

Order of Worship for Sunday, January 31, 2020

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany - *Not available on prerecorded services

Listen at 814-422-6238. Watch online at www.PennsValleyParish.info

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: From the pillar of fire and cloud of smoke, God led the people.

P: Praise be to God!

L: Through the voices of the prophet, God proclaimed the way to live.

P: Praise be to God!

L: Through the power and witness of Christ, God offered us new life.

P: Thanks be to God who has showered us with blessing upon blessing!

RELIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE OF CHRIST

L: We light the Christ candle to symbolize God's promise fulfilled.

P: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to all on whom his favor rests.

ALL: Blessed be the name of the Lord.

OPENING PRAYER

Open our hearts and spirits this day to hear the great good news of your power and presence with all your people. Fill our hearts with rejoicing as the words are proclaimed in song and story. Enliven us and remind us that you are with us, through the pillar of fire, through the magnificent words of the prophets, through the ministry and love of Jesus Christ. AMEN.

* HYMN Amazing Grace v. 1-3

BLESSING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS – DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE Who's In Control?

JOYS AND CONCERNS - (The Lord's Prayer "trespass")

SELECTED SCRIPTURE Mark 1:21-28, 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

MESSAGE BEING the Epiphany

* HYMN Amazing Grace v. 4-6

COMMISSION & BLESSING PASTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

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BIBLE STUDY: What Have You to Do with Us?

Read Mark 1:21-28

What might be surprising about verse 23? Hint: Where was the man with an unclean spirit? *[The man with the unclean spirit was in the synagogue! Right among them—the religious people.]* Why is it significant that the demon mentions his knowledge of Jesus? *[It was not the religious people who clearly name Jesus' identity and power, but rather a man with an unclean spirit.]*

Like those in the synagogue where an unclean spirit was found, we too can be surprised when evil encounters us in ways that are shockingly close to home. Why is it easier to think about evil being “out there” and a problem for “them” instead of acknowledging the evil that is among us (individually and collectively)?

How is authority a theme in this passage? *[Notice it is repeated in verses 22 and 27.]* How do we allow Jesus to exercise authority over our lives? *[Jesus has the authority to disrupt our plans, dreams, and strategies.]*

As a group, read again the first of the baptismal questions: “Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?” What are some ways we stand against evil and/or the demonic in our society and in ourselves? How does the freedom and power God gives us relate to our ability to resist evil, injustice, and oppression? *[It is only through God's power that we experience freedom over these other forces. We cannot do so on our own power.]*

How is allowing Jesus to exercise authority over us connected with the ability to stand against evil? *[It is only through Jesus' authority that we learn God's power over all forces. We cannot do so on our own.]*

What are some “-isms” that we should be aware of and work to eliminate? *[Ageism, racism, sexism, classism, etc.]* Which of these do you encounter most prominently?

The man with an unclean spirit asked Jesus, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?” (1:24) How might Jesus respond if you asked him, “What would you have us do, Jesus of Nazareth?”

CLOSING PRAYER

God of power and might, all the earth and all that is within it is yours. Give us the eyes to see the forces that are at work against you in the world around us. Give us the power to resist and stand against the rulers, powers, and principalities of this world and the power to love those who might seem unlovable to us. Amen.