

Sebastopol United Methodist Church  
Sunday, January 3, 2021  
Second Sunday after Christmas Day and Epiphany Sunday  
Order of Worship, including Communion and Scripture

*If you would like to participate in Communion, please have your bread and juice (or their substitutes) ready before beginning worship.*

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*Seasonal Theme:*

God putting the person of Jesus the human flesh, and sending him into the world to demonstrate God's love for us.

*Theme for the day:*

God's word has put on human flesh and given us grace upon grace.

*Call to Worship:*

*(please read the **BOLD** text, aloud or silently as you prefer)*

Pastor: Praise the Lord! How good it is to sing praises to our God, for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.

People: **The Lord builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts of Israel.**

Pastor: He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

People: **He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.**

Pastor: Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.

Unison: **The Lord lifts up the downtrodden; he casts the wicked to the ground. Amen.**

*Centering & Prayer of Illumination:*

*(please read along with me, aloud or silently as you prefer)*

Eternal Light, the Light of the World, who came to dwell with us in Jesus, may you also dwell within your word that we are about to hear, that we may have truly

intimate knowledge of your love for us -- throughout this new year, through the One who is always in our heart, through Jesus the Christ. Amen.

*Readings from Scripture:*        **John 1:1-14**        **Ephesians 1:3-14**

*[texts of Scripture follow the service, beginning on page 5]*

*Message:*    **GOD OF NEW BEGINNING!**

*Affirmation of Faith – The Apostles’ Creed, Ecumenical Version (UMH 882)*  
*(please read with Pastor, aloud or silently as you prefer)*

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

I believe 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 to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

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

*Pastoral Prayer*

*Sacrament of the Holy Communion*

*In peace and love, in gratitude and faith, I invite you to have your bread (or chips, crackers, etc.) and juice (or water, wine, etc.) ready.*

*Let us come together to Christ's table.*

*(we read together the texts in **BOLD**)*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

O God, you are the creator of heaven and earth. You formed us in your image, to love and to be loved. You made a holy covenant with us and sent prophets to teach us your truth. When we turned away and were unfaithful, you kept faith with us.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we join in your praise, saying,

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

Taking our form and flesh, Jesus came among us as a servant. He showed us the depth and power of your love. By his suffering, death, and resurrection you delivered us from sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

On the night in which Jesus gave himself up for us, he took bread. He gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said, "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Remembering your gracious acts, we offer ourselves to you in service and praise as we keep the feast that Christ prepares:

*[lifting the bread]* Bread of Heaven,

*[lifting the cup]* Cup of Salvation,

*[lifting bread and cup]* Resurrection and Life.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

O God, pour out your Holy Spirit among us: in this bread, in this cup, in your people; one in the body, one in the blood, one with Christ, one in mission, one in ministry; in this place, in every place, in this world, and in the world to come.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, Almighty God, now and forever. [Lord's Prayer]

**Amen.**

*Receiving the Bread and Cup*

*Prayer after Receiving*

O God, we give you our thanks and praise. You feed us by your grace. You are with us in all our journeys. Give us courage and faith to serve you in all we do. Fill us with the power of your Holy Spirit. Enable us to be faithful and fruitful servants of the gospel and ministry to which you have called us. In Jesus's name we pray.

Amen.

*Come to Christ and offer your gifts, not as a burden, but as opportunity to give rest and renewal to those who yearn to know God's love. Thank you again for all the offerings and pledges you have sent in by mail.*

*Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication:*

***(please read along with me, aloud or silently as you prefer)***

O Gracious Lord, your goodness is beyond the reaches of our imagination, a fullness of love that embraces all of life. From you we have received grace upon grace. Accept our offering for the sake of the world. All that we have is yours, and all we return to you is but a reflection of your love for us. In Jesus's name and way we pray. Amen.

*Blessing and Benediction*

Stay firm in the grace of Christ. He is within us. Walk in his light and serve with his strength.

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Scripture Readings – January 3, 2021

*first reading – JOHN 1:1-14*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

*second reading – EPHESIANS 1:3-14*

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood,

the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

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*Thank you for worshipping with us today.*