

**Minnesota Valley Church**

**Date: Sunday, January 19, 2025**

**Church Year Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany**

Prelude: Carol Gustafson

Singers: Fugleberg

CALL TO WORSHIP: from *Psalm 128*

*PASTOR: Blessed are all who fear the LORD,*

*ALL: Who walk in his ways.*

*PASTOR: You will eat the fruit of your labor;*

*ALL: Blessings and prosperity will be yours.*

*PASTOR: May the LORD bless you from Zion*

*ALL: All the days of your life;*

*PASTOR: May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem,*

*ALL: And may you live to see your children's children.*

Hymn #511 "Blessed Assurance"

**Confession of Sin: *I lay my sins on Jesus, The spotless Lamb of God; He bears them all and frees us, From the accursed load. I bring my guilt to Jesus, To wash my crimson stains, White in His blood most precious, 'Till not a spot remains. Amen***

Children's Sermon:

Reader: Bob Hawksford

*EPISTLE LESSON: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. 2 You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. 3 Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. 4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of*

*working, but the same God works all of them in all men. 7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.*

*GOSPEL LESSON: John 2:1-11 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." 4 "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. 8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, 9 and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside 10 and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." 11 This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.*

**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 Prayer Concerns

PRAISE AND WORSHIP: Chosen by Carol

**SERMON: THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM,** Isaiah 62:1-4  
Pastor Tom Olson *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen*

**BATTLES:** The battle for Jerusalem never ends. Remember the uproar when the American embassy was moved to Jerusalem? The arguments over the temple mount go on. The decision to rebuild the Jewish temple is one of the most volatile issues in the world today. From a human view it makes no sense, an almost worthless piece of land with no water, resources or outward value is headline news.

**REVEALED:** In today's Old Testament text, we see the peace of Jerusalem **PROPHESIED** and in the gospel lesson we see the peace of Jerusalem **REVEALED** in Christ. Isaiah 62:1ff...**JERUSALEM IS...**

## **I. A CHOSEN CITY: BLESSING OF THE WORLD**

*Isaiah 62:1-2 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch.  
2 The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow.*

PUPIL: Jerusalem is a special city to God. It is called the "apple of His eye." Zechariah 2:8 warns people who want to destroy Jerusalem that they are touching the apple of His eye...that refers to the pupil of the eye. In other words, if you mess with Jerusalem, you are poking your finger in God's eye. If I were to point to the center of the world it would not be New York, LA, London, Beijing, Tokyo or Rome, it would be Jerusalem. It is called "the city of the great King" in Psalm 48:2.

**HISTORY:** The inhabitants of Jerusalem don't always live up to the holy calling of that city though. God has had to wipe them out time and again because of their evil behavior. Isaiah tells us here what God wants Jerusalem to be. We can appropriately apply this to the church and to our own personal lives as well. This is the will of God for His people and for His city. Note what these verses say that God wants Jerusalem to:

1. To have righteousness that shines like the dawn
2. To be a beacon of spiritual salvation
3. To be an example of righteousness to the nations of the world
4. To be an inspiration to world leaders
5. To get a new name that reflects her holy calling

**DIVIDED:** Right now, Jerusalem is divided. People are fighting to control Jerusalem. The Jews want Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel. Many Muslims want the Jews to be driven out of Jerusalem and Israel. The current war between Israel and Hamas is a

heartbreaking tragedy. Jerusalem is supposed to be the city of peace. The Hebrew word for peace is part of the name, SALEM or Shalom. At this point, Jerusalem is not seen by many as a blessing to the world, but instead as trouble for the world.

ROCK: This trouble is prophesied in Zechariah 12:2-3 *"I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling...All who try to move it will injure themselves.*

WAITING: We patiently await the time when Jerusalem will once again be a great blessing to the world. It will happen when Jesus returns.

PRAYING: Until then, we pray for Jerusalem. The New King James version says in *Psalms 122:6 "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: May they prosper who love you."* The second point we see about Jerusalem is that it is...

## II. A DESERTED CITY: REPEATEDLY DESTROYED

*Isaiah 62:3-4a You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. 4 No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate.*

BABYLON: Jerusalem has been deserted and desolate a number of times in history. At the time of Daniel, Babylon swooped down and destroyed Jerusalem including Solomon's great temple, which was one of the wonders of the world. King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem, seventy years later. Nehemiah the governor rebuilt the walls and Ezra the priest rebuilt the temple.

ROME: In seventy AD the Romans once again destroyed Jerusalem. The Jews were scattered to the ends of the earth. Jerusalem was again DESERTED AND DESOLATE. In 1948 Israel became a nation. Eventually Jerusalem became the capital city of Israel. It is a modern city but there is no Jewish TEMPLE in it yet. A number of prophetic references about the reinstatement

of sacrifices have many people believing that the temple will be rebuilt. Not surprisingly, there is speculation that President Trump will be the one who will negotiate that peace and the terms of rebuilding the temple. Time will tell what will happen. These are interesting days.

FINAL DESTRUCTION: There is a passage in Zechariah 14 that indicates that Jerusalem will be destroyed one more time right before Jesus comes back. Let me read this passage to you:

*Zechariah 14:2-9 I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. 3 Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. 4 On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. 5 You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him. 6 On that day there will be no light, no cold or frost. 7 It will be a unique day, without daytime or nighttime—a day known to the LORD. When evening comes, there will be light. 8 On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea and half to the western sea, in summer and in winter. 9 The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name.*

PROPHETIC: Jerusalem is right in the middle of God's prophetic plan from the days of Abraham and Melchizedek to Christ Jesus to the last days when Christ returns. It will remain in the news headlines I suspect more and more as that great day draws near. Finally, Jerusalem is...

## III. A FUTURE CITY: GOD'S HAS PLANS

***Isaiah 62:4b But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married.***

REIGN: There is a future day coming for Jerusalem when Jesus returns and that great city will be the center of His earthly reign. To describe that day, Isaiah uses two words: HEPHZIBAH and BEULAH.

FRUITFUL: Hephzibah means “you are my delight” and it replaces the word “forsaken.” Beulah means “married” and it replaces the word “desolate.” Those of us who believe in the literal 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth at his return would see this as a season where Jerusalem is a delight and is fruitful or married. She will be the center of the earth’s activities and a delight to all. She will finally be the city of peace.

TYPE: Jerusalem is also a prophecy of what is to come for all eternity. In Revelation 21 the concept of the city of Jerusalem and the bride of Christ, or the church, are merged into one entity that will dwell in the very presence of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for all eternity. It will be the time beyond anything from this age. It will be the ETERNAL TIME of perfect peace, perfect health and perfect joy for all who are allowed to dwell there. No evil person or evil practice will ever be allowed in that place forever and ever. C. S. Lewis describes it as a place “where each day is better than the last one.”

DEVOTIONS: For my devotions with the area pastors in Burnsville on January 9 I had them read Revelation 21 out loud. I told them we would not interpret it or apply it, just read it and then pray. One of the pastors from Inver Grove Heights came to my home on Friday to talk to me. He said that experience of reading Revelation 21 about the new Jerusalem with no comments or discussion afterward was one of the most powerful experiences that he had experienced. I will read it to you, about the future

plans that God has for Jerusalem and for all believers. Then we will sing an old Norwegian song about it.

## Revelation 21

***Then I saw a new earth (with no scary oceans!) and a new sky, for the present earth and sky had disappeared. 2 And I, John, saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. It was a glorious sight, beautiful as a bride at her wedding.***

***3 I heard a loud shout from the throne saying, "Look, the home of God is now among men, and he will live with them and they will be his people; yes, God himself will be among them. 4 He will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain. All of that has gone forever."***

***5 And the one sitting on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new!" And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true: 6 It is finished! I am the A and the Z-the Beginning and the End. I will give to the thirsty the springs of the Water of Life-as a gift! 7 Everyone who conquers will inherit all these blessings, and I will be his God and he will be my son. 8 But cowards who turn back from following me, and those who are unfaithful to me, and the corrupt, and murderers, and the immoral, and those conversing with demons, and idol worshipers and all liars-their doom is in the Lake that burns with fire and sulphur. This is the Second Death."***

***9 Then one of the seven angels who had emptied the flasks containing the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come with me and I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." 10 In a vision he took me to a towering mountain peak, and from there I watched that wondrous city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of the skies from God. 11 It was filled with the glory of God and flashed and glowed like a precious gem, crystal***

*clear like jasper. 12 Its walls were broad and high, with twelve gates guarded by twelve angels. And the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written on the gates. 13 There were three gates on each side-north, south, east, and west. 14 The walls had twelve foundation stones, and on them were written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

*15 The angel held in his hand a golden measuring stick to measure the city and its gates and walls. 16 When he measured it, he found it was a square as wide as it was long; in fact it was in the form of a cube, for its height was exactly the same as its other dimensions-1,500 miles each way. 17 Then he measured the thickness of the walls and found them to be 216 feet across (the angel called out these measurements to me, using standard units).*

*18 The city itself was pure, transparent gold like glass! The wall was made of jasper, and was built on twelve layers of foundation stones inlaid with gems:*

*the first layer with jasper;  
the second with sapphire;  
the third with chalcedony;  
the fourth with emerald;  
the fifth with sardonyx;  
the sixth layer with sardus;  
the seventh with chrysolite;  
the eighth with beryl;  
the ninth with topaz;  
the tenth with chrysoprase;  
the eleventh with jacinth;  
the twelfth with amethyst.*

*21 The twelve gates were made of pearls-each gate from a single pearl! And the main street was pure, transparent gold, like glass.*

*22 No temple could be seen in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are worshiped in it everywhere.*

*23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to light it, for the glory of God and of the Lamb illuminate it. 24 Its light will light the nations of the earth, and the rulers of the world will come and bring their glory to it. 25 Its gates never close; they stay open all day long-and there is no night! 26 And the glory and honor of all the nations shall be brought into it. 27 Nothing evil will be permitted in it-no one immoral or dishonest-but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.*

*(Now may the peace of God that passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen)*

Hymn #622 "In Heaven Above"

Lord's Prayer

Benediction

Closing Song: Chosen by Carol

Postlude: Carol Gustafson