

## THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

FEBRUARY 4, 2024, AT 8 AM

## THE HOLY EUCHARIST

*Please keep a prayerful quiet as we prepare for worship.  
The People's responses are printed in **bold**.*

*This liturgy is derived from Year W, for which the lectionary and its translation are  
the work of Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney. See the liturgical note for more information.*

### THE WORD OF GOD

#### Opening Acclamation

Blessed be God: Mother, Sufferer, and Advocate.  
**And blessed be her reign, now and forever. Amen.**

#### Opening Sentences

Hear the word of God: As an eagle stirs upon her nest, and hovers over her young, as she spreads  
her wings, takes them up, and bears them aloft on her pinions, God alone guides us.

—Deuteronomy 32:11-12, adapted

#### Song of Praise

God is our Mother;  
**From her Womb comes all Life.**  
The Son of a Woman suffered on our behalf,  
**Salvation born on a cross.**  
She is our Advocate  
**And lights our path to peace.**

#### Collect of the Day

God be with you.  
**And also with you.**  
Let us pray.

Set us free, O God, from the bondage of our sins, and give us the liberty of that abundant life  
which you have made known to us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns  
with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

#### Faith Story *seated* Hugh Golub

*This morning we continue our series of Faith Stories shared by members of the St. Columba's community.  
Each of us has a unique faith journey. Faith Stories are a way to share this journey and hear God speak  
through one another.*

**Reading** Isaiah 6:1-10

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Holy One sitting on a throne, high and exalted; and the trailing edges, as of God's garment, filled the temple. Seraphs stood attending God—six wings!—each had six wings! With two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their groins, and with two they flew. And this one called to that one and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Marshall of heaven's armies; the whole earth is full of God's glory."

The doorposts of the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! I am wrecked, for I am a person of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the Sovereign, the Commander of the heaven's vanguard!" Then one of the seraphs flew to me, and in its hand a hot coal that with tongs had been taken from upon the altar. It touched my mouth with it and said: "Look! Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has turned aside and your sin atoned." Then I heard the voice of the Thundering God saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!" And God said, "Go and say to this people: 'Listen well, but do not comprehend; Look well, but do not understand.' Close off the heart of this people, and stop their ears, and blind their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."

For the Word of God in scripture, for the Word of God among us, for the Word of God within us,  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 119:33-40** *read responsively by whole verse*

Make known to me, HOLY ONE, the way of your statutes,  
and I will observe it to the end.

**Grant me understanding and I shall safeguard your teaching  
and shall observe it with my whole heart.**

Lead me in the path of your commandments,  
for in it I delight.

**Turn my heart to your decrees,  
and not to unjust gain.**

Avert my eyes from seeing falsity;  
in your ways give me life.

**Establish to your slave your promise,  
which is for those who revere you.**

Avert the disgrace that I fear,  
for your ordinances are good.

**Look! I have longed for your precepts;  
in your righteousness grant me life.**

**The Gospel** *standing as you are able* Mark 4:1-20

The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Mark.  
**Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

And again Jesus began to teach beside the sea and there gathered around him such a large crowd of women, children, and men that he boarded a boat sitting there on the sea while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. And he taught them much in parables, and then in his teaching he said to them: "Listen up! Look, a sower went out to sow. And as the sower sowed, some fell on the path and birds came and devoured. And the other fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up because it did not have deep soil. Now when the sun rose, it was scorched and since it had no root, it withered. And other seed fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked it and it produced no grain. Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and producing thirty and sixty and a hundredfold." Then Jesus said, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"

Now when Jesus was alone, those women and men who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, "To you has been given the mystery of the majesty of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; in order that they: 'Look well, but do not understand, listen well, but do not comprehend; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.'"

Then Jesus said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the [rest of the] parables? The sower sows the word. These are on the path where the word is sown; when they hear immediately Satan comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are on rocky ground; when they hear the word, they immediately with joy receive it. Yet they have no root in them and endure only for a while; then, when there is affliction or persecution on account of the word, immediately they stumble. And those sown among the thorns; these are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word and it becomes fruitless. And these are sown on the good soil: they hear the word and receive it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

**Sermon** The Rev. Ledlie I. Laughlin

*Please be seated at the invitation of the preacher. A period of silence will be observed after the sermon.*

**Creed** *standing as you are able*

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Mother, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**  
**We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.**  
**We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.**  
**We believe in one God: Mother, Sufferer, and Advocate. Amen.**

### **Prayers of the People**

*Intercessor* She who speaks life brought the world to being and entrusted it to our care. Creating God, guide the universal church in knowledge and love of you, remind us to care for the fullness of your creation, assist us in supporting the flourishing of your people around the world.

Ever living God, **hear our prayer.**

She who is exalted is the ruler of all and the lover of justice. Mighty God, lead those in authority toward justice, freedom, and peace; orient our individual pursuits of justice toward you and your kin-dom.

Ever living God, **hear our prayer.**

She who provides and saves will never stop caring for her people. Loving God, be present with our community; offer your healing and mercy to . . . and to those we name aloud or in our hearts . . .

Ever living God, **hear our prayer.**

She who is faithful has offered us many great gifts. Generous God, we praise you with gratitude and thanksgiving for . . . and for the blessings we name aloud or in our hearts . . .

Ever living God, **hear our prayer.**

She who is eternal grants us everlasting life in her glory. Heavenly God, mercifully accept your servants who have died into your house. We pray especially for . . . and for the departed we name aloud or in our hearts . . .

Ever living God, **hear our prayer.**

Mighty and merciful God, we lift our prayers to you. Respond in your loving kindness, and strengthen us to do your will. In your holy name we pray. **Amen.**

**Confession and Absolution** *standing or kneeling as you are able*

*Presider* Let us confess our sins to God.

*Silence may be kept.*

**God of all mercy, we confess that we have sinned against you, opposing your will in our lives. We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves, and in the world you have created. We repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf. Forgive, restore, and strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ, that we may abide in your love and serve only your will. Amen.**

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.  
**Amen.**

**Peace** *The Presider says to the People*

The peace of Christ be always with you.

**And also with you.**

*All greet one another in the name of Jesus Christ.*

**Announcements**

## THE HOLY COMMUNION

**At the Offertory**

*The Holy Spirit inspires us to give generously, to extend Christ's mission in this place and the wider world. Please visit <http://tinyurl.com/GivetoSCEC> to make your offering, or you can text to give using your phone. Text SCEC and AMOUNT to 73256 (QR code in Connections) and you will receive a text with instructions.*

*Please stand as you are able as the offering is brought forward and blessed.*

**The Great Thanksgiving**

God is here.

**Her Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them unto God.**

Let us give thanks to our Sovereign God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Blessed are you, O God, our light and our salvation; to you be glory and praise for ever. From the beginning you have created all things, and all your works echo the silent music of your praise. In the fullness of time you made us in your image, the crown of all creation. You give us breath and speech, that with angels and archangels and all the powers of heaven we may find a voice to sing your praise:

**Sanctus and Benedictus**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

How wonderful is the work of your hands, O God. As a mother tenderly gathers her children, you embraced a people as your own. When they turned away and rebelled, your gaze remained steadfast. From them you raised up Jesus to be our Savior, born of Mary, to be the living bread, in whom all our hungers are satisfied. He offered his life for sinners, and with a love stronger than death, he opened wide his arms on the cross.

On the night before he died, he came to supper with his friends, and, taking bread, he gave you thanks. He broke it and gave it to them, saying: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine, he gave thanks, and said: "Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Great is the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

Remembering his life, death, and resurrection, we present to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon them that they may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son, holy food and drink of new and unending life. Form us in the likeness of Christ, and build us into a living temple to your glory.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ by whom, with whom, and in whom, with all who stand before you on earth and in heaven, we worship you in songs of everlasting praise:

**Blessing and honor and glory and power be yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

**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 for ever. Amen.**

### **Breaking of the Bread**

*The bread is broken and silence observed.*

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

**Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

### **Invitation to Communion**

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Whoever you are, wherever you find yourself on the journey of faith, you are welcome at Christ's table.

### **Communion**

*Christ welcomes all to communion. ■ Receive the bread in open and outstretched hands and sip the wine, guiding the chalice to your lips. ■ If you do not want to sip the wine, it is also perfectly appropriate to receive the bread only. We do not allow dipping the bread into the wine. ■ Respond to communion by saying "Amen." ■ If you prefer a blessing, cross your hands over your chest. ■ Gluten-free wafers are available at each communion station. ■ Baptism is offered several times a year; speak to a priest to learn more.*

### **Prayer after Communion** *standing as you are able*

Let us pray.

**Nourishing God, thank you for inviting us to your table where all are welcome, and for feeding us with the bread of life and quenching our thirst with the cup of blessing. As you have filled our lives with love and hope, may we be a source of your love and hope for others who hunger and thirst for good news. Amen.**

*Presider* As we are gathered, fed, and sent by God, let us ask ourselves: With whom can I share the Good News? Whom will I invite to join us at this table?

## **Sending Forth of Eucharistic Ministers** *when scheduled*

In the name of St. Columba's we send you forth bearing these holy gifts, that *N.* may share with us in the communion of Christ's body and blood.

**We who are many are one body, as we all share one bread, one cup.**

## **Blessing**

*The People respond* **Amen.**

## **Dismissal**

*The People respond* **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**

## **Liturgical Note**

During the Season after Epiphany, St. Columba's is engaging *A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church*, compiled and translated by the Rev. Dr. Wilda C. Gafney. This series is often short-handed as "Year W" for *woman* and *womanist*. Womanism is a movement of Black Women that recognizes the intersections of gender, race, and class.

Throughout the season, we will hear feminine characterization of God, and we'll engage the women of the Bible anew. This is an experiment that allows us to notice how stories and names for God impact our connection to God and to one another. Listen for what comforts and challenges you, for what encourages or confuses you. *A Women's Lectionary* gives the opportunity to be curious and to notice.

Names of God included in Opening Prayers and Prayers of the People also come from resources by the Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney.

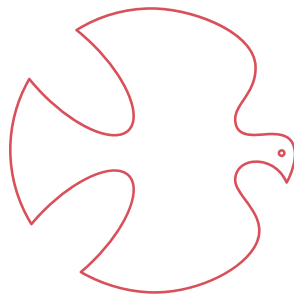
## **Land Acknowledgement**

We give thanks that we meet today on the traditional land of the first people of Nacotchtank, who had been its custodians for thousands of years, caring for and nurturing it. We pray for all who live on this land and pay our respects to the native leaders past, present, and emerging.

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