

Order of Worship for January 15, 2023

Prelude:

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: “*I Lay My Sins on Jesus*” – Hymn #606

Confession and Forgiveness p. 203

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm:

P: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight,

C: O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

P: The heavens declare the glory of God,

C: and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.

P: Day to day pours out speech,

C: and night to night reveals knowledge.

P: There is no speech, nor are there words,

C: whose voice is not heard.

P: Their voice goes out through all the earth,

C: and their words to the end of the world.

**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: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight,

C: O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

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

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

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray.... Almighty God, merciful Father, in Holy Baptism You declared us to be Your children and gathered us into Your one, holy Church, in which You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; 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 49:1-7

R: Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called

me from the womb, from the body of my mother He named my name. He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand He hid me; He made me a polished arrow; in His quiver He hid me away. And He said to me, “You are My servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” But I said, “I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the LORD, and my recompense with my Go

And now the LORD says, He who formed me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob back to Him; and that Israel might be gathered to Him—for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength—He says: “It is too light a thing that you should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and His Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers: “Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God

Epistle Lesson:--1 Corinthians 1:1-9

R: Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in Him in all speech and all knowledge—even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

R: This is the Word of the Lord’

C: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia and Verse: p. 205

Holy Gospel:--John 1:29-42

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

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

The next day [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because He was before me.’ I myself did not know Him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that He might be revealed to Israel.” And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on Him. I myself did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see

the Spirit descend and remain, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as He walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to Him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are You staying?” He said to them, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where He was staying, and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). He brought Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

Nicene Creed: p. 206

Sermon Hymn: “*Herald, Sound the Note of Judgment*” – **Hymn #511**

Sermon: “*Pointing to Jesus*” - **John 1:29-42**

Although we’re still a few weeks away from spring training, there have still been a few things for baseball fans to pay attention to while we look out the window and wait until spring. Trades and free agent signings were more plentiful this year, after several years of lower spending because of the pandemic and uncertainty of what the next labor contract would bring.

One of the best things I noticed about this, though, was how the sportswriters make sure to give credit to who broke the stories about different deals. The writers didn’t want credit that wasn’t due them. Instead, they made sure to give credit where credit was due. They wanted people pointed to the original source.

D.A Carson once said, “Humans discover their greatest importance in pointing to Jesus.” We see this perhaps most starkly in the life of John the Baptist, a man whose life was set apart for preparing the way for Jesus to begin his ministry on earth. He had the unique privilege of pointing to Jesus physically, right there in front of him.

John’s message and ministry attracted a lot of attention, but John was not the main show. John always knew that he was the opening act. John’s whole life was focused on pointing others to Jesus. People thought John the Baptist might be the Messiah, but he constantly said that he was not the one, but someone much more significant than he was on His way.

The synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) generally introduce John as the voice in the wilderness. The Gospel of John goes about it a little differently, but gets to a similar perspective. “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him” (John 1:6–7). John the

Baptist's mission is "to bear witness about the light." In fact, fourteen times in John's Gospel, the word witness is connected with John the Baptist. "He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world" (John 1:8–9).

John isn't the message; John is the messenger. Consider these verses, referring either to John or words spoken by him. "He was not the light" (John 1:8). "I am not the Christ" (John 1:20). "I am not [Elijah]" or "the prophet" (John 1:21). "I am not worthy to untie [His sandals]" (John 1:27). No wonder John the Baptist says, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). Even in the womb, when Mary comes to visit Elizabeth, John jumps for joy and prompts them to praise Jesus.

During his ministry calling all the repentance, John pointed others to Jesus as the one who was coming to clear the threshing floor, the one whose sandals John was unworthy of untying.

Although we hear from John mostly in Advent, we hear from him again today. After Jesus has been baptized by John, when he saw Jesus coming toward him, he declared, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). John knew that his job was to point people to Jesus, to the Savior who would set the world to rights and make all things new by forgiving sins and giving eternal life to all who believed in Jesus. Not all who believed in John, not all who answered John's call to repentance. It wasn't about John. It was about Jesus.

By calling Jesus the Lamb of God, John shows how everything that came before points to Jesus. A perfect, unblemished lamb was killed, and its blood caused the angel of death to pass over the houses of those who had trusted and followed God's directions. Lambs and bulls and doves were killed in the temple as sacrifices to atone for the sins of the people. And now, all of those sacrifices pointed to what John knew was to come. Jesus will die a sacrificial death for the world's sins.

And sure enough, the accounts of Jesus' death show many parallels between the sacrifices in the temple and what Jesus went through for us. All of those sacrifices pointed to Jesus. Jesus is the true Passover Lamb, and John wants us to understand these things about Jesus as a new and better Exodus story. Just as God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, God was now getting new people out of even older and darker slavery, slavery to sin.

Sometime later, when John's jealous disciples complained that Jesus was becoming more popular than his cousin, John humbly replied, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). John had pointed, had directed, the crowds that came to see him, to Jesus. He will go on to point all his own disciples at Jesus and encourage them to follow Jesus instead of him. For John knew that his life and ministry were never about John. They were always about Jesus.

The same is true for you and me. We are often tempted to believe that we are the directors of our own destiny and the architects of our plans. But our real reason to exist is to point people to Jesus. As the Westminster Shorter Catechism states, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." We glorify God when we give him the glory for all the good things in our

life—above all, our salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. And we glorify God when we help our friends, family, and neighbors to know Jesus as Savior and Lord.

We point to Jesus through our words, but not just our words. When we humble ourselves and point to Jesus through our actions, kindness, thoughts, prayers, and lives...others notice.

That's often one of the things that the international students who come here to learn English are most surprised about. They are surprised that the teachers are volunteers, and that they don't have to pay anything. Instead, they're told that the volunteers do what they do because of Jesus.

Like John the Baptist, we are here to point people to Jesus. We ourselves are not the light, but we bear witness about the Light: Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. Our world can be a very dark place. The world is darkened by sin. And people tend to love darkness more than light (John 3:19). But the true light, which enlightens everyone, has come into the world (John 1:9). "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5).

Our light doesn't come from inside us. Our light doesn't come from achieving enlightenment on our own. Our light is reflected. Our light is the light of Christ reflected outward into the lives of others.

The moon doesn't shine on its own – it reflects the light of the sun. That's what we are to do, as well. We don't have a light of our own. Instead, we reflect the light of the Son, Jesus, into the world.

All we need to do is light a lamp and keep the candle burning. "A city on a hill cannot be hidden.... In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14b, 16).

It wasn't any easier for the early disciples to share Christ with their friends and neighbors as it is for us today. And we wouldn't be here today if they hadn't done so. Jesus gave his Church only one Great Commission and that was to "make disciples" (Mt 28:16-20). We just have to be ready, like John the Baptist, to do our part. Pointing to Jesus.

Prayer of the Church:

P: Lord in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Sharing Our Ministry:

Offering and Voluntary:

Service of the Sacrament p. 208

Preface: p. 208

P: It is truly, good, right, and proper that we should in all times and in all places give thanks to You, almighty God, heavenly Father, for You used John the Baptist to point people to Jesus. You have given us Your holy Word to remind us again and again that Jesus is Your Son and that He has saved us from sin. Therefore with angels and all the army of heaven we praise and make great Your Holy name, evermore praising You and singing. . .

Sanctus: (*Holy, Holy, Holy*) p. 208

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P We give thanks to You almighty God for sending into this world, Your Lamb, Christ Jesus, who became the sacrifice for all the sins of the world. Bless us as we partake of His true body and blood in His holy supper, which He offers to us for the forgiveness of sins. Hear us as we pray in His name and as He taught us . . .

Lord's Prayer: p. 209

The Words of Our Lord, Pax Domini: (*Peace of the Lord*) p. 209

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

Distribution of Holy Communion:

“*Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bonds*” – **Hymn #458**

“*Sent Forth by God’s Blessing*” – **Hymn #643**

Nunc Dimitti: (*Now Let Us Depart*) 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, Christ Jesus, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Benedicamus (*Let Us Bless*) **and Benediction:** p. 212

Closing Hymn: “*Lamb of God*” – **Hymn #550**

Postlude