



First Christian Church

Disciples of Christ

430 S. 16th St. Lincoln, NE 68508 402.475.4289

Weekly Worship

love all • live spiritually • rejoice in hope • show hospitality

Rev. Dr. Karen Moritz, Pastor

Kelly Tyrrell, Church Administrator

Mark W. Miller, Director of Music Ministries

Sara Lugn, Stephen Ministry Leader

www.fcclincoln.org

info@fcclincoln.org

Week of January 31, 2021



Public Worship WILL be held at 10:30 am Sunday morning.

If you are not quite ready to join us for public worship, we ask that you follow along with this printed service. Find a comfortable place to be, relax your body, and calm your mind. Try to come into a prayerful mindset. As you pray the community prayer, remember, your fellow congregants at First Christian will be praying this along with you. Feel free to keep this prayer to pray all week.

Community Prayer

O God of the heavens, we pray to you today in awe of your wonder and power. We praise your holy name in all that we do. Our world is in tumult now, and we need you to be a beacon, a guiding light unto our feet to show us how to follow Jesus. There are so many things that tempt us, wasting our money, indulging in food, pampering ourselves while forgetting those around us. Fill us with your Spirit, O God, that we may name these things that tempt us and combat them with behaviors that are befitting to our place as children of the light. We pray to you in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Check out our weekly video at www.fcclincoln.org, First Christian's Facebook page, or search for First Christian Church, Lincoln, Nebraska on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVejAW8Dmqv8Jmk5rzj43g>

Call to Worship

Feel free to follow along with our Call to Worship from today's live-streamed worship service.

One: Thinking we know all the answers, yet wondering if we haven't missed something:

Many: **We enter this sanctuary of Truth.**

One: In the company of sinners, in cahoots with saints:

Many: **We gather as God's people.**

One: Standing by folks of deep, abiding faith; seated with those who stumble through the Kingdom:

Many: **We lift our praise to God.**

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Even if you are worshiping from home, please continue your regular giving to the church in addition to your faith giving . The FCC office is accepting checks at 430 S. 16th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508. We can also mail you a debit authorization form to do automatic withdrawals. Finally, there is a "GIVE" button on the top right-hand side of the fcclincoln.org website to make an online donation via PayPal.
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Scripture Reading

Psalm III

¹ Praise the Lord!
I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.
² Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who delight in them.
³ Full of honor and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures for ever.
⁴ He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds;
the Lord is gracious and merciful.
⁵ He provides food for those who fear him;
he is ever mindful of his covenant.
⁶ He has shown his people the power of his works,
in giving them the heritage of the nations.
⁷ The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.
⁸ They are established for ever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.
⁹ He sent redemption to his people;
he has commanded his covenant for ever.
Holy and awesome is his name.
¹⁰ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practice it have a good understanding.
His praise endures for ever.

Mark 1:21-28

²¹ They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²² They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.
²³ Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴ 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.’ ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent, and come out of him!’ ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, throwing him into convulsions and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷ 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.’ ²⁸ At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

Reflection

Meditation for the 4th Sunday after the Epiphany

“Possessed by the Spirit of God”

The new editor of the *Presbyterian Outlook*, Roger Gench, asked a compelling question in his reflections on our Gospel lesson from Mark. “If Jesus were to wander into church with you on Sunday, what do you imagine would happen?” Our passage from Mark recounted what began as a typical day of worship for Jesus and his Disciples. It was Jesus custom to attend worship in the local synagogue on the Sabbath. The author of our Gospel lesson for today relayed a specific story about Jesus’ first actions following his baptism and journey in the wilderness. Each of the Gospels described a different event which indicated the unique spin they each had on the life and ministry of Jesus. Gench points out: “Jesus begins his public ministry in Mark by throwing himself into cosmic battle with all the demonic forces that oppress and disfigure human life. In Mark, Jesus’ ministry begins with confrontation, so we should anticipate a lot of yelling and screaming and conflict during lectionary year B, which features this Gospel.”

Fortunately, our usual Sabbath worship isn’t quite so colorful. Although, I do remember leading some interesting services while chaplain at various state psychiatric facilities. As we ponder this lesson for today, we are invited to consider several things. What does this encounter with a man possessed by an unclean spirit say about Jesus’ ministry? Also, what does this story say to us today? Jesus did not begin the confrontation, but he did not shy away from it either. As Gench points out, Jesus recognized the forces that strive to “oppress and disfigure human life.” I bet each of us could name forces in our world today that do the same. We have had to actively confront them over these past few months; global pandemic, racism, injustice, and inequality. It might be tempting to surrender to these

“unclean spirits” but Jesus set an example for us that impels us to name these forces and combat them. We may not be able to exorcise them as quickly and dramatically as Jesus did, but we too are called to name them and fight them.

One of the other striking features of this story was the response of those who were present in worship on the Sabbath day. How would we react to such a scene? At first blush, the response of the congregation seemed rather lame. In verse 27 the NRSV Bible said: “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.” Amazed does not sound like a very impressive response after such a dramatic event. The Greek here actually says; amazed, astonished, terrified, or frightened. That sounds more like it, doesn’t it? But what is it they really feared? What really terrified them? For most of us watching someone possessed by an unclean spirit and witnessing its exorcism would be terrifying enough. But, our story also suggests that they were equally terrified by Jesus’ pronouncement and demonstration of his authority. His authority was different from the others who taught in the synagogue. What made it different? In reality, Jesus was also possessed by a spirit, but we know from his baptism that it was the Spirit of God. This Spirit gave him, and gives us, authority and power to name and confront the unclean spirits. In His name we too are empowered to name and confront the unclean spirits that oppress and disfigure human life.

AMEN

Prayers & Praises

January 31, 2021

In Our Church Family:

- Georgann Jordan
- Arlene Heimer
- Marvin Thurber
- Roger & Jessica Vocasek
- William Deterding
- Jill Carpenter, *diagnosed with COVID-19*
- Nancy & Leo Jelinek
- Vic Burgess
- Donna Baker
- Polly Putney
- Mildred Brockemeyer
- Rae Hope Putney

Relatives:

- Friends and Family of *Vic Burgess*
- Rick Pickel, *for returning to chemotherapy, son of Dick & Roxie Pickel*
- Fred Ogren, *prayers for healing during hospitalization, son of LaVonne Ogren*
- Tricia Gangwish, *prayers for fighting breast cancer, aunt of Lindsay Swanson*
- Will Oldenburg, *prayers as he anticipates deployment to the Middle East, cousin of D'Arcy Blosser*
- John Swanson's father, *in nursing home with COVID-19*

Friends:

- Pam Larsen, *continuing to fight cancer, friend of Marcia Foster*
- Peggy Westburg, *praise for improvement, though there is no cure for her cancer, friend of Lindsay Swanson*
- Karen, *during cancer treatments, co-worker of Rhonda Ball*
- Tallu Schuyler Quinn, *diagnosed with glioblastoma, prayers for healing, friend of Kaleo and D'Arcy Blosser*
- Dan Principato, *complications with COVID-19, friend of the Vocaseks*
- Cedric Gibb, *healing prayers, friend of Cec Burkhardt*
- Tomi, *healing prayers for cancer diagnosis, friend of Sara Lugin*
- Mother of Dave Schwaninger, *upon recent stroke, friend of Marcia Foster*
- Derek Hilgert, *prayers for multiple health issues, friend of the Effle family*

Our Timothys:

- Bruce Frogge *at Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX*
- Glenda Dietrich Moore, *Creative Arts Ministry in Lincoln, NE*

In the Nebraska Region:

Aurora First Christian Church and Rev. Penny Shulz

Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

Debbie Colvin serving in Ghana

Find more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners at www.globalministries.org



Song of the Week

I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

Words & Music by Kathleen Thomerson, 1966

I want to walk as a child of the light.
I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world.
The star of my life is Jesus.

*In him there is no darkness at all.
The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.*

I want to see the brightness of God.
I want to look at Jesus.
Clear Sun of righteousness, shine on my path,
and show me the way to the Father.

*In him there is no darkness at all.
The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.*

I'm looking for the coming of Christ.
I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race,
we shall know the joy of Jesus.

*In him there is no darkness at all.
The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.*