

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany<sup>1</sup>  
January 31, 2021

**GREETING**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** are located on the church website and in your weekly church-wide email

**PRELUDE**

*The Light of Epiphany Shines Down on Us* (Martin)

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: Friends in Christ, what hopes do you bring into this time of worship? Do you bring hope for health and wholeness? What afflictions do you bring to worship? Do you have physical pain from illness and injury? Or is there emotional pain from sad and scary life situations? Or what of mental pain? There is suffering from dis-ease of many kinds. With all these afflictions, it's a miracle that any of us have made it to worship this morning! But truth be told, where else would we be? We all yearn to know God's powerful love and to know that healing and wholeness are possible! In today's Gospel, we will hear about a person, who has an afflicting spirit, interrupt Jesus. And Jesus sets the person free! We wonder, then: Where does the miracle in this story and our stories intersect? As we enter into a time of worship, let us pause for a brief moment, to sit in silence with one another, with each of us laying before Jesus our hopes and afflictions. (Pause) Let us now pray together.

**OPENING PRAYER**

Leader: Divine Healer, we confess that sometimes we yearn for you to wave a magic wand on our wounded lives to remove our pain, illness, and suffering. We hear the gospel story of one seeking healing from Jesus and assume you will perform a similar miracle for all of us – if we just pray hard enough! And we *do* pray! Open our eyes to recognize the teachings and tools you have given us with which to seek healing in the midst of our afflictions and dis-eases. You whisper to us that wholeness requires self-care and rest. You nudge us toward caregivers who can support and advise us. You breathe into us energy to move and stretch and reach toward health, that all may enjoy adequate health care. You place in us an urgency to seek justice, so renew our spirits in the midst of our dis-eases and afflictions. Transform us for the health of your creation. Amen.

**NEW TESTAMENT READING - Mark 1:21-28** (The Message, translation)

<sup>21-22</sup> Then they entered Capernaum. When the Sabbath arrived, Jesus lost no time in getting to the meeting place. He spent the day there teaching. They were surprised at his teaching—so forthright, so confident—not quibbling and quoting like the religion scholars.

<sup>23-24</sup> Suddenly, while still in the meeting place, he was interrupted by a man who was deeply disturbed and yelling out, “What business do you have here with us, Jesus? Nazarene! I know what you’re up to! You’re the Holy One of God, and you’ve come to destroy us!”

<sup>25-26</sup> Jesus shut him up: “Quiet! Get out of him!” The afflicting spirit threw the man into spasms, protesting loudly—and got out.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel, a Conference Minister of the Missouri-Mid South Conference of the United Church of Christ, is the author of the service: Holy, Whole One: Service Prayers for the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany. (Copyright 2021 Faith INFO Ministry Team, United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100. Permission granted to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education.) < Epiphany 4 - Year B, January 31, 2021 - United Church of Christ (ucc.org) >

<sup>27-28</sup> Everyone there was spellbound, buzzing with curiosity. “What’s going on here? A new teaching that does what it says? He shuts up defiling, demonic spirits and tells them to get lost!” News of this traveled fast and was soon all over Galilee.

## **SERMON**

**Mr. Devin Moyer**

### **OFFERING INVITATION**

Leader: As we prepare to move into a time of intentional prayer before bringing this time of communal worship to a close, we recall once more how Jesus’ ministry was deeply involved in both the healing of people’s bodies and the healing of relationships. We remember too, how the church is Christ’s living, breathing, body on earth today. Therefore, *we* are called to ministries of healing, like Jesus. We do this through the giving of our time, talent, and money. Here at Starview UCC, we house and oversee the Northeastern Food Pantry, a Called to Care Ministry Team, a unique mid-week children and youth ministry called LOGOS, and Vacation Bible School – all of these, ministries of safe space and healing for people of all ages and backgrounds. The community is also supported via a Prayer Chain and Prayer Shawl Ministry. In the near future we will host a Red Cross Blood Drive - a particularly important ministry during the pandemic. In these unprecedented days when it may be difficult for many of us to share our time and talent, the sharing of our financial resources becomes even more important and necessary. Let us take a moment now to consider what and how we will each give, for we are all healers, in Christ’s body, the church. (Pause) Let us pray.

### **PRAYER of THE PEOPLE & THE LORD’S PRAYER**

Leader: Healing God, we confess that in this season of Epiphany, while we continue to hear the Good News of Jesus, the Light of the World, we are not altogether convinced that darkness is a thing of the past. There is much going on that makes us feel our world is one of darkness and gloom. Pressures crowd in upon us and get us down. The causes are varied: bereavement, illness, money, worries about family, trouble at work or not having work, drugs, drink, boredom, doubt, weariness, futility.

Then there are the world issues: domestic terrorism, ongoing war, poverty, climate change, disease, unfair trade and so on. It does not help when we feel that as Christians, we should be doing so much better than we are. Gracious and loving God, we rejoice that you are with us in our troubles, you know us, and you love us – always. Even though we have made a mess of things personally and collectively you remain faithful. We rejoice that you sent your Son, came not to a perfect world, but to a broken world, our world. To bring light to the darkness, our darkness.

We pray for our dark and dreary world, a world in need – in need not just of a technical fix, but in need of healing and wholeness, of love and grace, forgiveness and new life, hope, peace and fellowship, in need of renewal, in need of YOU. We pray that you would come to us and cast out all that afflicts us. Cast out demonic forces that torment and create chaos. In divine authority, walk alongside us and work your healing powers in the lives of those for whom we pray. Open our eyes to see Jesus, the light of the world, the one who came (and who comes) to rid us of sin, to give us life and health and peace, peace that passes all understanding – not a temporary respite from trouble but the strength to overcome it and ultimately to receive life eternal.

We have been set free. Enable us to use our freedom to be healers. Accept our tithes and all we have to offer. May they be used to create, nurture, and sustain ministries of wholeness. You, O Lord, are our light and salvation. Hear our prayers, spoken and unspoken as we continue in one voice, praying as Jesus taught us:

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 debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

HYMN

God Will Take Care of You (Be Not Dismayed)

Civilla D. Martin, 1904; alt.

Ps. 91

1 Be not dis-mayed what-e'er be-tide, God will take care of you;  
 2 Through days of toil when heart grows frail, God will take care of you;  
 3 All you may need God will pro-vide, God will take care of you;  
 4 No mat-ter what may be the test, God will take care of you;

Be-neath God's wings of love a-bide, God will take care of you.  
 When dan-gers fierce your path as-sail, God will take care of you.  
 Noth-ing you ask will be de-nied, God will take care of you.  
 Lean, wea-ry one, up-on God's breast, God will take care of you.

Refrain

God will take care of you, through ev-ery day, o'er all the way;

God will take care of you, God will take care of you.  
 take care of you

*This early hymn by Civilla Martin was written in 1904 and set to music by her husband, a Baptist minister, as a contribution to a songbook he was compiling for a school. This is one of several such collaborations.*

Tune: MARTIN C.M. with refrain  
W. Stillman Martin, 1905

## **BENEDICTION**

Leader: And now in the wholeness and the goodness of God, go forth. Go and laugh with your friends. Reconcile with those who have hurt you. Seek forgiveness from those you may have hurt. Be kind to strangers and feel the Divine smile upon you and all people – everywhere – now and forevermore.

*All people: Amen.*

## **POSTLUDE**

*And Soon It Will Begin* (Markle)