

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
EPIPHANY 7 - CELEBRATING ILLUMINATION
Reverend John R. Hanson
February 20, 2022, 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

Janet Hanson, Musician

INTRODUCTION *Today's lessons give us a prophecy of what lies on the other end of Good Friday – Resurrection. This is not just a once-off resurrection that happened to one human being after he died. This is a resurrection that is available to every human being this side of the grave. It is a resurrection that is constantly at work in every facet of life in our world. It is a resurrection that is much more powerful and all-encompassing than we can imagine. It is this resurrection that we celebrate...and await!*

THEME AND VERSE

Most gracious God and Father of us all, in our purest moments we delight in you more than misers in gold and kings in scepters. Glory be to you, loving God, on earth and in heaven for ever and ever!

Make God your chief delight, and your heart's purest desire shall be given to you. The meek shall possess the land and delight themselves in God's generosity. The salvation of loving people comes from God; God is our fixed point in the troubles of this life.

HYMN

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

Green # 315

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heav'n to earth come down!
Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation, enter ev'ry trembling heart.

Breathe, oh, breathe thy loving Spirit into ev'ry troubled breast;
Let us all in thee inherit; let us find our promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty, to deliver; let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never, never more thy temples leave.
May we be a blessing to thee, serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION God is good. **All the time.**

GOSPEL: Luke 6:27-38 *Jesus teaches that his followers must love their enemies, for it does no good to only love those who love back – even sinners do that. But loving enemies is acting like children of God and showing compassion as God shows compassion. This also means we must not judge others but must forgive and share generously, for then we will be forgiven and will receive abundance back.*

²⁷“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³²“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive,

what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

³⁶Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

³⁷“Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time. **God is good!**

HYMN *“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”* Green # 315

Finish then thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee!
Changed from glory into glory, till in heav’n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise!

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CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather to worship

in the name of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen

In the life of Christ Jesus, the bar to salvation has been raised to unprecedented heights. Yet there is good news, for through Christ, God has also shown us “plenteous grace to cover all our sins.”

As we embrace the good news, let us with quiet confidence confess:

Most holy God, we confess to you and to each other that we have fallen far short of your generous love. Through our own foolishness we have not only stumbled but caused those around us to fall. Through our own willfulness we have not only been corrupted but have aided the corruption of others. Holy God, through our repentance we acknowledge our sins. May we turn from them and receive your saving grace to once more rehabilitate our lives. May the spirit of Jesus continue to work in and through us that we may forgive those who have sinned against us and sincerely seek restored relationships.

For this church it is written: “Grace to you and peace from God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age.”

To the glory of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen

INSTALLATION OF 2022 CHURCH LEADERSHIP

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON

"Because He Told Me So!"

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of extravagant love, may your generous spirit flow into our lives. Although our spiritual capacity is small, and judgmental thoughts give way to good intentions, may we become more generous in our affirmation of those who share this journey with us. Through Jesus Christ your son, our Lord. Amen!

READING: Genesis 45:3-11 *The dreamer Joseph, who has been toying with his brothers, now reveals himself to them, asks about his father, and assures them that what they intended for evil, God has used for good. Their family would be saved from the famine because of what has happened to Joseph. He sends them back with a message inviting his father to come to Egypt, and then he kisses and weeps over his brothers.*

³Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence. ⁴Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to

Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. ¹⁰You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.'

¹⁵And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

READING: 1 Corinthians 15:35-38 *What kind of bodies people will have when they are raised? Like a seed planted in the ground, resurrected bodies are something totally different - heavenly bodies not earthly. Earthly bodies are planted in the ground, but they are raised as heavenly, eternal bodies. Now we are like the earthly Adam; then we will be like the heavenly Christ.*

³⁵But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" ³⁶Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷And as for what you

sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

HYMN

"In My Life, Lord, Be Glorified"

Burgundy # 248

In my life, Lord, be glorified, be glorified; in my life, Lord, be glorified today.

In my song, Lord, be glorified, be glorified; in my song, Lord, be glorified today.

In your church, Lord, be glorified, be glorified; in your church, Lord, be glorified today.

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SERMON *Can we experience our future hope of resurrection right here and right now? Joseph says, "Yes!" Paul says, "Yes!" Jesus says, "Yes!" May we show the investment of Christ's love in forgiveness and generosity. Let this resurrection story for us happen in this place and time.*

HYMN

"All Creatures of Our God and King"

Green # 527

All creatures of our God and King, lift up your voice and with us sing:
Alleluia! Alleluia! O burning sun with golden beam and silver moon with softer gleam:
Oh, praise him! Oh, praise him! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

O ev'ryone of tender heart, forgiving others take your part, oh, praise him! Alleluia!
All you who pain and sorrow bear, praise God and lay on him your care.
Oh, praise him! Oh, praise him! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Let all things their Creator bless and worship God in humbleness. Oh, praise him!
Alleluia! Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son, and praise the Spirit, Three in One,
Oh, praise him! Oh, praise him! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION / THE LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God so loves us and Christ enables us. Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give and it will be given to you. We are children of the Most High, who is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish, giving good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, poured into our lap. The abundant grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the immeasurable love of God, and the boundless fellowship of the Holy Spirit will be with us always. Amen.

BENEDICTION & SENDING

Go now, confessing Christ as Lord in word and in actions. Worship and serve the Lord your God and no other. Tell the story of God's goodness, and trust in the Lord whose saving word is always with you.

We go in Christ's name. Amen.

May God instruct angels to guard you wherever you go; may Christ Jesus be your refuge and stronghold; and may the Holy Spirit lead you and put God's Word on your lips and in your hearts. We go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

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Worship, as an action, continues to change.
Use this space to guide your thoughts as the Spirit may lead you.
Use this time to center your distractions in order to help activate your worship.

There is a sense in which the theme of today's readings could be viewed as resurrection – but in a different, more expanded sense than we would usually think of resurrection. While Paul's discourse in 1 Corinthians 15 does deal with the resurrection of our bodies – the transformation of a “physical” mortal body into a “spiritual” immortal one, the danger is to make resurrection about nothing more than what happens to our current bodies after we die. When we think that Paul referred to his Damascus Road experience as a resurrection appearance of Jesus, we have to admit that Paul sees resurrection as more than just a transformation of the physical body. Even the distinction between a “physical” body and a “spiritual” one is not the best way to describe the New Testament idea of resurrection.

In the light of this, we can view Joseph's transformed relationship with his brothers – whom he could have treated with the same disdain and cruelty with which they had treated him – as a resurrection, both for them as they were rescued from death, and for Joseph as he discovered the life-giving power of forgiveness and love. In the Gospel reading, Jesus' call for his followers to reject the way of death – loving only those who love us back and giving evil for evil with those who don't – is an invitation into a different kind of life that can also be thought of as a resurrection. It is the way of life in which we believe that love ultimately wins over hate, forgiveness over division, and life over death, and in which we live this resurrection life here and now, even in the face of death and evil.

Continuing the theme of call from the last few weeks, today's call is to live resurrection now, to die to our “earthly” selves which follow the ways of human self-protection and fear and bury them in the ground like a seed, and then allow God to raise us again into a new life of godly self-giving and love where we become trees of righteousness.

If resurrection is to be revealed and experienced in our world globally, then it must be nurtured and made available to people locally. This is the task of the local church, and of any community that seeks to oppose the forces of death and evil, and nurture and share whatever brings life, beauty, truth, and goodness into the world. When we claim that certain people are evil and beyond God's love and salvation simply for who they are, in terms of their religion, race, gender, or political views, then we are not the church of resurrection. God calls us to die to this very human, “mortal” way of living.

But, when we proclaim that God's love is available to all, that God welcomes and accepts all for who they are, we become a church of the resurrection. Another significant characteristic of a resurrection community is that they constantly facilitate the process of dying to our human “mortal” way of living that brings death and decay into our world and our relationships, and when they invite people to allow God to raise them to a new godly, “immortal” way of living and being that brings life and joy and goodness. When, in our worship and preaching, we invite people into a constant process of dying and rising we are a true resurrection community. Those who participate in such communities, discover a life that is not quenched by death, and they contribute to an eternal reality of life and love that is experienced now, but continues into the future when all creation knows resurrection in fullness.

Our call to resurrection can include such simple things as learning patience with ourselves, others, and God as we wait for healing or restoration to happen. It can include forgiving others instead of allowing our hatred and pain to lead us into a death of our souls. It can include releasing the values and material wealth of human society in order to share what we have and bring life to those in need. And it can include loving ourselves enough to do what feeds and nurtures our souls, what brings life to our bodies, and what deepens and strengthens our relationships. In these ways we can experience our future hope of resurrection right here and right now.

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