSHIP

Prelude  
Ringing of the Bell

Dr. Pattin

Opening Song     *"Precious Lord, Take My Hand"*     No. 773  
(sung by Annette)

### **Invocation**

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity (+) one God, Love from the beginning,  
Word made flesh, Breath of heaven.

**C: Amen.**

### **Confession and Forgiveness**

P: Let us confess our sinfulness before God and one another,  
trusting in God's endless mercy and love.

*(silence is kept for reflection)*

P: Merciful God, we confess that we are not perfect. We confess to  
you our fears, our worries, and our anxieties. You have given us  
your perfect love which casts out all fear and your peace which  
transcends all understanding, but even still we feel dislodged,  
displaced, untethered, and uncertain during these times.

**C: Amen.**

P: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in  
sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have  
been saved. In the name of (+) Jesus Christ, your sins are  
forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the  
Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

**C: Amen.**

## A HYMN OF LAMENT

*"How Long, O God" - ELW #698 (Vs. #1-4) (sung by Annette)*

*"How long, O God?" the psalmist cries, a cry we make our own,  
For we are lost, alone, afraid, and far away from home.*

*The evil lurks within, without, it threatens to destroy  
The fragile cords that make us one, that bind our hearts in joy.*

*Your grace, O God, seems far away; will healing ever come?  
Our broken lives lie broken still; will night give way to dawn?*

*How can we hope? How can we sing? O God, set free our voice  
To name the sorrows, name the pain, that we might yet rejoice.*

### **Prayer of the Day**

P: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Let us pray. 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.

**C: Amen.**

### **Announcements**

#### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 40:6-11**

A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.

**<sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass.**

<sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

**<sup>9</sup>Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"**

<sup>10</sup>See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

**<sup>11</sup>He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.**

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

#### **THE PSALM: Psalm 13**

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?

**<sup>2</sup>How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?**

<sup>3</sup>Consider and answer me, O LORD my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,

**<sup>4</sup>and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed"; my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.**

<sup>5</sup>But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

**<sup>6</sup>I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me.**

#### ***A HYMN OF LAMENT***

***"Peace, to Soothe Our Bitter Woes" - ELW #381 (sung by Annette)***

### ***PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE***

#### **ELDERS**

Darold Henninger, Kevin Ruedy

#### **SOLOIST**

Annette Slater

#### **SOUND BOARD**

Mark Ackerman

### **The Communion** (distribution will be continuous)

*If you wish to receive apple juice instead of wine, place your hand over your shoulder as you approach the person distributing the wine.*

*"All baptized Christians, believing that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, bringing to us the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, are welcome to gather at the Lord's table. Infants, children and others who have not been baptized are welcome to come to receive a blessing; please make an X with your arms across your chest."*

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and sustain you in God's grace.

C: Amen.

### **Prayer after Communion**

P: Jesus Christ, host of this meal, you have given us not only this bread and cup, but your very self, that we may feast on your great love.

C: Amen.

### **The Blessing**

P: God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved fill you; and the Holy Spirit the comforter (+) keep you in peace.

C: Amen.

### **The Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Closing Hymn "Jesus Lives, My Sure Defense (Vs. 1, 5 & 6) # 621  
(sung by Annette)

Postlude

Dr. Pattin

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*Peace, to soothe our bitter woes, God in Christ on us bestows;  
Jesus bought our peace with God with his holy, precious blood;  
Peace in him for sinners found is the gospel's joyful sound.*

*Peace within the church still dwells in our welcomes and farewells;  
And through God's baptismal pow'r peace surrounds our dying hour.  
Peace be with you, full and free, now and through eternity.*

### **THE SECOND LESSON: James 5:13-18**

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

### **A HYMN OF LAMENT**

*"Just a Closer Walk with Thee" - ELW #697 (sung by Annette)*

*Refrain: Just a closer walk with thee, grant it, Jesus, is my plea;  
Daily walking close to thee, let it be, dear Lord, let it be.*

*I am weak but thou art strong: Jesus, keep me from all wrong;  
I'll be satisfied as long as I walk, let me walk close to thee. (Refrain)*

*Through this world of toil and snares, if I falter, Lord, who cares?  
Who with me my burden shares? None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee. (Refrain)*

*When my feeble life is o'er, time for me will be no more;  
Guide me gently, safely o'er to thy kingdom shore, to thy shore.  
(Refrain)*

### **Gospel Acclamation**

P: The Gospel according to St. Matthew Chapter 5.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*(Please stand as you are able and wish)*

## **GOSPEL: Matthew 5:1-12**

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup>Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup>"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup>"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup>"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup>"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

<sup>7</sup>"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

<sup>8</sup>"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup>"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

<sup>10</sup>"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup>"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account

<sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

### **Gospel Response**

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

*(Please be seated)*

SERMON

Sermon Hymn

*"Healer of Our Every Ill"*

Pastor Rayl

No. 612

(sung by Annette)

**The Offering** *(As you exit, please place your offering in the wooden church in the Narthex if you have not already done so.)*

### **Musical Offertory**

Dr. Pattin

### **Offering Prayer**

P: Generous God, you have given us life, this community, and the treasures you entrust to us. Move in our hearts, that we might use your gifts to bring hope and blessing wherever we go, through Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

*(Please stand as you are able and wish)*

**Pastoral Prayer** *(Each petition concludes with this response)*

*"Lord, Listen To Your Children Praying" - (sung by Annette)*

## **The Great Thanksgiving**

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P: 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. For as often as we eat of this bread and drink of this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

### **The Lord's Prayer** *(prayed by 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 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.

### **Invitation to Communion**

P: Come, let us eat, for now the feast is spread.

**C: Our Lord's body and blood, let us take together.**

*(please be seated)*