

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
January 29, 2023
United Church of Christ, Neillsville
Pastor Sue Vornholt

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PRELUDE

Holly Pisors

RINGING OF THE CARILLON

OUR SHARED LIFE AND SERVICE (Announcements)

We thank God for these opportunities for fellowship and service. **Thanks be to God!**

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jesus, Teacher, your teaching surprises us!

Not the world's wisdom, but God's.

You move us with sorrow for the sorrow of the world.

And make us strong through our tears.

You offer us humility to admit our failures

And plant seeds of hope in the ashes.

You make us hungry for justice

And give us food that lasts. You invite us to

practice what we preach

And offer joy in that challenge.

You support us in standing firm for truth, even when it costs

And promise the truth will make us free.

HYMN

"I Woke Up This Morning"

#85 NCH African-American spiritual
Arr. Jeffrey Radford

1 I woke up this morning with my mind (Hallelujah) stayed on Jesus, Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on Jesus,

Woke up this morning with my mind (Hallelujah) stayed on Jesus, Hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah.

2 Singing and praying with my mind (Hallelujah) stayed on Jesus, Singing and praying with my mind stayed on Jesus, Singing and praying with my mind (Hallelujah) stayed on Jesus, Hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah.

OPENING PRAYER

God of our lives, God of our lives, you are always turning the world upside down, calling us to follow you into new ventures, new challenges, new ways to care, new ways to touch the hearts of all. When we get tired, or feel disappointed, remind us that you can bring change and hope out of the most difficult situations, so that we may do justice, love, kindness and walk humbly with you always. Amen

CALL TO CONFESSION (Pastor)

God has come to us in Christ, but we often live as if it made no difference. Let us confess our sin.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Leader: The World's wisdom surrounds us:

Left Side: Look after number one...

Right Side: Get them before they get you..

Left Side: Better be safe than sorry...

Right side: What's someone else's problems got to do with me..?

Left side: Only the strong survive..

Right side: Money makes the world go 'round...

Left side: Revenge is sweet..

Right side: Avoid pain at all costs...

May God forgive us when we, as Christ's own people, believe these words to be life-giving when Jesus has shown us a better way.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (Pastor)

Blessed are those who recognize the wisdom of God, and strive to shape their lives around it's truth. In Christ God forgives us and restores us to the way of trust and mercy.

Thanks be to God.

PRAISE RESPONSE

(sung twice)

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.

Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Give voice to God's love and peace; those around us need to hear the Good News.

All: The Peace of God be with you.

All are invited to greet one another with such words as "The peace of Christ be with you, and the response: "And also with you."

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE READINGS

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

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. 19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." 20 Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. 22 Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. 26 Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 God chose the lowly things of this world

and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast before him. 30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. 31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

Matthew 5:1-12

5 1-2 When Jesus saw his ministry drawing huge crowds, he climbed a hillside. Those who were apprenticed to him, the committed, climbed with him. Arriving at a quiet place, he sat down and taught his climbing companions. This is what he said: 3 "You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.

4 "You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.

5 "You're blessed when you're content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought. 6 "You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat.

7 "You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being 'care-full,' you find yourselves cared for.

8 "You're blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

9 "You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family. 10 "You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom.

11-12 "Not only that—count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even!—for though they don't like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble.

MESSAGE "You're Blessed" Pastor Sue

HYMN

"Blessed Are The Poor in Spirit"

#180 NCH

Rusty Edwards

**1 Blessed are the poor in spirit:
heaven will someday be theirs.
Blessed are the mourning children:
comfort comes from One who cares.
Blessed the meek and patient,
having courage to hang on.
Soon all earth they will inherit;
times of trials will be gone.**

**2 Blessed all who thirst or hunger:
righteously they will be fed.
Those who respond with mercy
will see mercy up ahead.
Blessed the clean in spirit -
beautiful, the pure in heart;
One day they will see their Maker,
nevermore to live apart.**

**3 Each seeking peace and justice
shall be known as God's own heir.
Blessed, too, are those ill-treated
for what's good and right and fair.
Blessed in New Creation,
joy beyond what we conceive;
Blessed all those who trust the promise:
without seeing, they believe!**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

One: Let us pray as Christ Our Savior has taught us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY (Pastor)

God has led us to this place to heal and inspire us, to gently redirect us, until we see the world as God does and love it with God's love. With our gifts, we affirm that God's generosity can make us all into a new creation by the way we give of ourselves.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING

Liberator Christ, you went to the top of a mountain, and taught a sacred word about the meek and the grief stricken, about the lost and the lonely. Come to this place now, and by these gifts help us to see the world not as it is, but as it could be, that we may become good news to all. Amen

HYMN

"God Be With You"

#80 NCH

Jeremiah Rankin

**1 God be with you till we meet again;
By good counsel guide, uphold you,
With a shepherd's care enfold you;
God be with you till we meet again.**

Refrain:

**Till we meet, till we meet,
Till we meet at Jesus' feet;
Till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.**

**2 God be with you till we meet again;
Wings of shelter safely hide you,
Daily manna still provide you:
God be with you till we meet again. [Refrain]**

**3 God be with you till we meet again;
When life's perils thick confound you,
Put unfailing arms around you:
God be with you till we meet again. [Refrain]**

**4 God be with you till we meet again;
Keep love's banner floating o'er you,
Smite death's threatening wave before you:
God be with you till we meet again. [Refrain]**

BENEDICTION

As you have learned wisdom- go and teach!
As you have been fed, go to feed the hungry.
As you have been set free, go to set free the imprisoned.

As you heard- proclaim
And the blessing which you have received from the Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit be always with you. **Amen**

JOYS AND CONCERNS

WELCOME

We welcome you to our service of worship!

We are glad that you have joined us in-person, through the internet or on the radio.

We pray that you will hear God’s call, seek to follow Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

RADIO BROADCAST

11 AM Sunday radio broadcast on WCCN
98.5FM and 1370AM

Youtube for January 29, 2023

<https://youtu.be/7PmdlQwscdg>

This week’s radio broadcast
is sponsored by
“a faithful listener”.

**Calling All Women
of the Church –**

You are invited to attend a short meeting after Sunday worship on February 5th in the sanctuary. We need your input on purchasing some items for our church using Holiday Fair Funds. Please plan to be there.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tuesday, January 31st –

1PM – Bible Study – 510 W 14th Street

*every week at Marge Goetsch’s home

REMINDER- Please have all February Newsletter articles into the office by January 31st



Bring your soup cans into the narthex by February 12th. All soup donations go to our local food pantries.