

Saturday, December 26, 2020

+ **OPENING CALL TO PRAISE AND PRAYER**

O God, open our lips,  
***and our mouths shall proclaim your praise.***  
From the rising of the sun to its setting,  
***we praise your name, O God.***

+ **REMEMBRANCE OF BAPTISM**

By Word and water God renews us this day  
in the living fountain of God's grace,  
and raises us with Christ Jesus  
to live a new life in the Spirit. \* OS�  
***Satisfy us in the morning  
with your steadfast love, O God,  
that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.***

+ **MORNING HYMN**

Joy to the world! The Lord is come  
Let earth receive her King!  
***Let every heart prepare Him room***  
And heaven and nature sing  
And heaven and nature sing  
***And heaven, and heaven and nature sing!***

+ **MORNING PRAYER**

The Holy One\* be with you;  
***And also with you.***

Let us pray:

O God our Father, you have brought us again to the glad season when we celebrate the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that his Spirit may be born anew in our hearts this day and that we may joyfully welcome him to reign over us. Open our ears that we may hear again the angelic chorus of old. Open our lips that we, too, may sing with the uplifted hearts. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill toward all; through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen***

UM Book of Worship

+ **Isaiah 52:7-10**

<sup>7</sup> How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,  
who brings good news,  
who announces salvation,  
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

<sup>8</sup> Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,

together they sing for joy;  
for in plain sight they see  
the return of the LORD to Zion.  
<sup>9</sup> Break forth together into singing,  
you ruins of Jerusalem;  
for the LORD has comforted his people,  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.  
<sup>10</sup> The LORD has bared his holy arm  
before the eyes of all the nations;  
and all the ends of the earth shall see  
the salvation of our God.

+ **Psalm 148** NRSV

***Joy to the world,  
The Lord is come!***

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD!  
Praise the LORD from the heavens;  
praise him in the heights!  
<sup>2</sup> Praise him, all his angels;  
praise him, all his host!  
<sup>3</sup> Praise him, sun and moon;  
praise him, all you shining stars!

<sup>4</sup> Praise him, you highest heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens!  
<sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
for he commanded and they were created.  
<sup>6</sup> He established them forever and ever;  
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.<sup>[a]</sup>  
<sup>7</sup> Praise the LORD from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deeps,  
<sup>8</sup> fire and hail, snow and frost,  
stormy wind fulfilling his command!  
<sup>9</sup> Mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars!  
<sup>10</sup> Wild animals and all cattle,  
creeping things and flying birds!  
<sup>11</sup> Kings of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the earth!  
<sup>12</sup> Young men and women alike,  
old and young together!  
<sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
for his name alone is exalted;  
his glory is above earth and heaven.  
<sup>14</sup> He has raised up a horn for his people,

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praise for all his faithful,  
for the people of Israel who are close to him.

Praise the LORD!

Glory to you, O Trinity, most holy and *blessed*,  
one God, now and for-ever, *A-men*.

***Joy to the world,  
The Lord is come!***

+ SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

+ **WORD**: **John 1:1-14** NRSV

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the

light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Holy wisdom, holy word.

***Thanks be to God!***

+ SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

+ **CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH**

We bless you, Adonai, God of *Israel*,  
for you come to visit us and ransom us from *bondage*.  
You have brought forth a strong *De-liverer*

in the house of your child *David*.

**This is what your holy prophets an-nounced:  
deliverance from enemies and from the hand  
of all who hate *us*;  
mercy a-mong our *ancestors*,  
and remembrance of your ho-ly *covenant*.**

This is the promise you swore to our an-cestor,  
*Abraham*,  
to make us un-a-fraid,  
to rescue us from our *enemies*,  
to serve before you, holy and just,  
all the days of our *lives*.

**And this, my little child,  
shall be called prophet of the Most *High*,  
going before you, Adonai, to pre-pare your *paths*,  
making your people know de-*liverance*  
by the forgiveness of their *sins*.**

**Through your merciful compassions, God our *God*,  
the dawn from on high shall *visit us*,  
to shine on those kept in dungeons  
and the shadows of *death*  
and to guide our feet onto the path of *peace*.**

[LUKE 1:68-79]

Glory to you, O Trinity, most holy and *blessed*,  
one God, now and for-ever, *A-men*.

+ **COMMEMORATION:**

**STEPHEN, DEACON AND PROTOMARTYR**

All that we know about Stephen the Protomartyr (that is,  
the first martyr of the Christian Church) is found in  
chapters 6 and 7 of the Book of Acts.

The early Christian congregations, like the Jewish  
synagogues, had a program of assistance for needy  
widows, and some of the Greek-speaking Jews in the  
Jerusalem congregation complained that their widows  
were being neglected. The apostles replied: "We cannot  
both preach and administer financial matters. Choose  
seven men from among yourselves, respected, Spirit-  
filled, and of sound judgement, and let them be in charge  
of the accounts, and we will devote ourselves to prayer  
and the ministry of the word." The people accordingly  
chose seven men, including Stephen, and the apostles  
laid their hands on them. They are traditionally considered  
to be the first deacons, although the Scriptures do not use  
the word to describe them. (The Scriptures do refer to

officials called deacons in the local congregations, without being very specific about their duties; and a century or more later, we find the organized charities of each local congregation in the hands of its deacons.)

Stephen was an eloquent and fiery speaker, and a provocative one. (Some readers have speculated that some of his fellow Christians wanted to put him in charge of alms in the hope that he would administer more and talk less.) His blunt declarations that the Temple service was no longer the means by which penitent sinners should seek reconciliation with God enraged the Temple leaders, who caused him to be stoned to death. As he died, he said, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." One of those who saw the stoning and approved of it was Saul (or Paul) of Tarsus, who took an active part in the general persecution of Christians that followed the death of Stephen, but who was later led to become a Christian himself.

*[by James Kiefer](#)*

+ SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

+ **COLLECT: STEPHEN**

We give you thanks, O Lord of glory, for the example of the first martyr Stephen, who looked up to heaven and prayed for his persecutors to your Son Jesus Christ, who stands at your right hand: where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting.

***Amen.***

+ **PRAYERS**

The Holy One be with you,  
***and also with you.***

Let us pray: (*pray for those on your heart today*)

+ **PRAYER FOR RECOVERY OF SICKNESS**

***O God of heavenly powers, by the might of your command you drive away from our bodies all sickness and all infirmity: Be present in your goodness with those we lift today, that their weaknesses may be banished and their strength restored; and that with health being renewed, all may bless your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.***

+ A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,  
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks  
for all your goodness and loving-kindness  
to us and to all whom you have made.  
We bless you for our creation, preservation,  
and all the blessings of this life;  
but above all for your immeasurable love  
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;  
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.  
And, we pray,  
give us such an awareness of your mercies,  
that with truly thankful hearts  
we may show forth your praise,  
not only with our lips, but in our lives,  
by giving up our selves to your service,  
and by walking before you  
in holiness and righteousness all our days;  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

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+ COLLECT OF THE WEEK

***Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.***

+ A COLLECT FOR SATURDAYS

Almighty God, who after the creation of the world rested from all your works and sanctified a day of rest for all your creatures: Grant that we, putting away all earthly anxieties, may be duly prepared for the service of your sanctuary, and that our rest here upon earth may be a preparation for the eternal rest promised to your people in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

+ HOLY SPIRIT PRAYER OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit,  
That my thoughts may all be holy.  
Act in me, O Holy Spirit,  
That my work, too, may be holy.

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Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit,  
That I love but what is holy.  
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit,  
To defend all that is holy.  
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit,  
That I always may be holy. Amen.

+ THE LORD'S PRAYER

*Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.*

+ CONCLUDING PRAYER

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father,  
You have brought us in safety to this new day:  
preserve us with your mighty power,  
that we may not fall into sin,  
nor be overcome by adversity;  
and in all we do direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

+ BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face to shine upon you,  
and be gracious to you;  
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,  
and give you peace. **Amen.**

NUMBERS 6:24-26

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## Morning Prayer

A ministry of the faithful at  
Elwood United Methodist Church

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