

February 1, 2026

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

Jesus-style Peacemaking

Teach us, Jesus, about what it means to be seen as blessed in your eyes. We so often imagine the opposite. Don't we admire the rich in spirit? The comfortable? The confident? The secure?

How would we frame the peacemakers Jesus calls blessed? We might imagine them to be the people who walk gently through life, navigating complex personal and organizational relationships without creating a fuss, leaving everyone happy in their wake. Would these be the type Jesus calls "children of God"?

Probably not. Jesus himself was hardly a lukewarm presence in his world. It is true that he healed many, and no doubt kissed a few babies in his day. But he also flipped tables in the temple and publicly chastised the religious leaders of his time. He was not above using a bit of sarcasm to make a point, and he tended to hang around with people of questionable reputation. He openly challenged the prevailing piety of his tradition.

Jesus' kind of peacemaker focuses more on justice and less on placating powerful people or persistent tradition. Jesus' kind of peacemaker takes into account the needs of all people, not just the ruling majority. Jesus' kind of peacemaker has a vision of a world that reflects God's mercy and God's justice for the whole creation. And, like Jesus, this kind of peacemaker is committed to a deep and lasting peace, even if it is very costly.

Can we find the courage to be such a peacemaker? Could we risk reputation, confidence, security, or comfort for the sake of the good news of God's love for all? When we are full of the Spirit, when we are at our faithful best, we will. And when we fall short, as we will, we can trust that Jesus will welcome us all the same, forgiven and blessed.

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Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician
Jo-Anne Chrysochoos, Director of Music
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Jessica Miller, Office Manager



Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community

February 1, 2026 - 10:30 am

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Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! We offer two services with Sunday School for youth and adults and catechism (starting soon). Our regular Sunday schedule is:

8:00 am	Early Worship
9:15 am	JAM Sunday School
9:15 am	Adult Sunday School
10:30 am	Late Worship
2:00 pm	Chapel Communion

(2nd Sunday of the month)

LIVESTREAM AND RECORDED WORSHIP: We livestream the service on our church website at www.firststjohn.com. Also, the service will be recorded and published to the website

SMILE! YOU'RE ON CAMERA: Please remember you may be on camera during the livestream and the recording of the service.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Please remember to silence your cell phone before church begins. Thanks!

SUNDAY SCHOOL & CATECHISM JAM Sunday School (church basement) and Adult Sunday School (lounge) meet each Sunday at 9:15 am. First year catechism will start soon! If you have a child in 6-7th grade interested please let Pastor Rayl know.

NURSERY is in the church basement and is now available during 2nd Service each week; you are welcome to sit with your child as well. A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

RESTROOMS are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take either set of steps to the basement hallway. The ladies room is at one end, and the men's room is at the other.

FLOWERS: If you would like to sign up for altar flowers, there is a book in the lounge. Or, you can call the church office during the week to check on availability.

MEMORIALS: If you wish to give a memorial in honor or memory of a loved one, you may mail it in or pick up a memorial card in the church office.

PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY

Please purchase full size items.

dish soap	shampoo, child	disposable razors
paper towel	laundry soap	toothbrush, adult
toilet paper	fabric softener sheets	toothpaste, adult
tissues	body lotion	sanitary pads
deodorant	body soap	band aids
shampoo, adult		

This is a list of the items that will provide a month's worth of hygiene supplies to families or individuals in our neighborhood to help them stay clean and healthy. We always welcome any donations from our congregation members.

If you would like to donate items, please donate only full size products as sample sizes will not last a month. If you would prefer a Pantry volunteer to do the shopping for you, we welcome monetary donations. Please make out checks to First St. John Lutheran Church and write Personal Needs Pantry on the memo line.



ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am

Prelude Nancy Russell

Ringling of the Bell

Opening Hymn *“Rise Up, O Saints of God!”* No. 669

Invocation

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, (+) one God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace.

C: Amen.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Trusting in God’s steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P: Mighty God, lover of justice,

C: you call us to life in community, but we have served our own interests at the expense of our neighbors. We have sown deceit where honesty was needed. We say the right words, but our hearts are far from you. Turn us to seek your face. Knit us together and give us the mind of Christ, that we may do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.

P: The former things have passed away, and new things God now declares: Like a spring of water that never fails, God covers you in the righteousness of Christ, and forgives your sin in † Jesus’ name. May the Spirit give you strength to live for others, and bless you with the gift of peace.

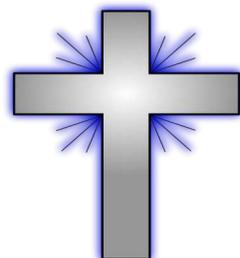
C: Amen.

P: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us share the peace of the Lord.

The congregation may greet one another by shaking hands, fist bumping, or any other form of greeting with the words, “Peace be with you.” We conclude the sharing of the peace by singing:



LENTEN & HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Here is the schedule for our upcoming Lent services.

Feb 18 th	Ash Wednesday	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Feb 25 th	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 4 th	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 11 th	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 18 th	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 25 th	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 29 th	Palm Sunday	8:00 am, 10:30 am
April 2 th	Maundy Thursday	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
April 3 rd	Good Friday	12:00 pm
April 5 th	Easter Sunday	8:00 am, 10:30 am

**Grant us grace to see thee, Lord,
present in thy holy word;
grace to imitate thee now
and be pure, as pure art thou;
that we might become like thee
at thy great epiphany,
and may praise thee, ever blest,
God in flesh made manifest.**

- Songs of Thankfulness and Praise ELW 310 (verse 4)

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray. Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

(Please be seated)

Announcements

Introduction

Who are the blessed ones of God? For Micah, they are those who do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. For Paul, they are the ones who find wisdom in the weakness of the cross. For Jesus, they are the poor, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who mourn, and those who hunger for righteousness. In baptism we find our blessed identity and calling in this countercultural way of living and serving.

FIRST READING: Micah 6:1-8

With the mountains and the foundations of the earth as the jury, God brings a lawsuit against Israel. God has "wearied" Israel with a long history of saving acts. God does not want or expect lavish sacrifices to attempt to earn divine favor. Rather God empowers the people to do justice, to love loyalty to God, and to walk shrewdly in God's service.

¹ Hear what the Lord says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

² Hear, you mountains, the case of the Lord,
and you enduring foundations of the earth,

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Nancy Russell

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Kevin Ruedy
Mike Winslow

READER

Bob Haar

SOUND BOARD

Mark Ackerman

He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

(Please be seated)

The Offering

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray. God of majesty, no eye has seen, no ear has heard what you have prepared for those who love you, yet in this meal you reveal the wideness of your mercy. Use what we have gathered to feed us with the reign of God come near, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

Pastoral Prayer *(Each petition concludes with this response)*

P: Hear us, O Lord,

C: your mercy is great.

P: Hear us as we pray:

The Lord's Prayer *(prayed by all)*

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.

Blessing

P: May the triune God, who has put a new song in your mouth and tuned your heart for praise (✠) bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn

"On Our Way Rejoicing"

No. 537

for the Lord has a case against his people,
and he will contend with Israel.

³ "O my people, what have I done to you?

In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

⁴ For I brought you up from the land of Egypt
and redeemed you from the house of slavery,
and I sent before you Moses,

Aaron, and Miriam.

⁵ O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the Lord."

⁶ "With what shall I come before the Lord
and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?

⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

⁸ He has told you, O mortal, what is good,
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God?

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 15:1-5

¹ O Lord, who may abide in your tent?
Who may dwell on your holy hill?

² ***Those who walk blamelessly and do what is right
and speak the truth from their heart;***

³ who do not slander with their tongue
and do no evil to their friends
nor heap shame upon their neighbors;

⁴ ***in whose eyes the wicked are despised
but who honor those who fear the Lord;
who stand by their oath even to their hurt;***

⁵ who do not lend money at interest

and do not take a bribe against the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be moved.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

According to the world's standards of power and might, the message of the cross seems stupid and offensive. Yet this word reveals the paradoxical way God has chosen to work power and salvation through weakness, rejection, and suffering. Hence the message of the cross becomes true wisdom and power for believers.

¹⁸The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. ²²For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

²⁶Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, ²⁹so that no one might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰In contrast, God is why you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand)

Gospel Acclamation *(sung by the congregation)*



Gospel Announcement

P: The Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter 5.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 5:1-12

Jesus opens the Sermon on the Mount by naming those who are blessed in the reign of God.

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. ⁷“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰“Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

SERMON

Pastor Rayl

Sermon Hymn “Oh, Praise the Gracious Power”

No. 651

(Please stand)

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;