

BULLETIN TEMPLATE:

Minnesota Valley Church

Date: Sunday, January 25, 2026

Church Year Date: 3rd Sunday after Epiphany SANCTITY OF LIFE SUNDAY

Prelude: Rebekah Olson

Today is Sanctity of Life Sunday and our songs are about life and children.

HYMN #527 (vss 1&2) "I Serve a Risen Savior"

CALL TO WORSHIP: from Psalm 27

PASTOR: O LORD, the king rejoices in your strength.

ALL: How great is his joy in the victories you give!

PASTOR: You have granted him the desire of his heart

ALL: And have not withheld the request of his lips.

PASTOR: You welcomed him with rich blessings

ALL: And placed a crown of pure gold on his head.

PASTOR: He asked you for life, and you gave it to him--

ALL: Length of days, for ever and ever.

PASTOR: For the king trusts in the LORD;

ALL: through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken.

HYMN #371 "I Am Jesus' Little Lamb"

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE:

Reader: Becky Kruse

Old Testament Lesson: *Isaiah 9:1-4 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan--*

2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. 3 You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder. 4 For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor.

Epistle Lesson: *1 Corinthians 1:10-19 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. 11 My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. 12 What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? 14 I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. 16(Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel-not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

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: “PROCLAIMING LIFE IN A CULTURE OF DEATH” Matthew 4:12-25, January 25, 2026 Pastor Tom Olson; *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen*

THANKS: I want to thank Dave Osthus for braving the cold and going to the March for Life at the Capital. OUR CONGREGATION AND DENOMINATION STANDS FOR THE SANCTITY OF LIFE FROM CONCEPTION TO NATURAL DEATH. It is in our Minnesota Valley Church constitution.

FORCES: Powerful forces are pressing hard upon our leaders in Washington D. C. to repeal the Hyde Amendment. The Hyde Amendment forbids Federal tax dollars to be used to directly provide abortions. To repeal it would bring a great curse upon our nation. We must stand with the most helpless and innocent of all people, the child in the womb.

HOW: How do we PROCLAIM LIFE IN A CULTURE OF DEATH? Our gospel lesson today gives us some practical ways to make a difference as we focus on how Jesus did his ministry. Matthew 4 beginning at verse 12...

I. JESUS STARTED WITH THE RURAL PEOPLE

Matthew 4:12-16 *When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. 13 Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali- 14 to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: 15 "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles- 16 the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned."*

CORRUPTION: To have abortion is to “LIVE IN THE LAND OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.” Corrupt leaders and rampant immorality is *“to live in the land of the shadow of death.”* Jesus had to face up to the realities of corrupt rulers. King Herod was living in sin with his brother’s wife. John the Baptist confronted him about his sin. Herod responded by throwing John in prison.

PRISON: Jesus was deeply grieved by John’s imprisonment. Undoubtedly, he knew it would lead to his execution. But Jesus also knew that the moment John’s soul left his body that he would be comforted in the glories of Paradise.

RETREAT: What did Jesus do? Where did He go? How did He carry on his ministry in the face of the King’s iron grip on dissent? He left the city and went out into the country and began with the rural people. The rural Shepherds were the first ones to hear from God about the birth of Jesus and the common rural people were the first ones to experience the ministry of Christ. Farmers, fishermen and common laborers were the foundation of the church that Jesus was pulling together.

FOUNDATION: If we want to make an impact on America for the gospel and for the sanctity of life we must start with the grass roots. We each have ordinary people in our lives. They are the ones we win to Christ. They are the ones we pour our lives into with discipleship training. They are the ones that will influence our

towns, our schools, our leaders on a local basis. They are the ones who are marching at the pro-life rallies and calling upon our leaders to do the right thing.

MARCH FOR LIFE: When we marched in St. Paul last year there were hundreds of children. Bus loads of children had more conviction and courage than the lawmakers hiding in their offices inside. There were mothers there pushing their baby strollers. There were no guns, no angry mobs, no loud chanting...just ordinary people taking a public stand for what is right. Starting with the children is key.

PARENTING: Dedicated parenting is so important. There is an old saying, **“The hand that rocks the cradle, rocks the world.”** Parents who take the time to raise their children well will produce the generation that will overturn our culture of death. I heard a scholar speak this week saying that if people in England don’t have more children and teach them to love England, their country is going to perish in another generation.

SAMUEL: In the Old Testament Hannah begged God for a child. She got Samuel. Hannah and Elkanah cherished Samuel. Thy gave him a loving foundation. Then they brought him to the temple where Eli the priest raised him in the presence of the Word of God. Samuel grew up to speak the Word of God to the nation.

SOLUTION: The most pro-life thing you can do is have children and raise them well. The way we raise children can make a real difference for our nation. I am so thankful that all our children grew up to be pro-life.

START: If you want to make an impact, **START RURAL, START LOCAL, START AT HOME.** We are raising up a generation of life, rather than death. Secondly, to **PROCLAIM LIFE IN A CULTURE OF DEATH...**

II. JESUS CALLED UPON THE PEOPLE TO REPENT

Matthew 4:17 *From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."*

MEANING: What is the first message Jesus gave to these rural people? It is “REPENT.” It is a life-changing word and we are afraid of it. To repent means to turn away from something by turning toward something else.

- It means turning toward the Lord and away from self.
- It means turning toward righteousness and away from sin.
- It means turning toward the Holy Spirit and away from Satan.
- It means turning toward the worthwhile thinking and away from the worthless thoughts.

SPIRIT: As we repent of sin, the door opens up for the fulness of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

CONTROL: Is God speaking to you today about repentance? Is He calling you to cling to something good and let go of something bad? Surrender your issue to God. He will fight for you.

PRODIGAL: I will never forget the farmer who ran to the altar and collapsed confessing his sins. In Cloquet a prodigal son returned home and came to the altar and wept a pool of tears onto the tile floor as he repented of his deplorable sins and as the pastor proclaimed, “your sins are forgiven by the blood of Christ.” Repentance was the beginning of a new life for him.

TODAY: If we want to overcome the **CULTURE OF DEATH**, we do well to start with personal repentance of sin. Why not do it today! Our carpet is ready to soak up your true tears of sorrow for sin.

III. JESUS KEPT BUILDING HIS TEAM

Matthew 4:18-25 *As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." 20 At once they left their nets and followed him. 21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. 23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. 24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them. 25 Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.*

DISCIPLESHIP: The pro-life cause is tied directly to discipleship. Anger or emotion won't be effective in the long-run. Jesus walked along the Sea of Galilee and invited fishermen to be His disciples. You will find that the working-class people are some of the best disciples of Christ and warriors in the pro-life cause. Most of the boots on the ground effort come dressed in blue jeans. Most of the people who are passionate about saving the lives of the unborn are ordinary people. They are Bible people.

PRIORITIES: In verses 23&24 we see that Jesus had four priorities: teaching, preaching, healing the sick and casting out demons. If we are going to be effective against the culture of death, we need to have those same priorities. Let's look at them:

- **TEACHING:** This is primarily the role of the parents to teach their children the ways of God from the Word of God. Daily Bible reading as a family in little digestible bites is

key. We like to do it at breakfast in our home and use a devotional book like "Our Daily Bread."

- **PREACHING:** Bringing the family to church to hear sermons from the Word of God is also very important. The children need to see mom and dad wanting to hear Bible preaching. On the old Andy Griffith show they don't say "I am going to church" but they say "I am going to preaching!" Preaching makes a difference.
- **HEALING:** When the love of Christ is poured into our hearts, we start to want to minister to people in their suffering. All of us have someone who needs a listening ear, a prayer for healing or a helping hand. When a person or family lends aid to someone in need, it draws them together as well.
- **EXORCISM:** **The painful reality is that we have allowed demonic powers to invade our spiritual landscape.** They enter souls and make life miserable. A missing ministry in most churches is casting out demons. Jesus said that they come out through "fasting and prayer." My personal goal is to do more fasting and prayer so I can be more effective in helping people get set free from Satanic powers.

NEWS: Notice in Verse 24 that "News spread" and soon many people were coming for help. I have a pastor friend that has been praying, preaching evangelistic sermons and starting discipleship groups in his tiny Mora, Minnesota church. They have grown in a couple of years from attendance of 35 to more than 100. They are especially focused on Celebrate Recovery to help people get free from the power of drugs and alcohol. God is changing lives. He credits the move of God to people gathering for serious prayer. God is blessing them with a season of revival.

TEACHING, PREACHING, HEALING AND EXORCISM...these are the priorities of the ministry of Christ. These are the tools that will deliver our nation from the cult of death to Savior who gives abundant life. We are on an exciting journey.

OPPORTUNITIES: We pray on Sunday mornings in the fellowship hall. If too many people come, we can split into two or more groups. I am adding a monthly prayer meeting on the third Saturday of the month at 9:00 AM. Serious prayer is where true revival begins.

ARMOR: We learned from Dave Fischer that once we put on the armor of God we pray. Ephesians six means primarily CORPORATE PRAYER because he was addressing the congregation as a whole. The Apostle Paul said clearly that this prayer is what made his ministry effective. If we want to be more effective like the church in Mora, **we have to do the same thing they did** and the same thing Jesus did...PRAY ERNESTLY!

LEGACY: I hope that when people ask you what my ministry and preaching is like that you won't say, "He is a good speaker" or "He is a nice person." I hope you say, "He is continually asking us to get together and pray for the Holy Spirit to bring us true spiritual revival. He is stuck on prayer and revival. That is what I want you to remember.

AMERICA: The move of God is the only power that will save America from the demonic culture of death. Jesus is Lord. Jesus is able. We just need to stay connected to the vine. Then we will bear much fruit. Then we will overcome THE CULTURE OF DEATH WITH THE CULTURE OF LIFE. Amen *May the peace of God that surpasses all human comprehension, guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen*

Hymn #545 (vss 1&2) "Because He Lives"

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