**Saginaw First Free Methodist Church**

**Fourth Sunday After The Epiphany**

**February 7, 2021**



*“But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent, and come out of him!’*

*And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed…” (Mark 1:25-27a)*

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*The mission of Saginaw First Free Methodist Church is to be faithful to God and to make known to all people everywhere God’s call to wholeness in Jesus Christ.*

**Prelude**

**\*\*Greeting/Announcements**

**\*Call to Worship** (*spoken responsively*)

L:     Great are the works of the Lord, and greatly to be praised

**P:    We come to celebrate the new life God has given us**

L:     God’s covenant is gracious, merciful, and trustworthy

**P:    We can count on God’s righteousness and faithfulness**

L: The works of God’s hands are established among us

**P: We will build in love, not by pride or self-importance**

L: Awe before God is the beginning of wisdom

**P: May God keep us holy to serve in love**

**\*Opening Hymn:** “Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise” #65 (vv.1,3)

**Immortal, invisible, God only wise**

**In light inaccessible hid from our eyes**

**Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days**

**Almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise**

**To all, life Thou givest, to both great and small**

**In all life Thou livest, the true life of all**

**Thy wisdom so boundless, Thy mercy so free**

**Eternal Thy goodness, for naught changeth Thee**

**\*Invocation and Lord’s Prayer**

L: Holy God, you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Bring healing to all wounds, make whole all that is broken, speak truth to all illusion, and shed light in every darkness. May that all creation will see your glory and know your Christ. Ignite the Holy Spirit in us, as we pray the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples…

**P: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come; your will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**\*Gloria Patri**

**Glory be to the Father​**

**And to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.**

**As it was in the beginning​**

**Is now and ever shall be**

**World without end**

**Amen. Amen**

**Old Testament Scripture Lesson:** Deuteronomy 18:15-20

 The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: “If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die.”

 Then the LORD replied to me: “They are right in what they have said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak--that prophet shall die.”

**Prayer of Confession**

L: God calls us to be authentic witnesses to the truth. God’s prophets in the world. We join in confession with the church universal, because we are not yet the perfect body of Christ. Let us seek God’s forgiveness…

**P: Faithful God, we often are scared of the change your resurrected life brings. We are not always ready to give up habits or beliefs we’ve held for much of our lives. We think you have come to destroy us and our world, when you come to teach us a better way. We allow our knowledge to inflate our egos, instead of using love to build up your world. We think our ways are better than the new life you call us to. Call out of us the sin that so easily entangles us, that we may know how to abide in you. Amen.**

**Affirmation of Faith:** Psalm 111

**P: Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation. Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them. Full of honor and majesty are God’s work, and God’s righteousness endures forever. God has gained renown by wonderful deeds; the LORD is gracious and merciful. God provides food for those who fear; God is ever mindful of the covenant. God has shown the people the power of God’s works, in giving them the heritage of the nations. The works of God’s hands are faithful and just; all God’s precepts are trustworthy. They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness. God sent redemption to the people; God has commanded the covenant forever. Holy and awesome is God’s name.**

**Hymn of Affirmation:** “Jesus, Lover of My Soul” #636 (vv.1,3)

**Jesus, lover of my soul**

**Let me to thy bosom fly**

**While the nearer waters roll**

**While the tempest still is high**

**Hide me, O my Savior, hide**

**Till the storm of life is past**

**Safe into the haven guide**

**O receive my soul at last**

**Thou, O Christ, art all I want**

**More than all in Thee I find**

**Raise the fallen, cheer the faint**

**Heal the sick and lead the blind**

**Just and holy is Thy name**

**I am all unrighteousness**

**False and full of sin I am**

**Thou are full of truth and grace**

**New Testament Scripture Lesson:** 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

 Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; but anyone who loves God is known by him.

 Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists," and that "there is no God but one.”

 Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth--as in fact there are many gods and many lords--yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

 It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. “Food will not bring us close to God.”

We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols?

 So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

**Communion**

**MINISTER: THE INVITATION**

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, who live in love and peace with

your neighbors and who intend to lead a new life, following the commandments

of God and walking in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy

sacrament to your comfort; and humbly kneeling, make your honest confession

to Almighty God.

**IN UNISON: THE GENERAL CONFESSION**

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all

people, we confess that we have sinned, and we are deeply grieved as we

remember the wickedness of our past lives. We have sinned against You, Your

holiness and Your love, and we deserve only Your indignation and anger.

We sincerely repent, and we are genuinely sorry for all wrongdoing and every

failure to do the things we should. Our hearts are grieved, and we acknowledge

that we are hopeless without Your grace.

Have mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for the sake of your son, our Savior, Jesus

Christ, who died for us.

Forgive us.

Cleanse us.

Give us strength to serve and please You in newness of life and to honor and praise

Your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**MINISTER: THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

O Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who with great mercy has promised

forgiveness to all who turn to You with hearty repentance and true faith, have

mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from our sins, make us strong and faithful in

all goodness and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**CONGREGATION: THE COLLECT**Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom

no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of the

Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You and worthily magnify Your holy name,

through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**MINISTER: THE SANCTUS**

It is always right and proper, and our moral duty, that we should at all times and

in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God.

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the inhabitants of heaven, we

honor and adore Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying,

**CONGREGATION: THE SANCTUS (CONTINUED)**

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts!

Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

Glory be to Thee, O Lord, most high. Amen

**MINISTER: THE PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION**

We do not come to this Your table, O merciful Lord, with self-confidence and

pride, trusting in our own righteousness, but we trust in Your great and many

mercies. We are not worthy to gather the crumbs from under Your table. But You,

O Lord, are unchanging in Your mercy and Your nature is love; grant us, therefore,

God of mercy, God of grace, so to eat at this Your table that we may receive in

spirit and in truth the body of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, and the merits of His

shed blood, so that we may live and grow in His likeness and, being washed and

cleansed through His most precious blood, we may evermore live in Him and He

in us. Amen.

**MINISTER: THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION OF THE ELEMENTS**

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who gave in love Your only Son, Jesus Christ,

to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who by His sacrifice, offered

once for all, did provide a full, perfect, and sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole world,

we come now to Your table in obedience to Your Son, Jesus Christ, who in His holy gospel

commanded us to continue a perpetual memory of His precious death until He comes

again. Hear us, O merciful Father, we humbly ask, and grant that we, receiving this bread and this cup,

as He commanded and in the memory of His passion and death, may partake of His most blessed body and blood.

In the night of His betrayal, Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to

His disciples, saying, “Take, eat; this is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

In like manner, after supper He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink of

this, all of you, for this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of

sins; do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” Amen.

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting

life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed upon Him in your heart, by faith with

thanksgiving.

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life.

Drink this in remembrance that Christ’s blood was shed for you and be thankful.

**MINISTER: THE BENEDICTION**

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love

of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and

the Holy Spirit, be yours now and forever. Amen.

**Passing of the Peace**

**Prayers of the People**

L: Lord in Your Mercy…

**P: Hear our prayer.**

**Gospel Lesson:** Mark 1:21-28

They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.”

 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!”

 And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching--with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”

 At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

**Sermon**

**Prayer of Response**

**Hymn of Response:** “He Leadeth Me” #99 (vv.1,3)

**He leadeth me: O blessed thought**

**O words with heavenly comfort fraught**

**Whate'er I do, where'er I be**

**Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me**

**He leadeth me, he leadeth me**

**By his own hand he leadeth me**

**His faithful follower I would be**

**For by his hand he leadeth me**

**Lord, I would clasp thy hand in mine**

**Nor ever murmur nor repine**

**Content, whatever lot I see**

**Since 'tis my God that leadeth me**

**He leadeth me, he leadeth me**

**By his own hand he leadeth me**

**His faithful follower I would be**

**For by his hand he leadeth me**

**Invitation of Offering**

L:All power and authority has been given to Christ; we can rest assured as we abide with Jesus. But the sharing of our earthly resources is a prophetic action in the world; seen as unusual. Be a powerful force in the world, as we collect this morning’s 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.**

**\*Prayer**

**\*Hymn:** “Standing on the Promises” #687 (vv.1,5)

**Standing on the promises of Christ my king**

**Through eternal ages let his praises ring**

**Glory in the highest, I will shout and sing**

**Standing on the promises of God**

**Standing, standing,**

**Standing on the promises of God my Savior**

**Standing, standing**

**I’m standing on the promises of God**

**Standing on the promises I cannot fall**

**Listening every moment to the Spirit’s call**

**Resting in my Savior as my all in all**

**Standing on the promises of God**

**Standing, standing,**

**Standing on the promises of God my Savior**

**Standing, standing**

**I’m standing on the promises of God**

**\*Benediction**

L: God has empowered us for service, and continues to remove obstacles from our path. God is raising us up as prophets of love. Follow the Holy Spirit's guidance and insight, as you go in peace to love and serve. Amen.