

January 30 & February 2, 2025 4th Sunday after Epiphany



Popularity is not Proof of Success

In 2009, Facebook added the "like" button. That same year, Twitter added the "retweet" feature. Interestingly, reported cases of depression began to rise sharply in 2010. It is easy to think that the more people like us, the more successful our lives must be. Likewise, it is easy to believe the more people like a church, the more successful that church is. So here is an important epiphany for both individuals and churches. Popularity is not proof of success.

Though there will be times when Christ's gospel and those who proclaim it are popular, that popularity is never the goal. Nor does that popularity define success. If a church makes its central focus things like personal improvement, healing for the sick, or social justice, that church may draw a crowd. It just fails to carry out the true agenda Christ has given his Church. The gospel of forgiveness is to be the center of all our preaching and teaching. The agenda for Christ's Church is set. It's the same agenda that was followed by the Church's Christ.



Tune: Gesang-Buch der Herzogl. Hofkapelle, Württemberg, 1784

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Stand

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. C: Amen.

CONFESSION OF SINS AND ABSOLUTION

M: Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

C: Blessed are they whose sin the Lord does not count against them.

M: Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

C: Almighty and merciful Father,

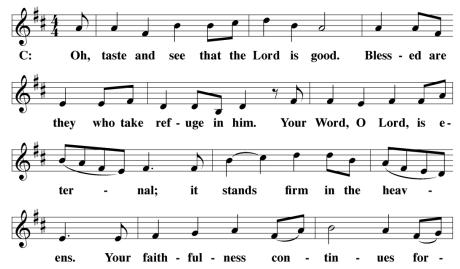
we have strayed from your ways like lost sheep. We have followed our own selfish ways and the desires of our hearts. We have offended you and sinned against your holy law. We have done those things that we should not have done, and we have not done those things that we should have done. Have mercy on us, Lord! Spare us, forgive us, and restore us, according to your promises in Christ Jesus.

Silence for meditation and reflection

- **M**: Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the (T) Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C: Amen.

PRAYER AND PRAISE

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.



Oh, Taste and See



Prayer of the Day

M: Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, look with mercy on our weaknesses, and in all our dangers and needs stretch out the right hand of your majesty to help and defend us; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Be Seated

Grades 3-4 (Sunday 8:00 am)

1 What does the Lord God ask of me? I should walk in all His ways, And fear and love Him faithfully Even now and all my days.

Refrain

For blessed are those who hear the Word of God and obey it. For blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it. Blessed Are Those

5 What does the Lord God ask of me? I should serve with all of my heart, And follow each of His commands so our ways will never part.

Linda Moeller 2007

THE WORD

First Lesson

Jeremiah 1:4-10

The LORD called Jeremiah to fearlessly share God's Word, even if what he said made him unpopular. ⁴The word of the LORD came to me, saying,

⁵"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,

before you were born I set you apart;

I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

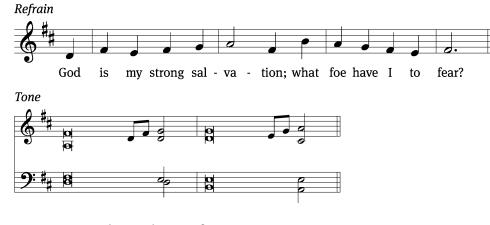
6"Alas, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young."

 7 But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. ⁸Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

⁹Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant." (NIV)



Psalm of the Day



In you, LORD, I have taken / refuge; let me never be / put to shame.

In your righteousness, rescue me and de- / liver me;

turn your ear to me and / save me.

Be my rock of / refuge,

to which I can / always go. Refrain

Since my youth, God, you have / taught me, and to this day I declare your / marv'lous deeds. Even when I am / old and gray, do not forsake / me, my God, till I declare your power to the next gener- / ation, your mighty acts to all who / are to come.
Glory be to the Father and / to the Son and to the Holy / Spirit, as it was in the be- / ginning, is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain*

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Second Lesson

2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

A temptation is for spiritual teachers to say only what people want to hear, equating personal popularity with success. St. Paul gives young Pastor Timothy a different agenda.

¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

¹In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: ²Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. ³For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. ⁵But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. (NIV)

Verse of the Day

M: Alleluia. I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God, because that is why I was sent. Alleluia. (Luke 4:43 NIV)

Stand

Gospel

Luke 4:38-44

Jesus was popular in Capernaum. The people wanted him to stay there permanently. Jesus knew for his mission to be successful, he needed to proclaim the good news in other towns.

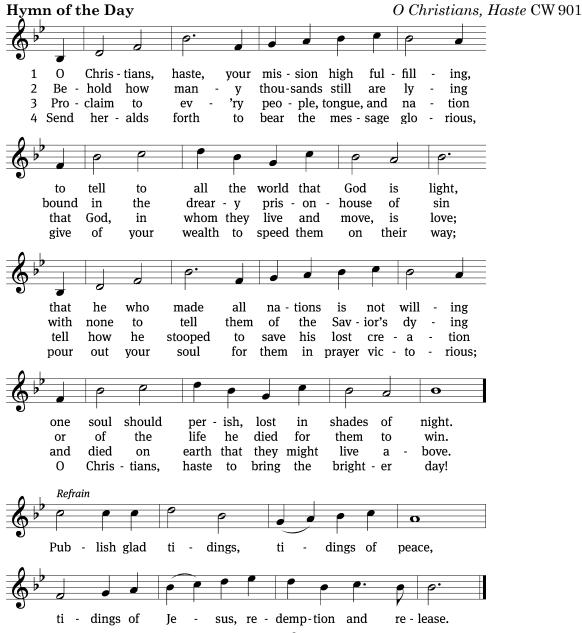
³⁸Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. ³⁹So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.

⁴⁰At sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. ⁴¹Moreover, 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.

⁴²At 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. ⁴³But 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." ⁴⁴And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea. (NIV)

M: This is the Gospel of the Lord. C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be Seated



Sermon

2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

Stand

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.

Be Seated

Please sign the friendship register located in your pew.

Offering

Guests please don't feel a necessity to give an offering today. "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Stand

Prayer of the Church

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.

M: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep us strong in your grace and truth, protect and comfort us in all temptation, and bestow on us your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

Benediction

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

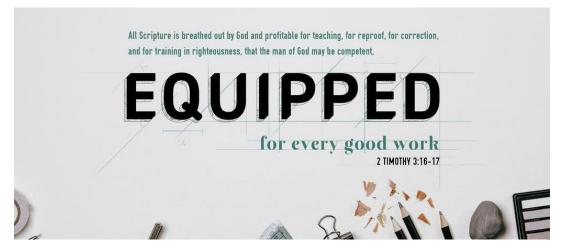
The Lord bless you and keep you.

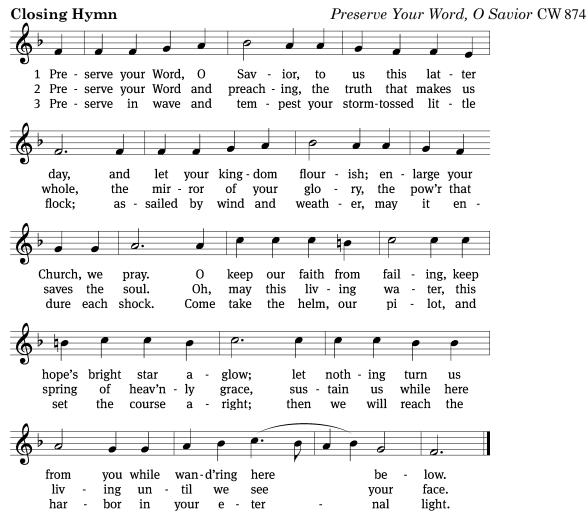
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: Amen.

Be Seated





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Tune: Leonhart Schröter, c. 1532-c. 1601

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