

**ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**Aitkin, Minnesota**

**January 1, 2023**

**New Year's Day**

**ONLINE ORDER OF WORSHIP**

P In the name of the Father and of the 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.**

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, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

### **Introit**

May all who seek you rejoice and be | glad in you; \*  
may those who love your salvation say  
continually, "Great | is the LORD!"

Sacrifice and offering you have not desired, but you  
have given me an | open ear. \*

Burnt offering and sin offering you have | not  
required.

Then I said, "Behold, | I have come; \*  
in the scroll of the book it is writ- | ten of me:  
I desire to do your will, | O my God; \*  
your law is with- | in my heart."

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son \*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning, \*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

May all who seek you rejoice and be | glad in you; \*  
may those who love your salvation say  
continually, "Great | is the LORD!"

## Collect of the Day

P Let us pray. Lord God, You made Your beloved Son, our Savior, subject to the Law and caused Him to shed His blood on our behalf. Grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit that our hearts may be made pure from all sins; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

## Old Testament Reading

*Numbers 6:22–27*

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,  
The LORD bless you and keep you;  
the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

“So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

## Epistle

*Galatians 3:23–29*

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might

be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

### **Holy Gospel**

*Luke 2:21*

And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise be to Thee, O Christ.**

### **Apostles' Creed**

C **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.  
He descended into hell.**

**The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven**

**and sits at the right hand of God the Father  
Almighty.**

**From thence He will come to judge the living  
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**Sermon Text – Luke 2:21**

**Theme – God’s Resolution for You**

As we end an old year and begin a new year, it is customary to think back on all that has happened in the year gone by. We remember the joys and the sorrows; we remember the victories and the challenges; we remember the things that remained the same and the things that changed. There are always things that have changed.

There is one thing in 2022, though, that remained the same. That would be our sin. You know what I am talking about: all the shouldofs, wouldofs, and couldofs that we think about, all the ways that we failed our family, friends, and neighbors, all the thoughts, words and deeds that have been dirtied by our sin.

Sometimes those things really stick in our minds. That’s the way Satan works. He keeps

reminding us of our failures, our shortcomings, our unworthiness. Satan loves to drive us to despair and shame.

What do many of us do in response to this? We make resolutions. We promise ourselves that we will do better, that we will get rid of some of our old bad habits and replace them with some new, good habits. We may do pretty good when it comes to keeping our resolutions for a week or two. But no matter how hard we try, our sinful nature does what sinful nature does. That would be sin.

That's why it is good that on this the first day of the New Year, the lessons appointed for this day directs our attention, not on the way we have lived in the year gone by, but it directs our attention on the way Jesus lived His life for us. On this day when we are likely to be focusing on our own promises, commitments, and resolutions, our Gospel lesson points us to how God kept His promises, commitments, and resolutions for us. He did not leave us in our sin, but He sent His Son to deal with our sin for us.

That's what circumcision was all about. Today, is the 8<sup>th</sup> day after the day we celebrated Jesus' birth and circumcision was to take place on the 8<sup>th</sup> day.

Back in the Old Testament, when God promised Abraham that one of His descendants would be the Savior of the world, God gave Abraham a sign of this covenant; the sign was circumcision. It

was not something for Abraham and his descendants were to do for God; it was God's way of reminding them that God was doing something for them. So, every time a male child was born, he was circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day. When the boy was circumcised, the parents might have wondered if this could be the One who would fulfill God's promise.

Today, as we hear about Jesus' circumcision, we can remember how God fulfilled His promise in Jesus. He was the One to whom God was pointing when He established His covenant with Abraham. In Jesus, Abraham's Seed, our Savior, has come.

In His circumcision, Jesus was beginning the work of doing what His name proclaims, "saving His people from their sin" (Matthew 1:21). The early church fathers would say that with His circumcision Jesus is making a down payment of His blood. We often point to Jesus' death and resurrection as His saving work, but His death would not be saving if not for the fact that from the moment of His conception He lived a perfect life. It was all so that He could take our place, so that He could be our substitute. It was all so that we could have the forgiveness of sins, forgiveness for all our failures: past, present, and future, so that Jesus could give us life and set us free.

Sin is captivity. Sin is Satan trying to keep us captive to the past instead of being free to look forward to the future that Jesus wants for us. Sin is

captivity to fear and doubt instead of having the peace of Christ. Sin is the captivity of selfishness instead of freedom to live for others and for God.

Today, we hear the truth that sets us free. We are free indeed because Jesus made Himself a captive to the Law for us. He fulfilled the Law, beginning with His circumcision. He fulfilled the Law so that He could give His perfect life for our imperfect lives.

Now, we are no longer defined by the opinions of others or the accusations of Satan; now we are defined by our union with Christ. This wonderful reality is ours, not through circumcision, but through Holy Baptism. That's what our Epistle Lesson is reminding us when it says, **“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ”** (Galatians 3:27).

It goes on to say that it doesn't matter if we are **“Jew or Greek, ... slave or free, ... male or female for [we] are all one in Christ Jesus. And if [we] are Christ's , then we are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise”** (Galatians 3:28-29).

So, as we stand at the threshold of a new year, as we may make resolutions of our own, we can give thanks to God for giving us a Savior who forgives us all our sin, including the sin of broken resolutions.

We can give thanks to God for the resolution He made for us, the resolution spoken of in our Old Testament Lesson for today. The resolution is this:



**“to bless [us] and keep [us], [to] make His face shine upon [us] and be gracious to [us], [and to] lift up His countenance upon [us] and give [us] peace”**  
(Numbers 24:26).

We don't know if the coming year will be a happy one. What we do know is that the coming year will be a blessed one. AMEN

P The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

C **Amen.**

### **Prayer of the Church**

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth. The heavens are the work of Your fingers, yet You willed to save us in the most humble and sacrificial of ways. Already eight days after being born of the virgin Mary, Your Son was at work for our salvation by fulfilling Your Law and shedding His blood. Receive our heartfelt thanks for the righteousness and forgiveness of sins we have obtained through Jesus' life, death and resurrection

Blessed God, You sent Your Son into our flesh, and as an infant He first shed the blood that would cleanse us from our sin. Accept our thanks for the loving kindness shown to us sinners. Grant us a steadfast faith, that we would not forget all of Your benefits or lose sight of Your promises

O God, You declare that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for we are all one in Him. Preserve us from all ungodly prejudice, yet instill in us a deep appreciation of our distinctive callings. Grant that we would not resent what You have called us to be and to do, but rejoice to serve as You have ordained

Blessed Lord, You have shown Your power by establishing governments and leaders to serve Your people in Your name. Grant to our president, governor, Congress, legislators, judges and magistrates the wisdom and courage to act with integrity on behalf of all people, especially those least able to defend themselves.

Father in heaven, bless and keep us by Your grace. Remember those in need who cry out to You [*especially \_\_\_\_\_*]. According to Your will and wisdom, lift up Your countenance upon them and give them peace.

Gracious Father, in Your steadfast love You have put off the day of Jesus' return until the perfect time, when the number of Your elect is complete. Keep Your people watchful, vigilant and awake with Your gift of faith until that day; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## Lord's Prayer

- 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.**

## 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  
give you peace.
- C Amen.**

## Acknowledgments

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