

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Cruciform Love
January 29 & 30, 2022

AS WE GATHER

At the beginning of the Church Year, many sang the hymn “Love Came Down at Christmas.” Indeed, the Bible says, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son” (John 3:16). It is only on Good Friday, however, that we discover the depth and power of God’s love in the cross of the Lord’s death. And so it was that ever since the beginning of His earthly ministry, after His Baptism, we are given clear hints about the true nature of God’s love. Initially people marveled at Jesus’ preaching and miraculous healings. Yet not only did the crowds quickly reject our Lord, but Satan also was actively opposing Him from the beginning. The love of God is the power of God to defeat Satan and free the world from the grip of sin and death. The standard of love is the cross of Christ. In today’s Epistle, Paul describes love in and through Christ. Substitute “Christ” for “love” and you get, “Christ is patient and kind; Christ does not envy or boast; . . . Christ rejoices with the truth.” This love of Christ is given to us and through us. “Faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these” is the cross of Christ!



ORDER OF DIVINE SERVICE *III LSB 184*

PRAYER

O Lord, our creator, redeemer, and comforter, as we come together to worship You in spirit and in truth, we humbly pray that You would open our hearts to the preaching of Your Word so that we may repent of our sins, believe in Jesus Christ as our only Savior, and grow in grace and holiness. Hear us for His sake.

+ CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION +

OPENING HYMN **LSB 544** “O LOVE, HOW DEEP”

- 1 O love, how deep, how broad, how high,
Beyond all thought and fantasy,
That God, the Son of God, should take
Our mortal form for mortals’ sake!
- 2 He sent no angel to our race,
Of higher or of lower place,
But wore the robe of human frame,
And to this world Himself He came.
- 3 For us baptized, for us He bore
His holy fast and hungered sore;
For us temptation sharp He knew;
For us the tempter overthrew.

- 4 For us He prayed; for us He taught;
For us His daily works He wrought,
By words and signs and actions thus
Still seeking not Himself but us.
- 5 For us by wickedness betrayed,
For us, in crown of thorns arrayed,
He bore the shameful cross and death;
For us He gave His dying breath.
- 6 For us He rose from death again;
For us He went on high to reign;
For us He sent His Spirit here
To guide, to strengthen, and to cheer.

D 7 All glory to our Lord and God
For love so deep, so high, so broad;
The Trinity whom we adore
Forever and forevermore.

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(The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.)

P In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C **who made heaven and earth.**

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C **and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

(Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.)

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

P Upon this your confession, the Lord Jesus Christ forgives you all your sins.

C **Amen.**

+ SERVICE OF THE WORD +

INTROIT

P Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up your hand;
forget not the afflicted.

C **The LORD is king forever and ever;
the nations perish from his land.**

P O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted;
you will strengthen their heart;
you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed,
so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.

C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

KYRIE *LSB 186*

C **Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.**

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS *LSB 187*

P Glory be to God on high:

C **and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.
We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee,
we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory.
O Lord God, heav'nly King, God the Father Almighty.
O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ;
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sin of the world, receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.
For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord.
Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,
art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

COLLECT OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

Almighty God, You know we live in the midst of so many dangers that in our frailty we cannot stand upright. Grant strength and protection to support us in all dangers and carry us through all temptations; 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 *Jeremiah 1:4–10*

⁴Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

⁵“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

⁶Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.” ⁷But the LORD said to me,

“Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’;
for to all to whom I send you, you shall go,
and whatever I command you, you shall speak.

⁸Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you,
declares the LORD.”

⁹Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me,

“Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.

¹⁰See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms,
to pluck up and to break down,
to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant.”

A This is the Word of the Lord. C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM *Psalm 71:1–6; antiphon: v. 12*

P ¹In you, O LORD, do I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame!

C ²**In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me;
incline your ear to me, and save me!**

P ³Be to me a rock of refuge,
to which I may continually come;
you have given the command to save me,
for you are my rock and my fortress.

C ⁴**Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of the unjust and cruel man.**

P ⁵For you, O Lord, are my hope,
my trust, O LORD, from my youth.

C ⁶**Upon you I have leaned from before my birth;
you are he who took me from my mother’s womb.
My praise is continually of you.**

EPISTLE *1 Corinthians 12:31b–13:13*

I will show you a still more excellent way.

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. ¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

¹³So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

A This is the Word of the Lord. C **Thanks be to God.**

VERSE *Luke 4:43b*

P I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.

ALLELUIA *LSB 190*

C **Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

HOLY GOSPEL *Luke 4:31–44*

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the fourth chapter.

C **Glory be to Thee, O Lord.**

³¹[Jesus] went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, ³²and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority. ³³And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, ³⁴“Ha! 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.” ³⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. ³⁶And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!” ³⁷And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

³⁸And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon’s house. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. ³⁹And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.

⁴⁰Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. ⁴¹And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

⁴²And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, ⁴³but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.” ⁴⁴And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord. C **Praise be to Thee, O Christ.**

NICENE CREED

C **I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

HYMN OF THE DAY LSB 842 “SON OF GOD, ETERNAL SAVIOR”

1 Son of God, eternal Savior,
Source of life and truth and grace,
Word made flesh, whose birth among us

Hallows all our human race,
You our Head, who, throned in glory,
For Your own will ever plead:
Fill us with Your love and pity,
Heal our wrongs, and help our need.

2 As You, Lord, have lived for others,
So may we for others live.
Freely have Your gifts been granted;
Freely may Your servants give.
Yours the gold and Yours the silver,
Yours the wealth of land and sea;
We but stewards of Your bounty
Held in solemn trust will be.

3 Come, O Christ, and reign among us,
King of love and Prince of Peace;
Hush the storm of strife and passion,
Bid its cruel discords cease.
By Your patient years of toiling,
By Your silent hours of pain,
Quench our fevered thirst of pleasure,
Stem our selfish greed of gain.

4 Son of God, eternal Savior,
Source of life and truth and grace,
Word made flesh, whose birth among us
Hallows all our human race:
By Your praying, by Your willing
That Your people should be one,
Grant, O grant our hope's fruition:
Here on earth Your will be done.

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PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, giver and perfecter of our faith, we thank and praise You for continuing among us the preaching of Your Gospel for our instruction and edification. Send Your blessing upon the Word, which has been spoken to us, and by Your Holy Spirit increase our saving knowledge of You, that day by day we may be strengthened in the divine truth and remain steadfast in Your grace. Give us strength to fight the good fight and by faith to overcome all the temptations of Satan, the flesh, and the world so that we may finally receive the salvation of our souls; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

SERMON *“What Love Does in the Church” 1 Corinthians 12:31b, 13:1-13*

Introduction:

We are encourage to unite as a nation, as a people and even as a church. This is good and right. We are to get along with each other, even more, work together for the good of the nation, others and ourselves.

The world understands this. A people united is a stronger nation, a more productive people and a better place to live.

So, we attempt to unite ourselves. We look to a common cause or purpose. We work to set goals that each of us can work toward. We work on our differences so that we come to an agreement or compromise which will help us move forward. All good and beneficial to the good of the nation, for the good of others and for a peaceful life for ourselves.

Add to this mix, love one another. The world see how important love is at home, at work and at rest. And is true for the holy Christian Church on earth.

I. Gives meaning to the temporal

Without love in the Church, nothing has meaning. All the wonderful things that go on in the Church, the teaching, the preaching, the serving, the worship, the evangelizing and the fellowship is nothing but an empty gong. If one could speak the language of the angels it would be amazing. But without love is just empty sound like the wind. Pretty but nothing of substance. If we could cure all diseases, feed all the hungry, house all the homeless and do not have love, they are empty gestures and self servicing attempts at glory. Even if we gave up everything we had, sacrifice our own well being and even laid down our lives for others and do not have love, it all becomes a waste land of efforts.

Unconditional love is what makes the work of the Church on earth meaningful. It is why the outside world favored the Christian and holds them in high esteem.

Paul describes this unconditional love. “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” This type of love is used in all types of relationships. It is used between husbands and wives, parent and child, between siblings, with relatives, neighbors, fellow citizens, employers and employees, and everyone especial between members of the Church. Paul does not include here the union of man and women in becoming one. This is reserved only between a man and woman in marriage.

When all that we think, say and do are done in love for God and for our neighbor, they become selfless acts. They become Christ like acts. For God’s love moves one to think of others and their needs. God’s love moved Him to create us and the world in which we live. It was His love for us that moved Him to send His Son to be our Savior. His is a holy and selfless love that

we cannot ever achieve here on earth.

Yet, we call upon Him to forgive our swallow thankfulness, our self servicing attempts to love others and that He would work His unconditional love in and through us.

II. Remains within the Body of Christ forever

It is this love for God and for others that will follow us into heaven when Christ returns. All the suffering and difficulties of lives will come to an end. There will be no need to feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty or visit the sick. When Christ returns all these things will come to an end.

There will be no need to proclaim the Word of God, teach the young and the old the grace of God, or spread the good news. All will see the Word made flesh and will have perfect faith and trust in their returning Savior.

Does this mean that all our work in the Lord here on earth is in vain. No! Christ will remember all our works as partial as they are on earth. He will say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant. I was hungry and you feed me. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was sick and in prison and you visited me." We will be amazed and in wonder. But this is the grace of God when He forgives us our sins through Christ. He declares our works good and done in selfless and unconditional love.

Conclusion:

Today, we rely on God's grace and forgiveness. But in eternity we will still have faith, hope and love. We will see our Savior and see our salvation. Our faith in Christ confirmed for eternity. Our hope and the certainty of our salvation we will see for all eternity. And our love will be a perfect love for God and others.

This is what unites us in our work and service to God and others. Goals on earth will not be met. Our purpose on earth never be fulfilled. All our endeavors will fall short of completion. But our faith, our hope and our love remains forever. And the greatest of these is love.

+AMEN+

PRAYER

O holy and most merciful God, You have taught us the way of Your commandments. We implore You to pour out Your grace into our hearts. Cause it to bear fruit in us that, being ever mindful of Your mercies and Your laws, we may always be directed to Your will and daily increase in love toward You and one another. Enable us to resist all evil and to live a godly life. Help us to follow the example of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and to walk in His steps until we shall possess the kingdom that has been prepared for us in heaven; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

OFFERTORY *LSB 192*

- C Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit. Amen.**

OFFERING HYMN **LSB 394** *“Songs of Thankfulness And Praise” st. 1*

- 1 Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus, Lord, to Thee we raise,
Manifested by the star
To the sages from afar,
Branch of royal David’s stem
In Thy birth at Bethlehem:
Anthems be to Thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.

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PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

- P** O God of love, thanks and praise be to You for sending Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to open Your kingdom by means of His love and deliverance and glory on the cross. Greater love has no one than this. Work in us, Your children, the gift of Your love, that we be enabled to endure the struggles of faith and hope and to reflect Your true glory all our days. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

- P** Establish Your whole Church and this congregation to be walking and serving together in love for You and love toward one another and the world, that many come to the knowledge of Your truth and salvation. Grant Your strength and blessing to all who preach Your life-giving Word and those who serve as Your loving hands to all who are in any need. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

- P** Grant Your grace and wisdom to all who serve in the government of our country. Give strength and integrity to those in the armed forces and to all who serve and protect us in our communities. Give all agencies dedicated to the service of helping and healing people the freedom to do their good works for the support of all people. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

- P** Hear also now our prayers for all who are sick or hospitalized, the injured and the lonely. Grant that Your healing love be administered faithfully by the medical professionals and those who supply the needy in any way. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

- P** Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER 196

C 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.

HYMN LSB 729 "I AM TRUSTING THEE, LORD JESUS"

- 1 I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,
Trusting only Thee;
Trusting Thee for full salvation,
Great and free.
- 2 I am trusting Thee for pardon;
At Thy feet I bow,
For Thy grace and tender mercy
Trusting now.
- 3 I am trusting Thee for cleansing
In the crimson flood;
Trusting Thee to make me holy
By Thy blood.
- 4 I am trusting Thee to guide me;
Thou alone shalt lead,
Ev'ry day and hour supplying
All my need.
- 5 I am trusting Thee for power;
Thine can never fail.
Words which Thou Thyself shalt give me
Must prevail.
- 6 I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus;
Never let me fall.
I am trusting Thee forever
And for all.

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HYMN LSB 783 "TAKE MY LIFE AND LET IT BE"

- 1 Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;

Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

2 Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love;
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

3 Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only for my King;
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

4 Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect and use
Ev'ry pow'r as Thou shalt choose.

5 Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

6 Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

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HYMN LSB 845 “*WHERE CHARITY AND LOVE PREVAIL*”

1 Where charity and love prevail
There God is ever found;
Brought here together by Christ's love
By love are we thus bound.

2 With grateful joy and holy fear
His charity we learn;
Let us with heart and mind and soul
Now love Him in return.

3 Forgive we now each other's faults
As we our faults confess,
And let us love each other well
In Christian holiness.

4 Let strife among us be unknown;
Let all contention cease;

Be God's the glory that we seek;
Be ours His holy peace.

5 Let us recall that in our midst
Dwells Christ, His only Son;
As members of His body joined
We are in Him made one.

6 For love excludes no race or clan
That names the Savior's name;
His family embraces all
Whose Father is the same.

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NUNC DIMITTIS *LSB 199*

**C Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word,
for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all
people,
a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

THANKSGIVING *LSB 200*

**A O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,
C and His mercy endureth forever.**

BENEDICAMUS *LSB 202*

**A Bless we the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.**

BENEDICTION *LSB 202*

**P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and T give you peace.
C Amen, amen, amen.**

HYMN OF DEPARTURE *LSB 803 "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"*

1 Joyful, joyful we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love!
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee,
Praising Thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
Drive the gloom of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day.

2 All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird, and flowing fountain
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

D 3 Thou art giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living,
Ocean-depth of happy rest!
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
Fountainhead of love divine:
Joyful, we Thy heav'n inherit!
Joyful, we by grace are Thine!

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PRAYER

Almighty and merciful God, we have again worshiped in Your presence and received both forgiveness for our many sins and the assurance of Your love in Jesus Christ. We thank You for this undeserved grace and ask You to keep us in faith until we inherit eternal salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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