



PLUM Worship

4th Sunday after Epiphany

GERASENE DEMONIAK

January 28, 2024

3:00 p.m.

PRELUDE Arise, Your Light Has Come

<https://youtu.be/hO8rZ29FGKc?si=DG-VxtcKFDq1FDcY>

WELCOME and PRAYER REQUESTS

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

CALL TO WORSHIP

We come before God possessed by demons.

Fear, shame, greed—these and more are the demons that plague us.

We come before God asking for healing and wholeness.

Jesus casts out our demons and makes us new.

HYMN Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness

<https://youtu.be/q5WzGYIP4r4?si=kVWbDw1gwbPJfNP>

- 1 *Praise the One who breaks the darkness
with a liberating light;
praise the One who frees the pris'ners,
turning blindness into sight.
Praise the One who preached the gospel,
healing ev'ry dread disease,
calming storms and feeding thousands
with the very bread of peace.*
- 2 *Praise the One who blessed the children
with a strong yet gentle word;
praise the One who drove out demons
with a piercing, two-edged sword.
Praise the One who brings cool water
to the desert's burning sand;
from this well comes living water
quenching thirst in ev'ry land.*
- 3 *Praise the one true love incarnate:
Christ, who suffered in our place;
Jesus died and rose for many*

*that we may know God by grace.
Let us sing for joy and gladness,
seeing what our God has done.
Praise the one redeeming glory;
praise the One who makes us one.*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

Guiding God,

We have failed to follow you as we ought. We have not reached out to our neighbors with the selfless and sacrificial love you modeled for us. We have caused harm to others and your creation by our actions and by our unwillingness to act. Forgive us our sins and lead us back onto the path you have trod for the sake of others.

In Christ, God meets us where we are and as we are and for his sake, God makes us whole and holy. Go forth to follow Jesus in the knowledge that your sins are forgiven. **Amen.**

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Faithful God, Your steadfast love endures forever, through all generations. Inspire us through your word and meal to share this love with our neighbors near and far. in Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

FIRST READING

Psalm 89:1-4

- ¹ I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever;
with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.
- ² I declare that your steadfast love is established forever;
your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.
- ³ You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to my servant David:
- ⁴ "I will establish your descendants forever,
and build your throne for all generations."

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL

Mark 5:1-20

The Holy Gospel according to Mark. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Readers: Narrator, Unclean Spirit, Jesus

Narrator: They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. And when he had stepped out

of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; and he shouted at the top of his voice,

Spirit: “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.”

Narrator: For he had said to him,

Jesus: “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”

Narrator: Then Jesus asked him,

Jesus: “What is your name?”

Narrator: He replied,

Unclean Spirit: “My name is Legion; for we are many.”

Narrator: He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding; and the unclean spirits begged him,

Unclean Spirit: “Send us into the swine; let us enter them.”

Narrator: So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea. The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened. They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it. Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighborhood. As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. But Jesus refused, and said to him,

Jesus: “Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you.”

Narrator: And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

PASTOR ALEX SUMO

HYMN Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

https://youtu.be/GM7GT_CSXJW?si=PVFWZCKIOSBTRKGC

*1 Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood,
from thy riven side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure;
cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.*

*2 Not the labors of my hands
can fulfill thy law's demands;
could my zeal no respite know,
could my tears forever flow,
all for sin could not atone;
thou must save, and thou alone.*

*3 Nothing in my hand I bring;
simply to thy cross I cling.
Naked, come to thee for dress;
helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly;
wash me, Savior, or I die.*

*4 While I draw this fleeting breath,
when my eyes shall close in death,
when I soar to worlds unknown,
see thee on thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee.*

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Trusting in the good news of Jesus Christ, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

You reached out to a man whose behavior was frightening to so many, restoring him to wholeness. Push us through our discomfort with others' challenges, that we might extend love and grace to all who need it. God our teacher and healer, **In mercy, hear our prayer.**

Your miraculous creation is at the same time both strong and delicate. Help us to appreciate its bold beauty, while working to ensure the balance it needs to thrive. God our teacher and healer, **In mercy, hear our prayer.**

Strengthen all those who work tirelessly to change systems and policies that marginalize those with mental illness or developmental disabilities. Guide our leaders to proclaim a message of inclusivity for all people. God our teacher and healer, **In mercy, hear our prayer.**

Demons need not be literal to diminish our lives and cause us pain. Cast out all those things we cling to or which cling to us that deprive us of full, healthy lives. Bring wholeness to all who suffer, (especially...) God our teacher and healer, **In mercy, hear our prayer.**

We remember each day that nine million children in the United States regularly do not have enough food to foster healthy growth and development. In your name, push us to demand an end to food insecurity in one of the world's wealthiest nations. God our teacher and healer, **In mercy, hear our prayer.**

God of all good gifts, your Son gathered children into his arms and blessed them. Help us to understand our youth as they grow in years and in knowledge of your world. Teach us to encourage their search for truth and value in their lives. God our teacher and healer, **In mercy, hear our prayer.**

Lord, you know what is best for the ministry of PLUM. Continue to open our eyes, ears, and hearts, that we may faithfully carry out your work which you have entrusted to us. God our teacher and healer, **In mercy, hear our prayer.**

We remember all your saints who overcame challenge and even tragedy and credited their enduring faith in you. Let their example inspire that same faith in us as we navigate the pains and trials of everyday life. God our teacher and healer, **In mercy, hear our prayer.**

Confident that in Christ Jesus you answer prayer, we lift to you all for whom pray, aloud and in our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our savior. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

At this time, we offer ourselves to God—our physical resources and our whole life—recognizing that all we are and all we have are God's given to us and for which

we are stewards. If you have a monetary offering for your congregation, please send it or deliver it to the church.

Let us pray. Holy God, we offer now our gifts and our tithes out of what you have generously given to us. Use them for the sake of all who suffer, that the world might know your healing love. **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations; in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son; and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

https://youtu.be/VP_VmA9bB54



In the night in which he was betrayed
our Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks; broke it,
and gave it to his disciples, saying;
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this in remembrance of me.

Together as the body of Christ, we proclaim the mystery
of our faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as the Lord taught us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION

Jesus, who frees us from all our demons through his holy body and blood now invites you to the table of healing and wholeness in his name. Come and eat, for all is prepared.

Take and eat the body of Christ given for you. **Amen.**
Take and drink the blood of Christ shed for you. **Amen.**

COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. Giver of every gift, Christ's body is our food, and we are Christ's body. Raise us to life by your power for the benefit of all and to your glory, now and forever. Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

God who names you, Christ who claims you,
and the Holy Spirit who dwells in you,
✠ bless you and remain with you always.
Amen.

HYMN Dear Lord & Father of Mankind

<https://youtu.be/7brCJdqEcVM?si=Iw4bDG6AzVZzjh-V>

- 1 Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways;
Reclothe us in our rightful mind;
In purer lives thy service find,
In deeper rev'rence, praise.*
- 2 In simple trust like theirs who heard,
Beside the Syrian sea,
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word
Rise up and follow thee.*
- 3 Oh, Sabbath rest by Galilee,
Oh, calm of hills above;
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee*

*The silence of eternity,
Interpreted by love!*

- 4 Drop thy still dews of quietness.
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our order lives confess
The beauty of thy peace. Amen.*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. You are God's beloved.
Thanks be to God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and GOD SIGHTINGS



This Epiphany season, please join PLUM for a study on

Affirmation of Baptism

Thursdays

January 11, 18, 25 and February 1 and 8

7:00 pm on Zoom

Sessions include:

- The Covenant God Made with You in Holy Baptism*
- To Live Among God's Faithful People, Hearing the Word of God and Sharing in the Lord's Supper.*
- To Proclaim the Good News of God in Christ through Word and Deed*
- To Serve All People, Following the Example of Jesus*
- To Strive for Justice and Peace in All the Earth*
- I Do, and I ask God to Help and Guide Me*

We will be using the materials of Craig L. Nesson, Wartburg Theological Seminary:
"An Intergenerational Curriculum Based on Affirmation of Baptism," A Book of Faith/Life of Faith Resource

The call-in line for PLUM Worship Services Bible Studies and meetings: Zoom online: <https://zoom.us/j/401596541>
Zoom by phone: (646) 876 9923 Meeting ID: 401 596 541

PLUM Pastoral Team:

The Reverend John Gropp	412-680-7867
The Reverend Brenda Henry	412-390-8005
The Reverend Susan Devine	412-496-4889
The Reverend Dr. Alexander Sumo	614-218-6730

If you are not already connected to one of our congregations and would like to support our ministry, please send donations to: **Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries, 405 Kennedy Avenue, Duquesne, PA 15110**