

Welcome to Worship at
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI
Epiphany 4 - January 30, 2022

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

Hymn #528 - "Christ Is Our Cornerstone"

**Christ is our cornerstone;
On him alone we build.
With his true saints alone
The courts of heav'n are filled.
On his great love our hopes we place
Of present grace and joys above.**

**Oh, then, with hymns of praise
These hallowed courts shall ring!
Our voices we will raise
The Three in One to sing
And thus proclaim in joyful song,
Both loud and long, that glorious name.**

**Here, gracious God, do now
And evermore draw near;
Accept each faithful vow
And all your children hear,
And more and more on those who pray
Each holy day your blessing pour.**

**Here may we gain from heav'n
The grace which we implore,
And may that grace, once giv'n,
Be with us evermore
Until that day when all the blest
To endless rest are called away!**

Confession of Sins:

P: Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: **Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace and forgiveness for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, have mercy on us!**

P: Upon this your confession, I as a called servant of Christ and His Word announce to you the grace of God, and in the place of and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

First Lesson: Jeremiah 1:4-10

The word of the Lord came to me. Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I set you apart. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations. But I said, "Ah, Lord God! I really do not know how to speak! I am only a child!" The Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone to whom I send you and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, because I am with you, and I will rescue you, declares the Lord." Then the Lord stretched out his hand and touched my mouth. The Lord said to me: There! I have now placed my words in your mouth. Look, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and to tear down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant. (EHV)

Psalm 78

Refrain: Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

**O my people, hear my 'teaching;
Listen to the words 'of my mouth.**

**I will utter things 'from of old,
What we have heard and what our fathers have 'told us.**

**We will not hide them from our ‘children;
We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds ‘of the LORD.**

Refrain: Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

**The LORD decreed statutes for ‘Jacob
And established the law in ‘Israel,**

**So the next generation would ‘know them,
And they in turn would tell their ‘children.**

**Then they would put their ‘trust in God
And would not forget his deeds but would keep ‘his commands.**

**Glory be to the Father and ‘to the Son
And to the Holy ‘Spirit,
As it was in the be’gining,
Is now, and will be forever. ‘Amen.**

Refrain: Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 14:12b-20

Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church. For this reason the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. Otherwise when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say “Amen” to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified. I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue. Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults. (EHV)

Verse of the Day: Alleluia. I must proclaim the Good News of the kingdom of God, because that is why I was sent. Alleluia.

Gospel: Luke 4:38-44

Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them. At sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah. At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. But he said, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea. (EHV)

The Apostles' Creed:

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn #529 - "*Built on the Rock*"

**Built on the Rock the Church shall stand
Even when steeples are falling.
Crumbled have spires in ev'ry land;
Bells still are chiming and calling,
Calling the young and old to rest,
But above all the soul distressed,
Longing for rest everlasting.**

**Surely in temples made with hands
God, the Most High, is not dwelling;
High above earth his temple stands,
All earthly temples excelling.
Yet he who dwells in heav'n above
Chooses to live with us in love,
Making our bodies his temple.**

**We are God's house of living stones,
Built for his own habitation.
He through baptismal grace us owns
Heirs of his wondrous salvation.
Were we but two his name to tell,
Yet he would deign with us to dwell
With all his grace and his favor.**

**Here stands the font before our eyes,
Telling how God did receive us.
Th' altar recalls Christ's sacrifice
And what the sacrament gives us.
Here sound the Scriptures that proclaim
Christ yesterday, today, the same,
And evermore, our Redeemer.**

**Grant then, O God, your will be done,
That, when the church bells are ringing,
Many in saving faith may come
Where Christ his message is bringing:
"I know my own; my own know me.
You, not the world, my face shall see.
My peace I leave with you always."**

**The Sermon: 1 Corinthians 14:12b-20
 "Build Up The Church"**

Which of these things matter **more** to you? Would you rather **receive** help and attention from other people, or would you rather **give** help and attention to **others**? Sometimes we need to ask ourselves questions like that in order to have a **clear focus** on our **priorities**. Each of us has **abilities** which have been given to us by the **LORD**. Let's just take a moment to **think** about some of the various **skills**

with which we have been **blessed**. What are we **good** at doing, and what are the things we **enjoy** doing? Let's start out by recognizing that we're **not** all the **same**. Some are better in the areas of **math** and **science**, while others are better at **hunting** and **fishing**. Some excel in the areas of **music** and the **arts**. Maybe you're a good **organizer** or **teacher**. Or maybe your talents line up better with **sewing** and **crafting** or **cooking** and **cleaning**. Every skill is **valuable** and is **needed**, but out of all the different **skills** we have received from the LORD, how can we know which ones should have the highest **priority** in our lives? It's not **easy**, but in our text for today, the Apostle Paul gives us a **guideline** to follow. He tells us to seek to excel in gifts that **Build Up The Church**.

In our text for today Paul applied this truth to the believers in the congregation at **Corinth**. He knew they were "*eager for gifts of the Spirit,*" and he **also** knew that they **gravitated** toward one **particular** gift - the gift of speaking in **tongues**. This was a gift which some of them may have been exposed to on the day of **Pentecost** when the Holy Spirit gave the **disciples** the ability to speak in **languages** which they had not previously **learned**. Although this was a gift which served as a great **blessing** on that day, and which held great **interest** for the Corinthians, was this a gift which the Corinthians **needed**? In our text, Paul makes a pretty good case **against** that idea. He said, "*Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church. For this reason the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say.*" In other words, if a message can't be **understood** by the people who are **hearing** it, then the message serves **no purpose** for them. If I were able to preach a sermon to you in **Russian** or **Swahili**, it would serve **no purpose**, because if you can't **understand** the words, then they basically have **no meaning** for you.

However, we also need to recognize that Paul was **not** saying that the gift of speaking in other languages was **completely** without value. It was still a gift from **God**, and it had value for Paul **personally**; but when he looked at that gift on a scale of how well it benefited **others**, it wasn't very **important** at all. Paul said, "*I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.*" Five **clear** and **understandable** words from the Bible, are able to do what **10,000 words** in a language we **don't** understand **can't** do - they **Build Up The Church**. That's the **key** to what Paul was saying to the Corinthians. Those gifts which **Build Up The Church** should be our **highest priority** when it comes to **having** and **using** gifts of the Spirit.

But what does it **mean to Build Up The Church**? Paul **isn't** talking about building a **building**. He's talking about building up **people**. Paul had just finished talking to the Corinthians about how every one of them was a **part** of the body of **Christ - the Church**. Each and every part is **important** - because if every part is not **used**, or if the parts are not properly **assembled**, the body will not **be** what it's supposed to **be**, and it won't be able to **do** what it's supposed to **do**. The **Church** is the body of **Christ**. He is the **head** of the body - the **brains** behind it all. So, Jesus is the one who makes it **possible** for each of us to **function** as the various **parts** of His body. When we put our **trust** in Him, we will never face **shame** for our sins and shortcomings, because Jesus died to **atone** for them all. Because of Jesus we have the certain hope of **eternal life** in heaven. He is the **Lord** over all things. God wants His people to be **strong** in faith - to be **firm** in the face of our trials and temptations - to grow in **love** for one another - to be fervent in our **care** for each other. He wants us to be good "fishers of men" - **testifying** about our Lord Jesus Christ to those who do not yet **know** Him.

This **building up** of believers happens by the power of **God's Word**. Whom has God called to **speak** His Word - to **build up** the believers? Well, certainly **I'm** part of it as a **pastor**, since one of my responsibilities is to publicly **preach** the Word to the congregation. In Ephesians 4 Paul wrote, "*Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the **pastors and teachers**, to **equip** his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be **built up**.*" But then Paul **also** went on to write, "*From (Christ) the **whole body**, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and **builds itself up** in love, as **each part** does its work.*" That means **each one of us** has work to do, using God's Word to **Build Up The Church**.

The Holy Spirit has given **each** of us gifts to use to **build up** our fellow believers. Some of us are gifted to **speak** the Word, whether it is **preaching** a sermon, **teaching** children in Sunday School, **inviting** a new friend or neighbor to come to church with us, or even using Bible passages we've **memorized** to speak words of **encouragement** to those who are working through difficult **problems** in their life. Others would be **petrified** at the thought of **publicly** or even **privately** speaking to others, even about such an **important** subject. But there's also the gift of **supporting** those who speak God's Word, by **praying** for the success of the Gospel, by **volunteering** to **plan** events where God's Word can be shared, and by **giving generously** to provide what is **needed** for those events - whether they take place **right here** in our midst, or **far away** where we can ease the **suffering** of victims who've experienced a natural **disaster**, and give them **hope** for a better future.

But the **Corinthians** weren't **interested** in those kinds of gifts. Unfortunately, they were totally focused on one of the **less** important gifts - **speaking in tongues**. In that sense they were like little **children**. Children are attracted to things that are **bright** and **shiny** - things that are **fun** and are **cool** to use. They are much more concerned about gifts which **they like**, rather than on gifts which are **useful**. Think back to your younger days. When your birthday came around would you rather have received the **toy** that all your friends were talking about, or some new **underwear** and **socks**? The **toy** would be a lot more **fun**, but the **underwear** and **socks** would be a lot more **useful**. The **Corinthians** were interested in the gift of speaking in **tongues** - it was like a shiny new **toy** - it would make them **look** and **sound** really cool - but it really wouldn't be very **useful** - **especially** if it couldn't be **understood**.

Do we sometimes **share** in their childish ways? Think about **this** for a moment. We're always trying to find ways to bring more people, especially young families, into our **worship** services and Christian **fellowship**. What are the best ways to **accomplish** that goal? I'm sure you've looked around at what **other** congregations are doing. Have you ever thought, "Their parking lot seems to be **full** all the time. Whatever **they're** doing, that's what **we** need to be doing"? What if they're doing an annual blessing of the **animals**, or maybe they're really good at **clown** ministry? Things like that might be a lot of **fun**, and they might fill up a parking lot, but they certainly aren't where our **priorities** should be. We need to concentrate on things that will build up the **faith** of people - things which will **Build Up The Church**.

There certainly may be times when we feel **unworthy** for the task. But the truth is that God **knows** exactly what we **are**. He **knows** all the **evil** things we've done, all the **hurt** we've caused, and all the **thoughts** we've felt - and in spite of it all, He hasn't **left** us. In fact, the **heart** of the Bible's message is that God **came near** to us in His Son, **Jesus**. He took on our humanity, and lived **among** us to **save** us from our sins. He didn't go **away** - He went to **Calvary**. And from the cross He spoke - not **five words** but **seven short sentences** including, "*Father, forgive them,*" and, "*Today you will be with me in paradise.*"

Everything Jesus ever said or did on earth was for **building up** the lives of others. He didn't come to **be served**, but to **serve** and to give His life as a **ransom** for sin. He has **comforted** us with His Word through the difficult times of life, so we can comfort **others** through **similar** troubles in **their** lives. He has taught us the

lessons of the Bible in church and Sunday School, so we can pass those same lessons on to our **friends**, and **children**, and **grandchildren**.

Paul wrote, "*Brothers and sisters, stop **thinking like children**. In regard to **evil** be infants, but in your **thinking be adults**."* God wants us to **grow up** concerning our **understanding** of life, and our **purpose** in life. It's **not** about having **fun** - it's **not** about getting **attention** - it's about **building up ourselves** and **others** with God's **Word**, so we can grow in our **faith** in Jesus, and stand **solid** in His love and salvation. Dear friends, may it always be said of us that we are using our gifts to **Build Up The Church** of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayers:

Lord Jesus Christ, in great love You kept Your **promise** and came to give Your **life** as a ransom for sinners, offering us an **alternative** to God's Law. Look on us with **patience**, and do not swiftly cast us away. You are the **Searcher** of our hearts, and **know** whenever we have begun to turn **away** from You. When that happens, **restore** our sagging faith through Your Holy Spirit. **Bless** the confessions of faith which we make before others, and rescue us from the **hypocrisy** of mere **outward** worship. Let our faith be **sincere** and **honest** - a faith which worships You in **spirit** and in **truth**. Teach us to search our hearts and lives **diligently**, to discover the **flaws** which are there, and help us to **correct** them. In order that our faith may be daily **nurtured** and **strengthened**, make us deeply **devoted** to Your Word. Give us each a **childlike** faith - a faith which **trusts** what it cannot **understand**, and **believes** what it cannot see.

May we all desire to **show** our faith and love by striving to **keep** Your commandments, and by refusing to **yield** to ungodly temptation. Make our New Man **strong** through Your Word and Sacrament, that we may be **victorious** over every evil thought, desire, word, and deed. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

**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.**

Hymn #395 - *“Seek Where You May to Find a Way”*

**Seek where you may to find a way
That leads to your salvation.
My heart is stilled; on Christ I build -
He is the one foundation.
His Word is sure; his works endure.
He will o’erthrow my ev’ry foe;
Through him I more than conquer.**

**Seek whom you may to be your stay;
None can redeem his brother.
All helpers failed; this man prevailed,
The God-Man, and none other.
The Servant Lord our life restored,
We’re justified, for he has died,
The guiltless for the guilty.**

**Seek him alone, who did atone,
Who did your souls deliver;
Oh, seek him first, all you who thirst
For grace that fails you never.
In ev’ry need seek him indeed;
To ev’ry heart he will impart
His blessings without measure.**

**My heart’s delight, my crown most bright,
Jesus, you are forever.
Not wealth or pride or aught beside
Our bond of love shall sever.
You are my Lord; your precious Word
Shall be my guide whate’er betide.
Oh, teach me, Lord, to trust you!**

P: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of

all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit! As it was in
the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

The Blessing:

P: The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: **Amen.**

Hymn #458 - "May We Your Precepts, Lord, Fulfill"

**May we your precepts, Lord, fulfill
And do on earth our Father's will
As angels do above,
Still walk in Christ, the living way,
With all your children, and obey
The law of Christian love.**

**So may we join your name to bless,
Your grace adore, your pow'r confess,
To flee from sin and strife.
One is our calling, one our name,
The end of all our hopes the same:
A glorious crown of life.**

**Spirit of life, of love, and peace,
Unite our hearts, our joy increase,
Your gracious help supply.
To each of us the blessing give
In Christian fellowship to live,
In joyful hope to die.**