

Liturgy

The Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany

GATHERING

We have gathered to praise and worship the LORD, our God.

He is our refuge and our fortress, our God, in whom we trust.

Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of wrongdoers.

For they will soon wither like the grass and fade like the green herb.

Trust in the LORD and do good;

 dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.

Delight yourself in the LORD,

and He will give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the LORD,

 trust also in Him and He will bring it to pass.

He will bring forth your righteousness as the light of dawn,

and your justice as the noonday sun.

Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him.

Those who wait for the LORD will inherit the earth,

and will delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD;

He is their strength in time of trouble.

The LORD helps them and delivers them;

He delivers them from the wicked and saves them,

because they take refuge in Him.

— from Psalm 37

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Praise to the Lord,
The Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him,
For He is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear,
Now to His temple draw near;
Join me in glad adoration!

Praise to the Lord,
Who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under His wings,
Yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen
How all thy longings have been
Granted in what He ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord,
Who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;
Surely His goodness and mercy
Here daily attend thee.
Ponder anew
What the Almighty can do,
If with His love He befriend thee.

Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
If with His love He befriend thee.

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Words: Joachim Neander, 1680; transl. by Catherine Winkworth, 1863.
Hymn tune: LOBE DEN HERREN, 1665.

*LECTIONARY for the seventh Sunday
after the Epiphany, Year C:*

Genesis 45:3-11, 15

Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40

1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

Luke 6:27-38

This week brings us nearly to the end of the season of Epiphany. During these weeks between Christmas and Lent, the Church reflects on the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ—the Word made flesh who dwelt among us that we might behold His glory, glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. In this Year C, we've been especially alert and watchful for those "a-ha moments" when God manifests His glory and reveals something to us of His purposes for us and the world He created by His Word.

On this seventh Sunday after the Epiphany, our attention is turned to Christ's representative work on behalf of all humanity. 1 Corinthians 15 reveals and explains Jesus as both the Man from Heaven and the Last Adam. Paul tells us, "'The first man Adam became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. . . . For as by a man came death, by a Man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15: 45, 21-22). It is through Christ's victory over death and His resurrection that we share in His resurrection life and partake of eternal hope and promise.

If we are promised not only that we will "bear the image of the man of heaven" (1 Cor. 15:48), but also that we are even now being increasingly conformed into His image (Rom. 8:29, Col. 3:10), what might be at least some of the implications that holds for our being "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58)? The reading in Luke's gospel continues Jesus' "sermon on the plain" with His teaching on reconciliation and forgiveness; the Genesis narrative gives the object

INVOCATION

Prayers of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving for God's presence

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty (verse 4)

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him.
Let the Amen sound from His people again;
Gladly, for aye we adore Him.

Fairest Lord Jesus

Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature,
O Thou of God, and man the Son;
Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor,
Thou my soul's glory, joy, and crown.

Setting: Ellen Koehler. Copyright ©2010 Ellen Koehler.
Anonymous German hymn *Münster Gesangbuch*, 1677;
Transl. source unknown, vs 1-3; verse 4, Joseph A. Seiss.
Music *Schleische Volkslieder*, 1842

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Leader: This is the gospel, which we received,
by which we were saved, and in which we stand:

**Christ died for our sins,
was buried,
was raised on the third day,
and appeared to many faithful witnesses.**

Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One of God,
the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
*In Him all things in heaven and on earth were created,
things visible and invisible.*

All things have been created through Him and for Him.
and in Him all things consist and hold together.

*He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,
so that He may have first place in everything.*

**And God has put all things in subjection under His feet,
and gave Him as head over all things to the church,
which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.**

Leader: For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
and through Him God was pleased to reconcile all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,
by making peace through the blood of His cross.

**This is in accordance with the working
of the strength of His might,
which He brought about in Christ,
when He raised Him from the dead,
and seated Him at His right hand
in the heavenly places,
far above all principality and power
and might and dominion,
and every name that is named,
not only in this age,
but also in the age to come.**

– from 1 Corinthians 15:1-7; Colossians 1:15-20; Ephesians 1:19-23

lesson of Joseph and his brothers; and the Psalm poetically gives voice to our thankful praises to the only One who is our refuge, fortress, salvation, and source of trust—now and forever.

Ellen's setting of Praise to the Lord, the Almighty is available in the music catalog (Hymn Settings) as a lead sheet and scored for keyboard (suitable for piano or organ, also). Please see the commentary on this hymn setting for reflections on the text, performance suggestions, and creative ideas for using the hymn verses throughout a worship service.

Here's the link to the Sheet Music Catalog (Hymn Settings) in the Music Room:

<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/praise-lord-almighty>

In this liturgy, we sing the first three verses as the opening hymn, and here, to close the time of corporate prayers of invocation and praise, we sing the fourth verse slower and quieter, then finish with a simple setting of the first verse of Fairest Lord Jesus. This verse draws our focus to Christ's identity as both God and man, and to His sovereign authority.

This Scripture-based Profession of faith weaves together passages from Paul's epistles that complement today's reading from 1 Corinthians 15.

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

Come and hear, all you who fear God,
and I will tell what He has done for my soul.
If I had cherished iniquity in my heart,
the LORD would not have listened.

But truly God has listened;

*He has given heed to the words of our prayer.
Blessed be God, because He has not rejected our prayers
or removed His steadfast love from us.*

– from Psalm 66:16-20

[Silence]

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
**We have sinned against You and against others,
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry, and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve You in newness of life
to the glory of Your name. Amen.**

The Jesus Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
Have mercy on me, a sinner.
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison, Lord Jesus, have mercy on me.

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ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Here is the good news of God's salvation and His promise of pardon:

If for this life only we have hope in Christ,
we are of all people most to be pitied.
But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead,
the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

*For since by a man came death,
by a Man has come also the resurrection of the dead.
For as in Adam all die,
so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*

– from 1 Corinthians 15:19-22

**By his resurrection He has overcome death
so that He might make us share in the righteousness
He won for us by His death.
By his power we too are already now resurrected to a new life.
Christ's resurrection is a guarantee of our glorious resurrection.**

– from Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 45

In Christ, we are forgiven! In Him we live!
Thanks be to God!

This simple, traditional prayer of confession and repentance is taken from the Book of Common Prayer (Alternative Service Book, 1980), Morning Prayer, Rite 1.

TIME OF OFFERING

Words and prayers of thanksgiving and praise

Creation Sings the Father's Song

Creation sings the Father's song;
He calls the sun to wake the dawn
And run the course of day,
Till evening falls in crimson rays.
His fingerprints in flakes of snow;
His breath upon this spinning globe;
He charts the eagle's flight,
Commands the newborn baby's cry.

Refrain:

Hallelujah! Let all creation stand and sing:
"Hallelujah!" Fill the earth with songs of worship,
Tell the wonders of creation's King.

Creation gazed upon His face;
The ageless One in time's embrace,
Unveiled the Father's plan
Of reconciling God and man.
A second Adam walked the earth,
Whose blameless life would break the curse,
Whose death would set us free
To live with Him eternally.

Creation longs for His return,
When Christ shall reign upon the earth;
The bitter wars that rage
Are birth pains of a coming age.
When He renews the land and sky,
All heav'n will sing and earth reply
With one resplendent theme:
The glory of our God and King!

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THE WORD

Genesis 45:3-11, 15
Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40
1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50
Luke 6:27-38

THE TABLE

Remembering the Body of Christ

The Lord be with you!
And also with you!
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again!

This modern hymn both tells the whole story of God in its lyrics, and resonates with the emphasis of the text of 1 Corinthians 15—Christ's power and grace, His salvific work as the Last Adam (in Paul's words) who overturned the curse and brought reconciliation and redemption to fallen humanity.

The Lord's Prayer (spoken)

**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**

Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery

Come behold the wondrous mystery, in the dawning of the King.
He the theme of heaven's praises, robed in frail humanity.
In our longing, in our darkness, now the Light of life has come.
Look to Christ, who condescended, took on flesh to ransom us.

Come behold the wondrous mystery, He the perfect Son of Man.
In His living, in His suffering, never trace nor stain of sin.
See the true and better Adam, come to save the hellbound man.
Christ, the great and sure fulfillment of the law, in Him we stand.

Come behold the wondrous mystery, Christ the Lord upon the tree.
In the stead of ruined sinners hangs the Lamb in victory.
See the price of our redemption, see the Father's plan unfold.
Bringing many sons to glory; grace unmeasured, love untold.

Come behold the wondrous mystery, slain by death, the God of life.
But no grave could e'er restrain Him. Praise the Lord, He is alive!
What a foretaste of deliverance; how unwavering our hope.
Christ in power resurrected, as we will be when He comes.

What a foretaste of deliverance; how unwavering our hope.
Christ in power resurrected, as we will be when He comes.

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Love Your Enemies Publishing | McKinney Music, Inc. Matt Boswell, Matt Papa, Michael Bleecker.

Fairest Lord Jesus

Beautiful Savior! Lord of the nations!
Son of God and Son of man:
Glory and honor, praise, adoration
Now and forevermore be Thine.

Setting: Ellen Koehler. Copyright ©2010 Ellen Koehler.
Anonymous German hymn *Münster Gesangbuch*, 1677;
Transl. source unknown, vs 1-3; verse 4, Joseph A. Seiss.
Music *Schleische Volkslieder*, 1842

SENDING FORTH
The Life of the Body

Benediction

May the Lord bless us and keep us.
May the Lord smile on us, shine His light upon us.
May the Lord lift us, turn His face towards us,
Give us His peace, give us His peace.

Blessed we came to this place today,
And blessed now, we will go.
In the name of the Father, the Spirit, and the Son.

Go now in peace; go now in peace.

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Thankyou Music | worshiptogether.com songs. Matt Redman, Jonas Myrin

Benediction:

Almighty God, whose Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, is the light of the world:
Grant that Your people, illumined by Your word and Table,
may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory.

Amen.

And as we go forth into the world to love and serve the Lord,
May He grant that what has been said with our lips
we may believe in our hearts,
and that what we believe in our hearts we may practice in our lives,
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns
with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever.

Amen. Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

A thought about worship from the Ancient Fathers –

“It is no wonder that Jesus is named after many good things in the Gospel. If we look at the names by which the Son of God is called, we will understand how many of these good things He is. The feet of those who preach His name are beautiful. One good thing is life. Jesus is the Life. Another good thing is the light of the world (when it is true light that enlightens people). And the Son of God is said to be all these things. Another good thing, in addition to life and light, is the truth. A fourth is the way that leads to truth. Our Savior teaches us that He is all these things. He says: ‘I am the Way and the Truth and the Life.’ Ah, isn't it good that the Lord shook off earth and mortality to rise again? And we have obtained this benefit from the Lord: that He is the Resurrection. He says, ‘I am the Resurrection.’ The door through which one enters into the greatest joy is also good. And Christ says, ‘I am the door.’ . . . We must not neglect mentioning the Word, who is God after the Father of all. For this another good, no less than the others. Happy, then, are those who accept these goods and receive them from those who announce their blessings, those whose feet are beautiful.” – Origen

Lectionary for next week: Exodus 34:20-35
Psalm 99
2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2
Luke 9:28-43a

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URL: <https://www.elerestorynotes.com>

These first words of prayer and dismissal blessing are adapted from the traditional collect for the Second Sunday after the Epiphany (the Book of Common Prayer).

This second section is taken from an ancient benediction, dating back at least to the fourth Council of Carthage (A.D. 398). In it, one of the canons decreed that cantors be blessed in this way: “See that what you sing with your lips you believe in your heart, ...” The Latin text appears over the centuries, with alterations for ordaining priests as well as blessing cantors and readers. The first English version appeared in the 1840s.