

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY
29 JANUARY 2023

GATHERING

What does God require of us?

The sacred words of Jesus will remind us
when we forget our calling.

**In humble hope, we are to be those
who live with love and justice,
even when that means a costly journey.**

In times when values are linked
with power and money and success,
we are to take our stand,
as those who have a different vision.

**For we, the people of God, have seen in
Jesus Christ,
a new witness to life which is full and free.**

(Source: Words for Worship 2011)

SONG TiS 179

**Praise with joy the world's creator,
God of justice, love and peace,
Source and end of human knowledge,
Force of goodness without cease.
Celebrate the Maker's glory,
Power to rescue and release.**

**Praise the Son who feeds the hungry,
Frees the captive, finds the lost,
Heals the sick, upsets religion,
Fearless both of fate and cost.
Celebrate Christ's constant presence -
Friend and Stranger, Guest and Host.**

**Praise the Spirit sent among us
Liberating truth from pride,
Forging bonds where race or gender,
Age or nation dare divide.
Celebrate the Spirit's treasure -
Foolishness none dare deride.**

**Praise the Maker, Son and Spirit,
One God in Community,
Calling Christians to embody
Oneness and diversity.
Thus the world shall yet believe
When shown Christ's vibrant unity.**

*(Tune: Praise my soul the king of heaven. J Goss c. 1986 Wild Goose
Publications)*

PRAYER

ENCOUNTERING THE LIVING WORD

The World According to Jesus...

*(A responsive reading based on the Beatitudes
in Matthew 5:3-9).*

**I believe in Jesus' vision of the best kind of
world made known to us in his teaching.**

Jesus said: Fortunate are the humble—minded;
they will live in the best possible world.

Fortunate are the mournful;

they will face the future with strength.

Fortunate are the non-violent;

they will govern the earth.

Fortunate are those whose passion is for justice;

they will receive justice.

Fortunate are the compassionate;

they will receive compassion.

Fortunate are the undivided in heart;

they will commit to the way of Jesus.

Fortunate are the peacemakers;

they will forgive and reconcile humanity.

Fortunate are those in danger for living Jesus'
way:

they will be freed from fear to follow him...

**And I believe that all who follow him will
create a world according to Jesus.**

By Lorraine Parkinson.

SONG

**We walk by faith and not by sight
No gracious words we hear
Of him who spoke as none e'er spoke
Yet we believe him near**

**We may not touch his hands and side
Or follow where he trod
Yet in his promise we rejoice
And cry "My Lord and God"**

**Help then, O Lord, our unbelief
And may our faith abound
To call on you when you are near
And seek where you are found**

**And when our life of faith is done
In realms of clearer light
We may behold you as you are
In full and endless sight**

**We walk by faith and not by sight
No gracious words we hear
Of him who spoke as none e'er spoke
Yet we believe him near**

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1 Corinthians 1:18-31

¹⁸ For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written,

*'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.'*

²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³ but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

²⁶ Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no one might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ in order that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'

May your Word live in us
And bear much fruit to your glory.

REFLECTION

RESPONDING WITH OUR LIVES

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

Teach us to--
Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

(You will be invited to light a candle as a symbol of your prayer.)

***Ubi caritas et amor,
ubi caritas, Deus Ibi Est.
(Where charity and love,
where there is love, God is there.)***

Disciples' 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**

SONG TiS 589

**Make me a channel of your peace
Where there is hatred let me bring your love
Where there is injury, your pardon Lord
And where there is doubt true faith in You**

***Oh, Master grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love with all my soul***

**Make me a channel of your peace
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope
Where there is darkness only light
And where there's sadness ever joy**

**Make me a channel of your peace
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
It is in giving of ourselves that we receive
And in dying that we are born to eternal life**

Songwriters: Jon Cohen / Traditional

THE BLESSING

**May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
the rains fall soft upon your fields and until
we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of His hand.**