

**January 7, 2024,
1st SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
Pastor Tom Olson
Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church**

PRELUDE: Ruth Antal (Fuglebergs)

CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 27

PASTOR: The LORD is my light and my salvation--whom shall I fear?

ALL: The LORD is the stronghold of my life--of whom shall I be afraid?

PASTOR: One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life

ALL: To behold the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.

PASTOR: For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling;

ALL: He will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock.

PASTOR: Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy;

ALL: I will sing and make music to the LORD.

HYMN #60 “Jesus, Wonderful Lord”

CONFESSION OF SIN: Psalm 51:1-7 Have mercy on me. O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

CHILDREN’S SERMON:

Reader:

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Isaiah 60:1-6 "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. 2 See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. 3 Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. 4 "Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the arm. 5 Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. 6 Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the LORD.*

SECOND LESSON: *Acts 2:31-44 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. 33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand 35 until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." ' 36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." 37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call." 40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.*

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

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

CONFESSION OF FAITH: *I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible.*

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made; Who for us, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, And was made man; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, He suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, And ascended into heaven, And is seated on the right hand of the Father, And He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, The Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the Life of the world to come. 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 AND PRAYER FOR OFFERING

PRAISE SONGS PICKED BY RUTH

SERMON TITLE: “LONGING FOR A MESSIAH” Mark 1:4-13; Pastor Tom Olson; January 7, 2024

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

The world is a bomb, waiting to explode. North Korea wants to invade and control South Korea. China wants Taiwan back and

tensions are running high in that part of the world. American destroyers are in the Indian Ocean on high alert. China’s grip on Nepal is a powder keg. The majority Hindus in India are trying to drive out the minority Christians. Every month we get news of the ongoing genocide of Christians in Nigeria and other parts of Africa. Islam is trying hard to take Africa by force and China is a major player. The battle for survival of tiny Israel against the forces of Hamas and the Arab neighbors is a bloody and seemingly hopeless situation that no one can resolve. Many parts of Europe are increasingly tense and violent as the immigrant Muslim populations grow and the ethnic populations decline. We brace for a summer of violence in America as the political powers clash in another election year. Gun sales are soaring for it in record numbers. Those who can afford to leave our cities are fleeing to safer parts of the country. Many people want peace but they don’t know where to turn...some to the politicians, some to guns and others do despair and suicide.

This is not unlike the time of Christ when the Roman Empire was crushing Israel with dictatorial control and unbearable taxes. Those taxes are what got Mary and Joseph to go to Bethlehem. Small groups of zealots were building up weapons to fight the Romans. In the midst of it all, a renewed interest in prophecy began and was fueled by the rise of an evangelist named John the Baptist. The passionate hope of the people, not unlike today, was for a MESSIAH to come and save them from their troubles. Today, we look at the Baptism of Jesus and the LONGING FOR A MESSIAH in Mark chapter 1.

I. THE PREPARATION FOR THE MESSIAH

Mark 1:4-6 And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. 6 John wore clothing made of camel's hair,

with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

II. THE PROCLAMATION OF THE MESSIAH

Mark 1:7-8 And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

III. THE PROVISION OF THE MESSIAH

Mark 1:9-13 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." 12 At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, 13 and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

#328 "On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry"

HOLY COMMUNION (Dave Fischer prep and help)

CHORAL BLESSING: *May the Lord, Mighty Lord, Bless and keep you forever-- Grant you peace, Perfect peace, Strength in every endeavor. Lift up your eyes and see His face, Feel His grace forever. May the Lord, Mighty Lord, Bless and keep you forever.*

POSTLUDE: Ruth Antal