

SUMMIT CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SUNDAY JANUARY 23, 2022 WORSHIP SERVICE

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WORDS OF WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP THROUGH SONG: “I Love You, Lord” (3 Xs)

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PRAYER OF INVOCATION: *

L: O God, who gives us strength when we feel weak,

All: we gather to hear your Word, sing your songs, and give you praise.

We know that you are always with us, and we are grateful.

Help us to live our lives in ways that show you are near.

Thank you for your presence and constant care for us — in worship, and in each day of our lives.

PROFESSION OF FAITH THROUGH SCRIPTURE

PSALM 19 (VOICE)

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L: The celestial realms announce God’s glory; the skies testify of His hands’ great work.

2 Each day pours out more of their sayings; each night, more to hear and more to learn.

3 Inaudible words are their manner of speech, and silence, their means to convey.

4 Yet from here to the ends of the earth, their voices have gone out; the whole world can hear what they say.

All: God stretched out in these heavens a tent for the sun,

5 And the sun is like a groom who, after leaving his room, arrives at the wedding in splendor;

He is the strong runner who, favored to win in his race, is eager to face his challenge.

6 He rises at one end of the skies and runs in an arc overhead;

nothing can hide from his heat, from the swelter of his daily tread.

L: The Eternal’s law is perfect, turning lives around.

His words are reliable and true, instilling wisdom to open minds.

8 The Eternal’s directions are correct, giving satisfaction to the heart.

God’s commandments are clear, lending clarity to the eyes.

9 The awe of the Eternal is clean, sustaining for all of eternity.

The Eternal’s decisions are sound; they are right through and through.

10 They are worth more than gold— even more than abundant, pure gold.

They are sweeter to the tongue than honey or the drippings of the honeycomb.

All: In addition to all that has been said, Your servant will find, hidden in Your commandments, both a strong warning and a great reward for keeping them.

12 Who could possibly know all that he has done wrong? Forgive my hidden and unknown faults.

13 As I am Your servant, protect me from my bent toward pride, and keep sin from ruling my life.

If You do this, I will be without blame, innocent of the great breach.

14 May the words that come out of my mouth and the musings of my heart

meet with Your gracious approval, O Eternal, my Rock, O Eternal, my Redeemer.

1. Now thank we all our God, with heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices,
Who from our parents' arms, has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.
2. O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us still in grace, and guide us when perplexed;
And free us from all ills, in this world and the next.

SCRIPTURE:

Nehemiah 8:1–3, 5–6, 8–10

⁸ ¹ all the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel. ² Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. ³ He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. ⁵ And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. ⁶ Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. ⁸ So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

⁹ And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep.” For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. ¹⁰ Then he said to them, “Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Luke 4:14–21

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

¹⁴ Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵ He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth

¹⁶ When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

A TIME OF REFLECTION

Filled with the Power of the Spirit

Today our gospel lesson shares several revelations about Jesus and what he came to do. He didn't begin his ministry until he was filled with the power of the Spirit. We know from reading the whole of scripture that it was the Spirit that came upon him when he was baptized by his cousin John in the Jordan. We also know it was the Spirit that led him into the wilderness where he fasted, prayed and faced repeated temptation and real human need. In each case of temptation, Jesus chose relationship with God over self-interest.

Jesus was anointed in the baptismal waters of the Jordan, but his time in the wilderness, in the vulnerability of hunger and temptation in the wilderness while praying and fasting was equally important in his anointing. Being filled with the power of the Spirit made it possible for Jesus to stand up to temptation and self-interest and self-preservation and accept the anointing to fulfill the purposes of God.

What was Jesus anointed to do? To bring good news to the poor. proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, let the oppressed go free and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Even though there is little evidence that this ever took place, the "year of the Lord's favor" is probably a reference to the year of Jubilee commanded in Leviticus 25, a year in which indentured servants (even resident aliens) were to be released, debts were to be forgiven, and land and property returned to families who had leased or sold them. It was to be a year of radical restoration and redistribution.

The spiritual aspect of salvation in Luke cannot be separated from economic, social, and political realities. Jesus' mission is to free people from captivity to sin and from captivity to the sinful structures and systems that diminish and destroy lives. This text argues against a Jesus only concerned with individual salvation. Luke reveals Jesus with a preoccupation with the kingdom of God in its realization, restoration, and recreation. When Jesus reads from Isaiah, he reads a text about a vision for God's people not singular persons. (<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/third-sunday-after-epiphany-3/commentary-on-luke-414-21-5>)

We diminish God's plan of salvation when we limit it to one or the other.

No matter where you find yourself in this story, it is good news. "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." It is not just a story for the past, but a present reality. Jesus did proclaim all that he was anointed to do both literally and figuratively in word and deed. Sure there are those who would reject his teachings and actions then and still today, none the less, no matter the consequences, Jesus did what he was anointed to do; filled with the power of the Spirit thus fulfilling the scriptures heard by those of the initial reading and heard by us today.

So where do you find yourself in the story? Do you hear good news? Do you hear words of challenge? If you are like me, you hear some of both. I know there are times when my sight needs restoration and I am in need of healing not only physically, but spiritually, mentally and emotionally as well, but I have also been the receiver of God given sight and healing both literally and figuratively. There are times, filled with the Spirit's power where I truly have felt set free from self-interest in order to serve the greater good. There are times, filled with the Spirit's power I have had the courage to speak hard truths in love and without judgement, yet there are times when I fail to be a voice for the voiceless and need to be set free from my fears.

God's anointing with the power of the Spirit didn't stop with Jesus. It is given to all who are willing to receive and to be led by the Spirit giving us the power to live in relationship with God, one another and creation. It is no wonder Jesus told his disciples to await the anointing of the Spirit to carryout their ministry and proclamation.

Theologian Karoline Lewis shared this about her experience in the Holy Land. One of the places she visited was called the *Primacy of Peter, where Jesus, "could have, possibly, maybe,*

tradition says," that Jesus appeared on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, prepared a meal for his disciples, and invited them to come and eat (John 21).

There is a plaque attached to the outside façade of the chapel that is built around the rock where Jesus hosted this last meal for his disciples. The plaque's inscription is based on Luke 5:5, the calling of the first disciples in Luke, "Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.'" And so the plaque reads, "The deeds and miracles of Jesus are not actions of the past. Jesus is waiting for those still prepared to take risks at his word because they trust his power utterly." <https://www.workingpreacher.org/dear-working-preacher/preaching-nazareth>

Jesus is waiting. Anointed by God and filled with the Spirit's power may we trust Jesus and truly be set free from captivity to sin and from captivity to the sinful structures and systems that diminish and destroy lives and continue the work of God revealed through Jesus. May the joy of the Lord be our strength as we fulfill the purposes of God.

**A TIME OF PRAYER –
LIFTING UP PRAYER REQUESTS –
THE LORD'S PRAYER:**

CALL FOR OFFERING: ☪ *

L: Our offering is a faith statement. God gifts us with a variety of gifts for the good of all. We share from what we have and from who we are as a sign of our desire to live into the people God created us to be. May these gifts bring light to those in need, and put the joy of the Lord in their hearts.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION: ☪ *

L: O God of all creation and giver of all good gifts,

All: we join with Jesus in proclaiming the year of your favor. Bless our gifts and bless us as we seek to bring joy and comfort to those who are unknown to us, and to those who are near and beloved. Amen.

SUMM-IT UP:

Congregational Annual Meeting immediately following worship

Monday – 7:30 a.m. – New furnace being Installed **No Heat to Main Part**

9 – Noon Pastor's Scheduled Office Hours;

1:30 p.m. Bible Study Studying the Gospel of Luke

Tuesday – 10:30 a.m. Bible/Book Study – Women of the Bible Session 1 Via Zoom

Wednesdays – 6:30 p.m. – Zoom Fellowship Hour **Trivia Night** (Let's just have some fun together)

Friday – Sparks Articles Due!

Sunday January 30th – **Hymn Sing for Worship** –

be looking at hymns you may want to request for the Hymn Sing

CLOING HYMN: #76 v. 1 "Sent Forth by God's Blessing"

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CHARGE & BENECTION:

May God bless and keep you.

May God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

May God look upon you kindly and give you the peace God alone can give. Amen.

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POSTLUDE: v.v. 1 & 3 “Lord Be Glorified”

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CONGREGATIONAL MEETING:

SENDING HYMN: #76 (NCH) v. 2 “Sent Forth by God’s Blessing”

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