

BULLETIN TEMPLATE: Minnesota Valley Church
Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
Date: Sunday, January 23, 2022
Church Year Date: 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Prelude: Rebekah Olson

Hymn #511 "Blessed Assurance"

Responsive Reading: Psalm 19:7-14 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. 10 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. 11 By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. 12 Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. 13 Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression. 14 May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Hymn #571 "He Hideth My Soul" v1&2, refrain, v3&4, refrain

Children's Sermon: What is your HOMETOWN? **Luke 4:16** *He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read.*

Reader: Becky Kruse?

Old Testament Lesson: *Nehemiah 8:1-10 All the people assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel. 2 So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. 3 He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law. 4 Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden platform built for the occasion. (Beside him on his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah and Maaseiah; and on his left were Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam.) 5 Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. 6 Ezra praised the LORD, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. 7 The Levites (-Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiah-) instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. 8 They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read. 9 Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is sacred to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. 10 Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."*

Epistle Lesson: *1 Corinthians 12:12-31 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 17 If the whole*

body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But eagerly desire the greater gifts. **(And now I will show you the most excellent way.)**

READER: Here ends the reading of God's Word.

CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!

CONFESSION OF FAITH: Apostles' Creed- *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen*

Gloria Patri: Ambassador Hymnal p. 4 (please put on screen)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.

Announcements

Special Sanctity of Life Sunday Song: Luke & Krista Johnson (Marretta: Please include words in powerpoint to read as Luke sings.)

The Survivor

I have heard the slander of many
Terror on every side
While they council together against me
And plan to take away my life

I am small, concealed in this darkness
Yearning to see the light, but I may never
Because of the heartless attempt
To take away my life

Am I safe? The water around me
Is changing. Is it alright?
I am burning. Oh what are they doing?

They want to take away my life

But as for me, I trust in Thee
Oh, Lord, my times are in Your hands
You are my God, deliver me
From the solution that they have planned

I'm condemned, completely unwanted
I struggle to stay inside
Oh, my dear mother, your future is haunted
If take away my life

I'm cut off, exposed in this cold room
For love and warmth I strive, will you discard me
Throw away or starve me
And slowly drain away my life

But as for me, I trust in Thee
Oh, Lord, my times are in Your hands
You are my God, deliver me
From the solution that they have planned

Desperate hands reach out to embrace me
And steal away in the night
A gentle voice is speaking assuringly
No one will take away your life

Now I am one apart from the millions
Fortunate to survive
And though I bear on my body these old wounds
They didn't take away my life

But as for me, I trust in Thee
Oh, Lord, my times are in Your hands
You are my God, deliver me
From the solution that they have planned

**“JESUS RETURNS TO NAZARETH” (Life of Christ Series)
Luke 4:13-30; Pastor Tom Olson; January 23, 2022**

Dear Friends, Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

LIFE: Today is “Sanctity of Life Sunday.” We are pro-life. Life begins at conception and goes until natural death. God is the author of life and Satan is the cheerleader of death. Jesus spoke in John 10:10 that “the thief” comes to steal, kill and destroy. Jesus came to give abundant life! How can we become a pro-life nation? The only way is when people come to know Jesus Christ. We try to speak up for the unborn. I serve on the board of Alpha Women’s Center and we have a mobile clinic that gives free ultrasound images to show young women that they are carrying a real baby. We have our work cut out for us. God is life and we are doing the right thing.

DEATH: In today’s message we see the people of Nazareth trying to kill Jesus, the author of life. Satan inspires people to kill. Jesus inspires people to live. Let’s talk about it.

I. HUNGRY SOULS

Luke 4:13-15 When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time. 14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. 15 He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

SATAN: Jesus returned from his 40-day wilderness fast where the devil tempted him and angels ministered to him. The devil was waiting for “an opportune time.” His goal is to control the world. Satan is always looking for an opportune time to ruin the work of Christ in our lives.

SPIRIT: Jesus was operating in the power of the Spirit. We read *“he returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit.”* Perhaps that is kind of how we are when we come home from a week of Bible camp...we are fired up! Jesus’ ministry was finally under way. The people had not seen a ministry with such power. Their temple leaders were spiritually dead. Jesus taught in the power of the Holy Spirit. People were amazed. Their souls were hungry for the teaching of Christ. News was spreading about this Spirit-filled teacher of God’s Word.

NAZARETH: Jesus was moving through Galilee toward his hometown of Nazareth. He taught in the synagogues. Soon the day would come to teach in the Nazareth synagogue where he learned the Word of God as a young man.

HOMETOWN: I have had great reception preaching in many places but have had little opportunity to speak in my hometown. There are many times I wish I could go there and share the gospel and invite people to come to Christ and be “born again.” The people of my home are very “religious.” They get their children baptized and they make sure that when they die, they have a church funeral from a preacher who assures everyone they are in heaven. But many of them simply don’t have a saving faith in Jesus. If you ask them why God should let them into heaven, they will say it is because they try to be good. In their newspaper obituaries they write who baptized and confirmed them as if that is some sort of assurance that they are saved. They belong to a church but don’t have a clue about what Jesus did for them on the cross.

COMPLACENT: Many are not very hungry for salvation because they feel confident that their church membership and occasional attendance at Holy Communion will get them into heaven. When I have talked to some of them, I get very blunt and tell them that church membership is no guarantee that they are saved. Why do I do this? I want them to awaken from their religious slumber and find the assurance of salvation in Christ alone. I want them to grow in His Word. I want them to find THE SAME PEACE THAT GOD HAS GAVE ME when I got saved.

Jesus met HUNGRY SOULS in Galilee as he walked toward his hometown of Nazareth. Are you hungry today to get to know Jesus better? Does your soul long for a real and living relationship with God? I hope we all can say yes to those questions.

II. HONORING PROPHECY

Luke 4:16-22 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. 17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." 20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, 21 and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." 22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.

HOME: Jesus finally got to his hometown where he had spent the first 30 plus years of his life. There is something special about your hometown. You can go there and you know it so well. You can find your house and you know exactly what it is like, even though you have not been inside of it for decades. Some of the older people will still remember you.

SKEPTICAL: But it is hard to get respect at home. You are always a kid to them. They may have attitudes about you because of the family you are from. What do you suppose they whispered? How did they say that phrase, "Isn't this Joseph's son?" Did they say it as an honor? Did they say it as a put down like "Oh he is just the son of a carpenter?" Or did they say it with a sneer meaning, "You and I know that Mary got pregnant and Joseph wanted to divorce her, I really wonder whose child he is." Or did they mean, "Who does he think he is anyway?"

MESSIAH: Jesus was given the scroll. He opened and read a prophecy from Isaiah of the coming Messiah who would "proclaim the year of the Lord's favor," the "Year of Jubilee," the time for Israel to be set free. Then he said that this was fulfilled right then and there. I think if he said, "Let's go get our weapons and I will lead a revolt," they would have joined him. But instead, he pointed to the spiritual meaning and began to expose pride and self-righteousness.

CROSS: At this point Jesus was NOT on his way to a throne in Jerusalem. He was not going to set up his earthly kingdom yet. He was on a road to the cross. He was on a mission to bring freedom to souls in bondage to sin. **Luke 19:10** *"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."* He came to offer forgiveness and eternal life in heaven. They wanted health, wealth and prosperity right then and there. **John 6:26&27** *Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. 27 Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."*

TODAY: The same struggle goes on today. People will travel half way around the world for a prayer that might make them healthy or wealthy. But there are not as many souls that will travel to find forgiveness of sins. Jesus was HONORING PROPHECY of the SUFFERING MESSIAH WHO WOULD DIE FOR LOST SOULS. HUNGRY SOULS, HONORING PROPHECY...

III. HARDENED HEARTS

Luke 4:23-27 *Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'" 24 "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. 25 I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. 26 Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. 27 And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed-only Naaman the Syrian."*

TRUTH: Jesus points out that they are following in the footsteps of those who have rejected God's prophets. They got enraged when He reminds them that foreigners have often been more open to the things of God than the Jews who had the temple and the prophets.

MASTED: I remember an evangelist, Leonard Masted, coming to my home town to preach at the church. His dad and brother had both served there as the pastor. But most of the people stubbornly refused to come and listen to this great old man of God. One elderly woman said something like this, "Why does he come here? We don't need him. We have a nice church with pews. He needs to go out to Montana where they still sit on benches. They need him out there. We are good church people; we don't need an evangelist."

RESISTENCE: Our pastor tried so hard to lead the people into a living relationship with Jesus Christ, but many of the people resisted so stubbornly. The human heart is the same today as it was in the time of Christ.

FRUIT: But some did come to Christ and get new life and salvation, two of us became pastors. And one thing that I noticed is that many who got converted were not from my hometown. They didn't have proud roots of generations of ancestors in the church. Sometimes it is hard to break through religious pride and heritage to get the true condition of the soul. Matthew 23:37&38 records the heartbreaking words of Jesus as he rides into Jerusalem to be rejected and nailed to the cross. *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. 38 Look, your house is left to you desolate.* Put in the name of your hometown. Put in the name of your child. Put in your own name! *"O, _____, how often I would have gathered you to myself...but you would not."*

ANDREASON: Pastor Jacob Andreason preached his heart out in a large, prominent church in a Westby, Wisconsin. But the church people were very hard and would not respond to his crystal-clear call to salvation. He left that church in frustration and took a call to Ulen and Hitterdal, Minnesota. He told someone about his big wealthy Wisconsin church with giant stained-glass windows and pipe organ and he quoted from the book of Revelation, *"They have the name of being alive, but they are dead."*

FRUIT: Thankfully Pastor Andreason continued his radio program in Viroqua called "The Hour of Awakening" in the Norwegian language. My grandfather, who preferred Norwegian, never went to church. He sat at home and listened to some of the best preaching one could find from Pastor Andreason on the radio. And when we found him dying in his home with a stroke, he had been reading from the Norwegian devotional book on his last day on earth. Pastor Andreason's labor in Vernon County, though difficult, was not in vain. I typed his name into Google and up popped an obituary of a woman born in 1954 and who died in 2020 and it mentioned Pastor Andreason: *"The deceased was "confirmed in Atlanta Lutheran Church, Ulen, MN, by Rev. Jacob Andreason, who gave her a real hunger to know more about the Word of God."* Good thing he left Westby for Ulen to help this hungry soul come to Christ! HUNGRY SOULS, HONORING PROPHECY, HARDENED HEARTS...

IV. HEAVEN'S PROTECTION

Luke 4:28-30 All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. 29 They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff. 30 But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

TIMING: It was not Jesus' time to die. If they had killed him then, would his holy blood would have atoned for the sins of the world. I don't see why it would not have. But God had other plans. The people needed to be taught. Lost souls needed the good news preached to them. But most importantly, **all Scripture about Jesus needed to be fulfilled**, dozens of prophecies would be perfectly fulfilled. No man determined when Jesus died, not Herod, not Pontius Pilate, not Caiaphas, not the mob. Jesus willingly went to the cross at the right time. That is why he came the first time. He had HEAVEN'S PROTECTION.

TRUMPET: Jesus is coming again, not as the Lamb but as the Lion of Judah. Listen to these powerful words from I Thessalonians chapter 4 that we are going to be studying at OK Bible study this week: *1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 "According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage each other with these words."*

CALL: I close with this thought. Jesus is here today, speaking life through His Word. He is calling “religious people” to come to him for a real and living relationship, for forgiveness, for eternal life. New life in Christ is the only thing that will make us into a pro-life nation.

QUESTION: Will we be like the people of Nazareth and reject him? Or will be like the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian and believe in God’s Word? A Christmas carol ends with this concise prayer, “O come to my heart Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for Thee.” If He is calling you, come today; don’t delay. Amen

“Now may the peace of God that surpasses all human comprehension guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen”

Hymn #565 “My Faith Has Found a Resting Place”

Lord’s Prayer

Benediction

Doxology (AH #390) *Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below, Praise Him above, ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A-men. A-men. A---men.*

Postlude: Rebekah Olson

Old Testament Lesson: *Nehemiah 8:1-10 All the people assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel. 2 So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. 3 He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law. 4 Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden platform built for the occasion. (Beside him on his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiiah, Uriah, Hilkiyah and Maaseiah; and on his left were Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam.) 5 Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. 6 Ezra praised the LORD, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. 7 The Levites (-Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiah-) instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. 8 They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read. 9 Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is sacred to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. 10 Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."*

Epistle Lesson: *1 Corinthians 12:12-31 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.*

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But eagerly desire the greater gifts. (And now I will show you the most excellent way.)

READER: Here ends the reading of God's Word.

CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!