

## Order of Worship for January 16, 2022 (8:30 AM)

### Prelude

P: The Lord be with you,  
**C: and also with you.**

**Opening Hymn:** “*Songs of Thankfulness and Praise*” – **Hymn #394**

**Confession and Forgiveness** p. 203

### Service of the Word

#### Introit

P: The LORD brought me to the banqueting house,

**C: and His banner over me was love.**

P: Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens,

**C: Your faithfulness to the clouds**

P: Your righteousness is like the mountains of God;

**C: Your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast You save, O LORD.**

P: How precious is Your steadfast love, O God!

**C: The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.**

P: They feast on the abundance of Your house,

**C: And You give them drink from the river of Your delights.**

P: For with You is the fountain of life;

**C: in Your light do we see light.**

**ALL: 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.**

P: The LORD brought me to the banqueting house,

**C: and His banner over me was love.**

**Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy)** p. 204

**Hymn of Praise** (“*Glory to God in the Highest*”) p. 204

#### Salutation

P: The Lord be with you,  
**C: and also with you.**

#### Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray... Almighty and everlasting God, who governs all things in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear the prayers of Your people and grant us Your peace through all our days; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen**

### **Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 62:1-5**

R: For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and our land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

R: The Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **Epistle Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11**

R: Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as He wills.

R: The Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Alleluia** p. 205

### **Holy Gospel: John 2:1-11**

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the second chapter.

**C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

P: On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with His disciples. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you."

Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it. When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did

not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.” This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory. And His disciples believed in Him.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to You, O Christ.**

## Nicene Creed

**Sermon Hymn:** “*Son of God, Eternal Savior*” - **Hymn #842**

**Sermon:** “*Best for Last*” – **John 2:1-11**

Have you ever lost something? Maybe you put something down in a rush, without thinking. Maybe you needed to keep something secret for later, so you hid it in a special spot, that you then forgot when later comes. No matter what, when you look and find something you’ve lost, it’s inevitable that whatever you were looking for is found in the last spot you look. If only you’d looked there first!

The same thing can happen with problems we face. Have you run out of ideas? In the musical “tick, tick, Boom,” the main character, based on composer Jonathan Larson, is finally able to find the idea for the final song his musical needs while he’s swimming. Have you run out of patience? Sometimes you need to go take some deep breaths or calm down to find some patience, or sometimes you’ll be put in situations where you have to learn how to be patient. Have you run out of money? You can always check your couch cushions or the pockets of your dirty laundry, or do a little more budgeting. Have you run out of enthusiasm or joy? Those things often seem to be found when we’re not looking for them. Whatever you’ve run out of, you can find it in the last place you look.

In today’s Gospel lesson, we find a wedding that has run out of wine. And that’s a problem. Wine isn’t merely a social lubricant at the time, you see. Wine is a sign of the harvest, of God’s abundance, of joy and gladness and hospitality. And so when the wedding runs short on wine they run short on blessing. And that’s a tragedy for the couple, for the families, for everyone there. It would have been a major social failure for all involved. In fact, in first century Palestine, these social customs were so serious that lawsuits could be filed against people who ran out of food and wine.

That’s when Mary the mother of Jesus steps in. She knows there is a problem. She’s not bossy, she doesn’t try to fix things herself, she isn’t critical, and she doesn’t blame herself or others. She knows who Jesus is. She just gives the problem to Jesus, and points others, especially the servants, to Jesus as well.

And so Jesus, prompted by his mother, steps in and provides more wine. Not just more wine, but more wine than the whole crowd could have drunk not only during the days of the wedding feast, but probably across a few weeks. Six jars, we’re told, each capable of holding 20-30 gallons of water. In changing the water of those six large basins of water for purification, Jesus

is providing close to an additional thousand bottles of additional wine. Not only that, but as the surprised steward discovered, it's not just cheap boxed wine Jesus provides, but the best wine yet served. The best had been saved for last.

Now, there wasn't any official polite backing for the idea that you serve the good stuff first, and then get out the cheap stuff once everyone has had a chance to become a little tipsy and their palates to be a little less refined, but it would certainly make sense to anyone being frugal to do things that way. But just because it's frugal doesn't mean it's polite, or right.

Jesus saved the best for last when he changed the water into wine, not making it into the cheap boxed stuff but instead making into a fine vintage. But that wasn't the only time Jesus saved the best for last. We're reminded that turning water into wine is only the first miracle, the first sign, Jesus does. In the Gospel of John, the miracles of Jesus are called signs. They point to who Jesus is and what he came to do. John tells us at the end of the Gospel that he specifically chose the seven signs that he mentions, out of all of the many signs and miracles Jesus did. John chose these miracles, these signs, because they point us to who Jesus is.

Changing water into wine was the first sign, but it wasn't the last. Other signs point to Jesus fulfilling the prophecies about the Messiah as he heals the sick, gives sight to the blind, makes the lame to walk, and feeds the 5000. The last and greatest miracle Jesus does is to defeat death itself. He raises Lazarus from the dead as his seventh sign, but that's not really the last one, either. Jesus then goes to the cross to defeat death once and for all. Death doesn't turn out to get the last word. Life does.

Jesus continues to save the best for last. This first sign, of water turned to wine, of a joyful wedding celebration saved, points us to the picture of another wedding, the great wedding feast at the end of everything, when we will celebrate without end.

The Prophet Isaiah promises that "the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, or rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined" (Isaiah 25:6). When God is host, he serves only the best—he saves the best for last. Indeed, God saves the best for the Last Day, which is why all other feasts are only a foretaste of the Feast to come. The Wedding Feast of the Lamb will be the party to end all parties. It will be the best party with the best music and food you could ever imagine. Until then, we wait for that happily ever after. We wait for everything to end well. We wait, knowing that the best is yet to come.

Those who work with stories know there are two basic types of stories; comedies and tragedies. If a story ends in a funeral, it's a tragedy. If it ends in a wedding, it's a comedy. Not a comedy in turns of laughter, but in terms of joy, of a happy ending. That's why the Bible doesn't end with a funeral, not even a "ruined" one like the ones Jesus attends where he raises the dead and ends the need for the funeral. Instead, the Bible ends with a wedding. It ends with a marriage celebration full of joy, one that celebrates God not just visiting his people, but living with us, dwelling with us, forever.

The signs we look to show that God loved us enough to come into the world as a baby, to die on a cross, to rise again for us. If we look to the signs that God gives us, though, we'll see God at work in unexpected ways, showing he is with us and giving us abundantly more than we need.

Jesus performing this miraculous sign—willing water into excellent wine—invites his disciples, and us, to believe in him, and to experience life in his name. With this miracle we also are given a foretaste of Jesus’s ultimate glory revealed in his death and resurrection. That glory will finally be fully revealed when he will return to restore all things. Blessed with life given by Jesus today, we look ahead to further blessings on the last day when, among other things, there will be an abundance of excellent wine as we celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb in his reign that has no end.

The miracles Jesus does are signs. They point us to what God is doing in the world. They point us to the fact that the best is yet to come. They remind us that no matter what challenges we face, God is saving the best for last. That’s a promise worth waiting for.

### **Prayer of the Church**

P: Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

## **Service of the Sacrament**

**Preface and Sanctus** (*Holy, Holy, Holy*) p. 208

**Prayer of Thanksgiving, Lord’s Prayer and Words of our Lord, and**

**Peace of the Lord** p. 209

**Agnus Dei** (*Lamb of God*) p. 210

**Distribution Hymns:** “*Prelude and Rondeau*” by Boismortier – Duet Jan B & Mary P  
(Sunday both services)

“*Come, Join in Cana’s Feast*” – **Hymn #408**

“*O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright*” – **Hymn #395**

**Song After Communion:** “*Nunc Dimittis*” (Song of Simeon) p. 211

### **Prayer After Communion**

P: Lord God, You showed Your glory and led many to faith by the works of Your Son. As He brought gladness and healing to His people, grant us these same gifts and lead us also to perfect faith in Him, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

**Blessing** p.212

**Closing Hymn:** “*The Star Proclaims the King Is Here*” - **Hymn #399**

**Postlude**