

Thursday, December 23, 2021

* **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.

* OSL

Satisfy us in the morning

with your steadfast love, O God,

that we may sing for joy

and be glad all our days.

PSALM 90:14

* **MORNING CANTICLE OF JOY**

Be joyful in the LORD, all you lands;

serve the LORD with gladness

and come before God's presence with a song.

Know this: The LORD is God; the LORD has made us,

and we belong to the One who created us;

we are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture.

Enter God's gates with thanksgiving;

go into God's courts with praise;

give thanks to God and call upon God's Name.

For the LORD is good;

God's mercy is everlasting;

and God's faithfulness endures from age to age.

PSALM 100

* **MORNING PRAYER**

The Holy One* be with you;

And also with you.

Let us pray:

We give you hearty thanks for the rest of the past night and for the gift of a new day, with its opportunities of pleasing you. Grant that we may so pass its hours in the perfect freedom of your service, that at eventide we may again give thanks unto you. Amen.

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* **Psalm 80** NRSV

***Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.***

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock!
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth
² before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.
Stir up your might,
and come to save us!
³ Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.
⁴ O LORD God of hosts,
how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?
⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears,
and given them tears to drink in full measure.
⁶ You make us the scorn of our neighbors;
our enemies laugh among themselves.
⁷ Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.
⁸ You brought a vine out of Egypt;
you drove out the nations and planted it.
⁹ You cleared the ground for it;

it took deep root and filled the land.
¹⁰ The mountains were covered with its shade,
the mighty cedars with its branches;
¹¹ it sent out its branches to the sea,
and its shoots to the River.
¹² Why then have you broken down its walls,
so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit?
¹³ The boar from the forest ravages it,
and all that move in the field feed on it.
¹⁴ Turn again, O God of hosts;
look down from heaven, and see;
have regard for this vine,
¹⁵ the stock that your right hand planted.
¹⁶ They have burned it with fire, they have cut it down;
may they perish at the rebuke of your countenance.
¹⁷ But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
the one whom you made strong for yourself.
¹⁸ Then we will never turn back from you;
give us life, and we will call on your name.
¹⁹ Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.
Glory to you, O Trinity, most holy and *blessed*,
one God, now and for-ever, *A-men*.

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***Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.***

* SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

* **1st READING: Galatians 3:1-14** NRSV

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified! ² The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? ⁴ Did you experience so much for nothing? — if it really was for nothing. ⁵ Well then, does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?

⁶ Just as Abraham “believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” ⁷ so, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. ⁸ And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you.” ⁹ For this reason,

those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed.

¹⁰ For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law.” ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for “The one who is righteous will live by faith.” ¹² But the law does not rest on faith; on the contrary, “Whoever does the works of the law will live by them.”

¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”— ¹⁴ in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Holy wisdom, holy word.

Thanks be to God!

* SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

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* **2nd READING: Luke 1:57-66** NRSV

⁵⁷ Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

⁵⁹ On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. ⁶⁰ But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." ⁶¹ They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." ⁶² Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. ⁶³ He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. ⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵ Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

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*.**

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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.

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

* THE APOSTLE'S 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, died, and was buried;
the third day he rose from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of the Father Almighty.
From there he shall come again to judge
the living and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

* SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

* PRAYERS

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

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

* FOR HEALTH OF BODY AND SOUL

For those we have lifted up today, may God the Father
bless you, God the Son heal you, God the Holy Spirit
give you strength. May God the holy and undivided
Trinity guard your body, save your soul, and bring
you safely to his heavenly country; where he lives and
reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

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* PRAYERS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Almighty God our heavenly Father, send down upon those who hold office in this State of New Jersey, the spirit of wisdom, charity, and justice; that with steadfast purpose they may faithfully serve in their offices to promote the well-being of all people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

* PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

Gracious Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son our Savior. 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.***

* 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.**

* PRAYER OF JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

***Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time
with one accord to make our common supplication to
you; and you have promised through your well-
beloved Son that when two or three are gathered
together in his Name you will be in the midst of them:
Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may***

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***be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of
your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting.
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 amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the
extravagant love of God, the intimate friendship of the
Holy Spirit, be with all of you. **Amen.**

Morning Prayer

A ministry of the faithful at
Elwood United Methodist Church

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