

# SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Growing in Wisdom

What's Really Important in Life?

January 3, 2021



## AS WE GATHER

“Let our gladness have no end, alleluia!” (*LSB* 381:1). “Let our gladness banish sadness All throughout creation!” (*LSB* 371:1). These two songs of the Christmas season remind us that we are in glad times as we celebrate the birth of our Lord. This year, because of the way the days of the week fall immediately after Christmas Day, we are blessed by having not one but two Sundays after Christmas! Through the Holy Gospel today, we hear about our Lord Jesus when He was a young man—one who increased in wisdom and stature. Jesus was glad to be in God’s house when He was in Jerusalem. Our gladness in these special days is heightened by our being here for worship as we grow in wisdom and in stature by God’s endless grace!

The end of a calendar year and the beginning of a new set of months brings a special opportunity to look at our lives. What has been most memorable in our lives in the past weeks and months? How might our priorities change in the next months? The Readings in today’s service are not often heard because the calendar does not always bring two Sundays after Christmas. Wisdom is waiting to be found by each of us here in this place today as we hear God’s Word and seek His kingdom in this New Year of grace. God’s wisdom is here to bless us each time we gather for worship!

### ✘ PREPARATION ✘

#### **PRAYERS OF PREPARATION:**

**Lord of yesterday, today and tomorrow, we gather here this first Sunday of the New Year, in a mixture of hope, anticipation, fear, excitement, and expectation. We do not know what the year holds for us. There are things we are afraid of: worries about health and family, job security and finances. Lord God, the coming year is full of uncertainty and hope. Whatever the year holds for us, though, we trust You, and we place every day of this year in your care knowing that, as in the past, You are with us, caring for us with**

constant love. Give us faith to go out with courage, not knowing where we go but only that your hand is leading us, and your love supporting us. And so, Lord, we place ourselves into your keeping and dedicate our lives to your service through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour. Amen.

**HOLY COMMUNION IS CELEBRATED:**

Today we have the privilege of receiving Christ's true body and blood in, with and under the bread and wine of Holy Communion. Through this sacrament the Holy Spirit seals to us the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation for the strengthening of our faith. Scriptures also teach that as we commune together, we are publicly testifying to a complete unity of faith based on a confession of all of God's Word. If you confess the same belief, we invite you to our fellowship of the Lord's Supper.

**WELCOME:**

**WELCOME TO GOD'S HOUSE....** We, the members of Bethel Lutheran Church are please today that you have made a choice to worship with us this afternoon. We gather in the name of the living Christ to worship God. As we worship, let us pray that He will open our eyes, that we may behold wondrous blessings out of His word. That we may share God's love and life and may we be renewed in the refreshing Spirit of the living Christ. Welcome and come into this place where we strive to reflect the love, peace, and wholeness of such a God. Let us Worship God together!

**SELECTION**

**Minister Terry Dale**

**INVOCATION**

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

**OPENING SENTENCES**      *Hebrews 8:10-12; Psalm 122:1*

Pastor: "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord:

People: **I will put My laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.**

Pastor: And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest.

**People: For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."**

Pastor: I was glad when they said to me,

**People: "Let us go to the house of the LORD!"**

## **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

Pastor: Let us now make confession of our sins to God, our gracious and heavenly Father.

**People: Eternal God, we confess that by nature we are sinful people. We have transgressed Your Law in many ways, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not always been wise in our thinking and our speaking and our actions. Our motives and thoughts have not always been pure. We deserve Your punishment now and for eternity. O God, in Your mercy forgive our sin and restore us to a full and joyful relationship with You, through the merits of Jesus, our Lord. Direct all that we do by Your Holy Spirit that in the year now beginning we joyfully follow Your will and gladly obey Your Commandments as Your redeemed people.**

Pastor: In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it. Be at peace.

**People: Thanks be to God. Amen.**

## **SALUTATION**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray.

Almighty God, You have poured into our hearts the true Light of Your incarnate Word. Grant that this Light may shine forth in our lives; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**OLD TESTAMENT READING**     *1 Kings 3:4–15*     (Solomon prays to God for the gift of wisdom.)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## SELECTION

**Minister Terry Dale**

**EPISTLE**     *Ephesians 1:3–14*     (We are gifted with God's spiritual blessings.)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**VERSE**     *Luke 2:40*

**People: Alleluia. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon Him. Alleluia.**

**HOLY GOSPEL**     *Luke 2:40–52* (The boy Jesus is found in the temple at Jerusalem.)

Leader: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter

**People: Glory to You, O Lord.**

(The Gospel is read.)

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to You, O Christ.**

## **SELECTION**

**Minister Terry Dale**

## **SERMON**

## **SELECTION**

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**(We Bring Our Tithes And Offering To The Lord)**

## **CREED      The Nicene Creed**

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

Leader:            Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

We pray for the Church, that the light of the Gospel of salvation be

proclaimed here and everywhere, the wisdom of God be honored and followed, and the gifts of God be treasured and shared. Lord of the Church,

**People:** in mercy, hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray as this New Year begins for our nation and for all of the people of the world, that there be an end to hostilities and that times of peacefulness and wellness everywhere prevail. Lord of all times and all people,

**People:** in mercy, hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for our families and our neighbors. Help us to remember that each person in our lives is a precious gift from God. Guided by the Holy Spirit, help us to choose wisely how we invest our time in the coming weeks and find in our associations with God's people a source of mutual support and blessing. Lord of all generations,

**People:** in mercy, hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all sorts and conditions of people, especially making our petitions for the hospitalized and those who are shut in. We pray for those whose lives are in transition, the unemployed, those who are downcast or grieving, and for all those for whom our intercession is desired, [*including . . .*]. Lord of care and grace,

**People:** in mercy, hear our prayer.

Leader: As a community of the faithful gathered, we remember those who have shared the faith with us and now have departed this earthly life, especially those whose earthly lives came to an end in the past year. Direct our ways that we complete our journey of life in faith with divine wisdom to direct us. At the end of our days, bring us to rejoice together eternally with saints and angels and all the company of heaven in light everlasting. Lord of eternity,

**People:** in mercy, hear our prayer.

Leader: Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

**People:** Amen.

## ✠ SACRAMENT ✠

### PREFACE

Pastor: The Lord be with you. *2 Timothy 4:22*

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts. *[Colossians 3:1]*

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. *[Psalm 136]*

People: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

### PROPER PREFACE

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, Lord our God, for You have had mercy on us and sent Your only-begotten Son as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Grant us the gift of Your Spirit, that we receive Your wisdom and blessings with thankfulness. Help us to treasure the life of faith and worship we share and receive the body and blood of our Lord as the guarantee of our salvation and as a foretaste of the feast to come in Your eternal kingdom. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and praise, together with the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

**SANCTUS** Holy, Holy, Holy (246 Sts. 1)

1. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee; Holy holy, holy, merciful and mighty! God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

**THE WORDS OF OUR LORD** *Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25*

### PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST

Pastor: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. *1 Corinthians 11:26*

People: **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.** *Revelation 22:20*

**LORD'S PRAYER** *Matthew 6:9–13*

**PAX DOMINI**

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.

**DISTRIBUTION OF THE LORD'S BODY AND BLOOD**

**POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING**

Pastor: Let us pray.

Blessed are You, heavenly Father, for You have once again fed and nourished us at Your Table through the body and blood of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Strengthen and support us, Your pilgrim people, so that we grow in wisdom and serve You and our neighbor. Keep us in Your care in the year that is beginning, and bring us at last to Your eternal kingdom, where You live and reign with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

**BENEDICTION**

Pastor: The blessing of almighty God—the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit—be with you now and forever.

People: Amen.

**SELECTION**

**Minister Terry Dale**



