



4300 N. 82nd Street
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
480-947-5525
Pastor Sandy Jones
www.bethanyscottsdale.com

Worship

Fourth Sunday After Epiphany

January 28, 2024

THE GATHERING

Greeting and Announcements
Preparation for Worship

You are invited to stand as you are comfortable

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, and praise God!

In the company of the God's people,
let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**Great are the works of God,
full of glory and majesty.**

Our God is gracious and compassionate;

our God is merciful and forgiving

our God is faithful and trustworthy,

our God is just and good.

So come, let's worship God together.

God's praise will last forever!

GATHERING HYMN –God is Here ELW 526 (vs 1,3,4)

- 1 God is here! As we your people
meet to offer praise and prayer,
may we find in fuller measure
what it is in Christ we share.
Here, as in the world around us,
all our varied skills and arts
wait the coming of the Spirit
into open minds and hearts.**

- 3 Here our children find a welcome
in the Shepherd's flock and fold;
here as bread and wine are taken,
Christ sustains us as of old.
Here the servants of the Servant
seek in worship to explore
what it means in daily living
to believe and to adore.**
- 4 Lord of all, of church and kingdom,
in an age of change and doubt,
keep us faithful to the gospel;
help us work your purpose out.
Here, in this day's dedication,
all we have to give, receive;
we, who cannot live without you,
we adore you! We believe!**

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903-2000

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Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
creator of darkness and light,
word of truth,
wind sweeping over the waters.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God, our rock and refuge,
we pour out our hearts before you.
We have known you but have not always loved you.
We have wounded one another
and sinned against you.
We have not always recognized the Holy Spirit
dwelling in each of us.
Remember your covenant.
Renew your creation.
Restore us,
that we might proclaim your good news to all.
Amen.

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters.
God has spoken:
The time of grace is now.
In Jesus, the reign of God has come near.
By the authority of ✠ Jesus Christ,
your sins are forgiven.
You are God's beloved.
Amen.

KYRIE

P In peace, In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

P For the reign of God, and for peace throughout the world, for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

P For your people here who have come to give you praise, for the strength to live your word, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

P Help, save, and defend, O God.

C Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE – *Glory to God* (Bolduc)

(Refrain)

***Glory! Glory to God in the highest. Glory! Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.***

We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you.

We give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King,

O God, almighty Father.

(Refrain)

Christ, only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God,

Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;

You take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer;

You are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

(Refrain)

You alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,

You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,

With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.

***Glory! Glory to God in the highest. Glory! Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will. Amen.***

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray:

Compassionate God, you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Bring wholeness to all that is broken and speak truth to us in our confusion, that all creation will see and know your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

You may be seated

THE WORD

First Reading – Deuteronomy 18:15-20

(Today's reading is part of a longer discourse in Deuteronomy, an updating of the law for the Israelite community as the people wait to enter the promised land. Here Moses assures the people that God will continue to guide them through prophets who will proclaim the divine word.)

[Moses said:] The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: "If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die." Then the LORD replied to me: "They are right in what they have said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die."

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Psalm – 111

Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,
in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.

**Great are your works, O LORD,
pondered by all who delight in them.**

Majesty and splendor mark your deeds,
and your righteousness endures forever.

**You cause your wonders to be remembered;
you are gracious and full of compassion.**

You give food to those who fear you,
remembering forever your covenant.

**You have shown your people the power of your works
in giving them the lands of the nations.**

The works of your hands are faithfulness and justice;
all of your precepts are sure.

**They stand fast forever and ever,
because they are done in truth and equity.**

You sent redemption to your people and commanded your covenant forever;
holy and awesome is your name.

**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all who practice this have a good understanding. God's praise endures forever.**

Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

(Paul is concerned about the way some Corinthian Christians use their freedom in Christ as license to engage in non-Christian behavior that sets a damaging example to other, impressionable believers. Christians have a responsibility to each other that their behavior does not cause another to sin.)

Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; but anyone who loves God is known by him.

Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists,” and that “there is no God but one.” Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. “Food will not bring us close to God.” We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? So, by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

Response: Thanks be to God.

You are invited to stand as you are comfortable

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light; for those who sat in the shadow of death light has dawned. ***Alleluia***

P The holy Gospel according to Mark.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel Reading – Mark 1:21-28

(Forces that would bring death and disease have taken hold of a man, yet they recognize Jesus and know what his power means for them. Jesus commands these forces to leave and people are amazed at his authority.)

[Jesus and his disciples] went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

P This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

You may be seated

Sermon

You are invited to stand as you are comfortable

HYMN OF THE DAY – *There is a Balm in Gilead* ELW 614

Refrain

***There is a balm in Gilead
to make the wounded whole;
there is a balm in Gilead
to heal the sin-sick soul.***

- 1 Sometimes I feel discouraged
and think my work's in vain,
but then the Holy Spirit
revives my soul again. *Refrain*
- 2 If you cannot preach like Peter,
if you cannot pray like Paul,
you can tell the love of Jesus
and say, "He died for all." *Refrain*
- 3 Don't ever be discouraged,
for Jesus is your friend;
and if you lack for knowledge
he'll ne'er refuse to lend. *Refrain*

Text: African American spiritual

AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH

P We affirm our faith with the words of the Apostles' Creed

C I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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.

You may be seated

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

As we celebrate Christ embodied in human form, we pray for God's blessing on the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

Loving God, we pray that your example of teaching with confidence and authority builds up your church in love. May all church leaders and teachers honor your instruction and model your inclusive ways. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Renewing God, we pray for all of creation, that waterways flow clean and clear, natural spaces are protected, and our planet is healed. Let us commit to thoughtful care of the earth. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Justice-seeking God, we pray for those in government and community leadership, that they lead with honor and mindfulness. May they remember their covenants and be upright in their ways. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Compassionate God, we pray for all in need, especially those who have known rejection, any who struggle with long-term illness or chronic pain, those without access to safe housing or health care, and any who suffer, especially our loved ones; Martha, Brian, Jerry, Julie, Sherry, David, Nancy, Jack, and Colette. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Still-speaking God, we pray for our congregation, for its artists and musicians, for its educators and caregivers, that all gifts are used to care for those in need and to live out your example of accompaniment, gospel witness, and love. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

What else do the people of God wish to lift up to God today..... God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Eternal God, we remember all who have been teachers, mentors, and companions in the church and in our lives (*especially Thomas Aquinas whom we commemorate today*). We trust that all who have died rest in your loving care. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we offer these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you all.

And also with you.

Let's share God's peace with one another.

THE MEAL

Lord, we give you today what is already yours. You provide so much for us. Thank you for giving us the ability to give and cheerful hearts to do it.

We continue with the offering.

OFFERING HYMN – *Let Us Go Now to the Banquet ELW 523*

Refrain

Let us go now to the banquet,

to the feast of the universe.

The table's set and a place is waiting;

come, ev'ryone, with your gifts to share.

- 1 I will rise in the early morning;
the community's waiting for me.
With a spring in my step I'm walking
with my friends and my family. *Refrain*
- 2 God invites all the poor and hungry
to the banquet of justice and good
where the harvest will not be hoarded
so that no one will lack for food. *Refrain*
- 3 May we build such a place among us
where all people are equal in love.
God has called us to work together
and to share ev'rything we have. *Refrain*

Text: Guillermo Cuéllar, b. 1955, *Misa popular salvadoreña*; tr. Bret Hesla, b. 1957, and William Dexheimer Pharris, b. 1956
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OFFERTORY – “Make Me a Servant”

Make me a servant, humble and meek.
Lord, let me lift up those who are weak.
And may the prayer of my heart always be;
Make me a servant, make me a servant,
Make me a servant today.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, Holy One, for all good things come from you. In bread and cup you open heaven to us. Meet us at this table, that we receive what we seek and follow your Son, Jesus, in whose name we pray.
Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

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 God our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

“Holy, Holy, Holy” (Haugen)

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power, God of might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your Word brought light into the world. In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our darkness and to make us your daughters and sons.

P In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

P Again after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

P Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him.

P By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Son. Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

C Amen.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

P Gathered into one, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

C 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. AMEN.

COMMUNION INVITATION

P At Jesus’ table, heaven and earth are joined as one. Come and see.

You may be seated

COMMUNION HYMN - *Mosaic Choir*

You are invited to stand as you are comfortable

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P Let us pray.

C Giver of every gift, Christ's body is our food, and we are Christ's body. Raise us to life by your power for the benefit of all and to your glory, now and forever.

Amen.

THE SENDING

BENEDICTION

P God who names you, Christ who claims you, and the Holy Spirit who dwells in you,
✠ bless you and remain with you always.

C Amen.

CLOSING HYMN – *The King of Love My Shepherd Is ELW 502 (vs 1,2,6)*

- 1 The King of love my shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his
and he is mine forever.
- 2 Where streams of living water flow,
my ransomed soul he leadeth
and, where the verdant pastures grow,
with food celestial feedeth.
- 6 And so, through all the length of days,
thy goodness faileth never.
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house forever.

Text: Henry W. Baker, 1821-1877

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. You are God's beloved.

C Thanks be to God.

**Bethany's Mission Statement –
Accepting
Serving
Loving . . .
We Share God's Embrace**

Pastor	The Rev. Sandy Jones
Accompanist:	Kristan Youn
Lector	Tom Aaby
Communion	Barbara Brown & Laurie Greer
Ushers	Moe & Tom Aaby