

**BULLETIN TEMPLATE:**

**Minnesota Valley Church**

**Date: Sunday, January, 2023**

**Church Year Date: 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Epiphany**

Prelude: Rebekah Olson

**CHORUS HYMN #362 “Jesus Loves the Little Children”**

**CALL TO WORSHIP: Epiphany Psalm 24**

**MEN: The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,**

**WOMEN: The world, and all who live in it;**

**MEN: For he founded it upon the seas**

**WOMEN: And established it upon the waters.**

**MEN: Who may ascend the hill of the LORD?**

**WOMEN: Who may stand in his holy place?**

**ALL: He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.**

**MEN: He will receive blessing from the LORD WOMEN: and vindication from God his Savior.**

**MEN: Such is the generation of those who seek him,**

**WOMEN: who seek your face, O God of Jacob.**

**(SELAH-PAUSE FOR REFLECTION)**

**PASTOR: Lift up your heads, O you gates;**

**MEN: be lifted up, you ancient doors,**

**WOMEN: that the King of glory may come in. PASTOR: Who is this King of glory?**

**ALL: The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.**

**PASTOR: Lift up your heads, O you gates;**

**MEN: lift them up, you ancient doors,**

**WOMEN: that the King of glory may come in. PASTOR: Who is he, this King of glory?**

**ALL: The LORD Almighty--he is the King of glory.**

**HYMN #**

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE:**

Reader: Steve Karban

Old Testament Lesson: *1 Kings 8:6-13 The priests then brought the ark of the LORD's covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim. 7 The cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark and overshadowed the ark and its carrying poles. 8 These poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the Holy Place in front of the inner sanctuary, but not from outside the Holy Place; and they are still there today. 9 There was nothing in the ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt. 10 When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the LORD. 11 And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled his temple. 12 Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud; 13 I have indeed built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell forever."*

Epistle Lesson: *Romans 12:1-5 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. 3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. 4 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*

**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 *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 and Receive Offering

PRAISE AND WORSHIP: Songs to be chosen by Hannah

**SERMON: "WHY DIDN'T YOU KNOW?"** Luke 2:41-52  
Pastor Tom Olson; *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen*

BUSY: I find that household chores, career, activities, media and entertainment happen in my lives and can keep me from thinking deeply. Jesus called them "the cares of life." That is why I try to get away for a couple days, by myself, in January to be quiet and listen to God...to get a sense of direction for the new year.

ATTACK: I got a phone call from a fellow I went to 13 years of school with...he is all alone so I sent him a Christmas letter. He reacted to my Christmas letter I sent out. He claims to be a druid and master wizard. He told me strange things and attacked the Word of God. After he had tried to convince me that Christianity is

a myth, I got a chance to share my testimony with him. I told him one thing that I tell all such people. It gets to them. I tell them that the gospel of Jesus Christ gives me joy and peace. And I ask them, "DO YOU HAVE JOY AND PEACE?" He has no joy and no peace.

REMINDER: I was reminded how many searching souls there are out there who have lost their way. He is lonely. His ex-wife and three daughters don't speak to him. I am likely the only childhood friend who still speaks to him. I was REMINDED of the purpose of my life...to share the good news of the gospel with lost souls.

LOST: Today, we see Jesus staying behind in the temple. Mary and Joseph thought HE was lost. But he was not lost. Mary and Joseph knew full well who he was. THEY had gotten lost. They got so BUSY with the cares of life, that they forgot the deeper purpose of their life...to raise THE SON OF GOD. That is why Jesus said to them, very appropriately, "WHY DIDN'T YOU KNOW?" Let's talk about it.

## **I. JESUS INTENTIONALLY STAYED BEHIND**

***Luke 2:41-43 Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. 42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. 43 After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it.***

FAITHFUL: Jesus' parents were faithful with the outward requirements of the Jewish law. They went to Jerusalem "every year" for the Passover. This was a great sacrifice of time and money. Perhaps we could compare it to going to Bible Camp every year, faithfully. But somehow, they lost track of Jesus.

VILLAGE: Now I understand this from my association with Alaskan village life. Way up North, by Nome, there is a practice in small villages that children do not walk home late at night after

playing with friends. They just stay overnight with them. Wild animals could easily get them. It happens so often that parents often don't even know where their children are some nights.

TWELVE: Mary and Joseph were going home. Jesus was 12 and he was staying at his real Father's home. I remember that when I was 14 I got confirmed and invited an older man from our antique engine club to my confirmation dinner. Albert Levendoski said to me, "I would love to come." And I never forget what he also said, "CONFIRMATION IS WHEN A BOY BECOMES A MAN." Jews call it BAR-MITZVAH. Our land in Wisconsin was purchased from a farmer who quit school at age 12 and started farming full time. Jesus was growing up.

PAST: When our children are 12 or so it is time to start letting them go and giving them serious responsibilities. School keeps them irresponsible in a way. In the old days, at age 12, most children started to work full time! They had no time or energy left to get in trouble...just eat at night and collapse into bed exhausted. We forget how it was for most of human history. Jesus was doing His work...HE INTENTIONALLY STAYED BEHIND.

## II. CLUELESS AND OUT OF TOUCH

*Luke 2:44-46 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.*

CLUELESS: Mary and Joseph were clueless and out of touch. They looked for three days. You know what that tells us? They were looking in all the wrong places. Perhaps they looked at the market, or at the home of relatives, or at places where children gather to play. Perhaps they were afraid he was kidnapped, like Joseph of

old, and went to the caravans that transported food and merchandise and inquired there.

LAST: Finally, they went to the temple. Jesus was drawn to the place that they had no idea a child would be drawn toward. The temple was beautiful, but that is not what drew Him. He was drawn to the teachers and discussions about the Holy Scriptures. *Psalm 122:1 "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."*

IDENTIFY: I identify. In my home town is a big old brick Lutheran church. I always liked being there, unlike other children. Most younger children seem to like the church but change at about age 12. I loved Bible study, choir practices, church services or even just being alone in the majestic sanctuary in the presence of God. But no parent of the normal 12-year-old would ever suspect their child would be at the temple, or church.

OBVIOUS: Mary and Joseph knew full well who Jesus was. The virgin birth made that clear. The angel visits affirmed it. But they got so busy living with the cares of life, they sort of FORGOT, it seems, that they were RAISING THE SON OF GOD. They forgot that the "Word Made Flesh" would start to long to be near the "Written Word of God."

APPLICATION: It is good for all godly parents and grandparents to remember that they are raising children to fulfill THEIR GOD-ORDAINED DESTINY and not to merely be successful in the world's eyes. I grieve that so many people have raised their children to be successful financially but spiritually lost and untrained in the Word of God.

PROMISE: Our children belong to God, we give them to him in Holy Baptism, and we promise to raise them up to know the Word of God. We sometimes forget and they become lost.

### III. FINDING THE DESTINY HIS PARENTS FORGOT

*Luke 2:47-50 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." 49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" 50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them.*

CHIDED: It is interesting that Mary and Joseph chided Jesus for staying behind in the temple. They were more concerned about getting back to Nazareth than they were seeing to it that Jesus was exposed to the Holy Word of God. But Jesus chided them back with that great question: *"Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house?"* That question must have cut them to the quick. I would suspect that Mary and Joseph had told him many times about the virgin birth and the angelic visitations.

HINDSIGHT: I can imagine Mary and Joseph talking that night together and saying to one another, "Jesus was not the one who was lost. We are the ones who have lost our way. How could we forget the virgin birth, the angelic visitations? Why did we try to drag him away from the temple, rather than making sure he had all the time there he needed at his age? We need to get our thinking straight and remember who we are raising."

PERSONAL: This is not only true for our children. We also can forget that we OURSELVES have a God-ordained destiny. Perhaps at Bible Camp or even just out in the woods, God once spoke to us. We yielded to Him and told him that our life was His. And then we slowly got back into the worldly pattern of thinking and caught up with the cares of life. We forget that we are God's people on earth.

*2 Corinthians 5:16-20 "So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a*

*new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the me."*

We all have A DIVINE DESTINY that Satan wants us to forget. If Mary and Joseph can forget, so can we.

### IV. WAITING FOR THE RIGHT TIME

*Luke 2:51-52 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*

SILENCE: After this incident, Jesus returned to Nazareth and grew up. We don't hear a word about him for next twenty years. But we know what he was doing because it says here: *Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.* Jesus grew in wisdom, undoubtedly faithfully going to synagogue to hear the Scriptures read and taught. I assume he kept going to the Passover and to the temple, but we don't know that. But we know he grew in wisdom. We can be sure he spent time in prayer. And he grew in stature which would mean lots of hard work and exercise. He was true God and true man and grew in both aspects of his being.

NATURES: When Christ comes into our hearts, we also are like that. TRUE GOD IS IN US and our spiritual lives grow as we study the Word, pray and come to the Lord's table. WE ARE ALSO TRUE MAN, and we get strong and able to fulfill our destiny as we take care of our bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit.

LAMB: Jesus is our example, but most importantly, keeping with our theme these past Sundays, Jesus is the *"Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."* And that is the destiny that Jesus was heading toward.

SS PROGRAM: Our Sunday school this year had their Christmas program of that same theme, from the manger to the cross. The children started in the stable of Bethlehem but ended their program gathered around an old rugged cross. But the story doesn't end there. Our recent funerals of Mark Gangl and Wayne Hanson remind us that we have a greater destiny, an eternal one...in heaven, with the Lord, forever.

SAD: My poor friend from childhood doesn't have that. He thinks the earth is flat and that if he can find the true center of the earth, the true North Pole, that there is a portal there where he can jump in and find his greater destiny. But he lives in despair, without hope to find that portal, blind to the Love of God in Christ Jesus. We were confirmed together in 1974 but I met Jesus and he lost his way.

AMBASSADORS: *"Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house."* It is good to be here together today, gathered around God's Word and trying to stay closer to the divine destiny that God has for us and for our children as well. Ninety five percent of Americans under the age of 20 have never been in a church...we are a nation that has lost its way. We are missionaries to a pagan culture. We are ambassadors for Christ. We have a real calling, don't we! Amen

*May the peace of God that surpasses all human comprehension, guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen*

**Hymn #381 "How Shall the Young Secure Their Hearts"**

Lord's Prayer

Benediction

*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