

Introduction to the day

The Sundays after Epiphany continue to celebrate the revelation of God's glory to us as it was made known to the magi and to those on Jordan's banks at Jesus' baptism—today using wedding imagery. Our God rejoices over God's people as those being married rejoice over one another. By the power of the Spirit there are gifts galore for everyone. In Christ Jesus the best wine is saved for last. Taste and see.

PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW p. 188)

Let us pray.

Lord God, source of every blessing, you showed forth your glory and led many to faith by the works of your Son, who brought gladness and salvation to his people. Transform us by the Spirit of his love, that we may find our life together in him, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 62:1-5

A reading from Isaiah.

The people's return to Judah after the exile was marred by economic and political troubles. Nevertheless, the prophet declares, Jerusalem and Judah will be restored. God will rejoice over Jerusalem as a bridegroom rejoices over the bride, and the people are called to the celebration.

PSALM: Psalm 36:5-10

We feast upon the abundance of your house, O LORD. (Ps. 36:8)

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

The congregation at Corinth experienced division as people were comparing their spiritual gifts, thinking some to be superior to others. Paul invites this fractured community to trust that God's Holy Spirit has gifted them all perfectly for their mission together.

GOSPEL: John 2:1-11

Turning water to wine at the wedding at Cana is described as the first of Jesus' signs. Through many such epiphanies, Jesus reveals that he bears God's creative power and joyful presence into the world.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY - Jesus Does Care

There is humor to be found in the words "And his disciples believed in him" . . . because he could turn water into wine! Really? That's it? This small miracle performed at a wedding was *all* that was required at the start of Jesus' ministry to gain his disciples' faith and trust?

That such a minor event could prove so significant might sound silly if we are tempted to think God cares only about big things, such as war, environmental justice, and world hunger. But if we pay attention, we notice that many people encounter God in the most mundane moments of life: sitting quietly in a deer stand, floating on a calm lake while fishing, breastfeeding an infant and rocking in a chair, or holding the hand of an aged neighbor.

Jesus cares about all manner of small things—the grief of one widow, disease in the life of a teenager, the lack of wine at a wedding. While these things may seem small to an outsider, we know they are big to the one experiencing them. Thank God, no matter how large or small our concerns, Jesus does care!

At all times, and in all places, God is at work using ordinary things and people to produce extraordinary results. At the Cana wedding, Jesus turned ordinary water into wine to provide an extraordinary blessing: continued joy and celebration among family and friends. Today Jesus often uses coffee and cookies to create bonds among people—just ask the fellowship committee in your congregation! Jesus does care about our fellowship with one another. We are even commanded to gather around tables, to break bread and drink wine to remember him.

This season after Epiphany, may you catch sight of the ways Christ is present at your tables and in your gatherings, deepening relationships and spreading joy.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

With the Spirit of Christ shining upon us, let us boldly pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

Giver of gifts, you form each member of the church to serve. Inspire us to boldly use gifts of welcome and healing, service and teaching, leading and preaching, for the sake of your work in the world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Refuge of creatures, you place all the living under the shadow of your wings. Lead us in ways that tend to the needs of wild and domestic animals, creatures threatened by extinction, and the environment we share. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Voice of the oppressed, you call prophets throughout time. We remember the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a voice for racial and economic justice and for peace. Guide our nation in continuing to heed your prophetic call. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of steadfast love, as Jesus celebrated at Cana, nurture marriages and relationships in mutual care; in times of separation or divorce hold tenderly broken hearts and broken dreams. Be present to all who are sick, grieving or in any need. We especially pray for: Linda Boland, Sandra Gagnon, Shirley Glickman, Donna L. Hoffman, Claude Jeannotte, Cassie Jessup, Bill Lorbetskie, Glenda Panke, Barry Rogers, Marilyn Schneider, Danny Schultz, Doug Sell, Debbie Thom, Keith Weckwerth, Elaine Yourth, Harold Yourth, Stephanie Yourth, and those in long term care facilities and senior residences.. In this moment of silence, we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts those who need your healing grace, we also pray for all those affected by the wildfires in the Los Angeles area. (pause) God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Spirit of peace, celebrating this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we pray for neighboring congregations and ministry sites, especially St. John's Anglican Church. Nurture our shared commitment to embody Jesus' love, justice, and healing. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Wellspring of life, in living and dying we trust in you. We give thanks for the saints. Guide us in our living until, at last, we rest in you. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We entrust our prayers to you, O God, in the sure and certain hope that your promise is revealed among the people. **Amen.**

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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