



Midweek Service of Word, Song and Prayer

Opening Prayer

Blessed Lord God, you have caused the holy scriptures to be written for the nourishment of your people. Grant that we may hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that, comforted by your promises, we may embrace and forever hold fast to the hope of eternal life, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Readings

Nehemiah 8

⁵And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up.

Why do the people stand for the reading of God's Word? Why do we stand for the reading of God's Word?

1 Corinthians 12

¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with the body of Christ.

Where do you see Christian unity in the world today? What makes it work?

Luke 4

Jesus unrolled the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Where do you see this reading being fulfilled today?

Reflection for the Day

Living "Words with Friends"

Playgrounds still resound with "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." But those words ring hollow. As adults, and as children, we know only too well the power of words to do harm.

Jesus, in coming home and attending the synagogue, reads from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Jesus announces good news to those struggling economically on the fringes of society, hope to those who are imprisoned, healing to those without sight, a lifting of the burden from those who are weighed down or oppressed, and even the in-breaking of a holy year of favor.

Today as we look around and see people spending time speaking, reading, and even playing games with words, this is an opportunity to ground ourselves in the one full and true Word that bears life. This word counters sticks and stones and all that oppresses; as Jesus proclaims God's liberating actions. This Word sounds promise to all who hear; it is an invitation to see God at work among God's people.

Hymn of the Day

God of the Poor – Graham Kendrick

Apostle's 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 to the living,
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.**

Lord's 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.

Closing Prayer

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing

Let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Dismissal

Almighty God bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**