

The Second Sunday after Epiphany January 16, 2022

Who is Jesus? This is a question asked by countless people throughout the generations. Indeed, Jesus is a man who was born of the Virgin Mary. However, He is also true God! This fact became undeniable to His disciples as they witnessed Him perform His many miracles, beginning with changing water into wine at the wedding of Cana.

Jesus' presence at the wedding feast is a reminder that God blesses marriages and families. It is a reminder that God's intention is for children to be raised by a father and mother joined in marriage. Any other arrangement is less than God's plan but because sin has placed so many burdens upon marriage often children are not in the ideal situation. Yet every child is a wanted child by our Savior Jesus who declares, "Let the little children come to me."

May we pray that the laws of our nation will once again protect every child including those who are unborn but have been given life in the womb.

The Star Proclaims the King Is Here Lutheran Service Book 399, Lutheran Worship 81, The Lutheran Hymnal 131



1 The star pro - claims the King is here; But, Her - od,
2 The east - ern sa - ges saw from far And fol - lowed
3 With - in the Jor - dan's sa - cred flood The heav'n - ly
4 And oh, what mir - a - cle di - vine, When wa - ter
5 For this Thy glad e - piph - a - ny All glo - ry,



why this sense - less fear? For He who of - fers heav'n - ly
on His guid - ing star; And, led by light, to light they
Lamb in meek - ness stood That He, of whom no sin was
red - dened in - to wine! He spoke the word, and forth it
Je - sus, be to Thee, Whom with the Fa - ther we a -



birth Seeks not the king - doms of this earth.
trod And by their gifts con - fessed their God.
known, Might cleanse His peo - ple from their own.
flowed In streams that na - ture ne'er be - stowed.
dore, And Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more.

L In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

L Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth. (*Psalm 124:8*)

L Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

C Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. (*Psalm 19:12, 13*)

L If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord who could stand?

C But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared. (*Psalm 130:3–4*)

L Let us, confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and as His people let us take refuge in His infinite mercy seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, saying:

C God, be merciful to me, a sinner, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

(*Luke 18:13*)

L Almighty God, merciful Father, in Your holy Church, You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Introit Psalm 36:5–9; antiphon Song of Solomon 2:4

L [The Lord] brought me to the banqueting house,
and his banner over me was love.

C Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.

L Your righteousness is like the mountains of God;
your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast you save, O Lord.

C How precious is your steadfast love, O God!
The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

L They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

C For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light do we see light.

C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

L [The Lord] brought me to the banqueting house,
and his banner over me was love.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

L Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

C Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, and we praise You for Your glory.

- L** Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:
- C** **Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**
- L** Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.
- C** **For You alone are the Holy One,
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Collect of the Day

- L** Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, who governs all things in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear the prayers of Your people and grant us Your peace through all our days; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

Isaiah 62:1–5

¹For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet,
until her righteousness goes forth as brightness,
and her salvation as a burning torch.

²The nations shall see your righteousness,
and all the kings your glory,
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will give.

³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

⁴You shall no more be termed Forsaken,
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate,
but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her,
and your land Married;
for the LORD delights in you,
and your land shall be married.

⁵For as a young man marries a young woman,
so shall your sons marry you,
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
so shall your God rejoice over you.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**

Gradual Psalm 117:1–2a; 96:8

- L** Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples!
- C** **For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.**
- L** Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
- C** **bring an offering, and come into his courts!**

Psalm 128

- L** ¹Blessèd is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways!
C ²**You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.**
L ³Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house;
your children will be like olive shoots around your table.
C ⁴**Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.**
L ⁵The LORD bless you from Zion!
May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life!
C ⁶**May you see your children's children! Peace be upon Israel!**

1 Corinthians 12:1–11

¹Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. ²You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. ³Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

Verse of the Day: John 2:11

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia, This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. Alleluia.
C **Alleluia, Alleluia, And his disciples believed in him. Alleluia.**

John 2:1–11

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 2nd chapter.
C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. ³When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” ⁴And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” ⁵His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

⁶Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So they took it. ⁹When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have

kept the good wine until now.”¹¹ This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

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.

The People That in Darkness Sat Lutheran Service Book 412, Lutheran Worship 77, The Lutheran Hymnal 106



1 The peo - ple that in dark - ness sat A glo - rious
2 To hail Thee, Sun of Righ - teous - ness, The gath - 'ring
3 To us a Child of hope is born, To us a
4 His name shall be the Prince of Peace, The Ev - er -



light have seen; The light has shined on them who long In
na - tions come; They joy as when the reap - ers bear Their
Son is giv'n, And on His shoul - der ev - er rests All
last - ing Lord, The Won - der - ful, the Coun - sel - or, The



shades of death have been, In shades of death have been.
har - vest trea - sures home, Their har - vest trea - sures home.
pow'r in earth and heav'n, All pow'r in earth and heav'n.
God by all a - dored, The God by all a - dored.

5 His righteous government and pow'r
Shall over all extend;
On judgment and on justice based,
His reign shall have no end,
His reign shall have no end.

6 Lord Jesus, reign in us, we pray,
And make us Thine alone,
Who with the Father ever art
And Holy Spirit, one,
And Holy Spirit, one.

Devotional Thoughts: *(Note: These devotional thoughts were prepared for a sermon to be delivered at Trinity Lutheran Church of Glendora, Michigan. If you are not familiar with Berrien County, Michigan, references in the first paragraph will be obscure for you. Please go to the end of the service for an explanation.)*

I want to begin with this question. What do the D.A.N.K., the Kicker's Club, Wolverine Gardens, and Louis Rudlaff all have in common? They all came to my mind when I was thinking about our Gospel lesson for today!

When I prepare a message, I like to read and study the text and then take the advice of Dr. Martin Scharlemann, a former professor at Concordia Seminary—ruminate! While ruminating on The Wedding at Cana, I happened upon The Lawrence Welk Show. It concluded with Lawrence Welk, Myron Floren, and Joey Schmidt playing “The Beer Barrel Polka” on accordions! I couldn’t help but remember when almost every wedding reception that I attended had a polka band. And so now you know what all four names in my opening question had in common.

What comes to your mind when you think of wedding receptions? Some wedding receptions are large. Some are small. My parents’ reception was at my mother’s grandparents’ house. It was a small gathering of family and friends. They played records and danced in the living room. They had a nice cake and some flowers. On the other hand, I once attended a wedding reception at the Point O’ Woods Country Club where we were served steak and lobster!

Times change. Growing up, wedding receptions had live music. Now they have DJs. They used to last long into the night. Now, wedding venues require everyone to leave by 11. Once, whole families were included. Today, they are often for adults only. I could go on and on.

But there are many ways that wedding receptions haven’t changed. Close family and friends are invited. Food and drink are freely provided. Everyone is supposed to have a good time.

As we examine the Wedding at Cana, you will notice that only a few details are supplied. However, we can make some assumptions. While there may have been dancing, there was no polka band. Being a Jewish wedding, it’s safe to assume that they didn’t serve a baked ham. Close family and friends were there. Food and drink were freely served. Everyone was supposed to have a good time!

So as we read the text, it seems safe to assume that Mary, Jesus, and His disciples were there because they were counted among the close family and friends of the bridal couple. Those who carefully read the Bible will note that Jesus’ disciple, Nathanael, was from Cana (John 21:2) so there may have been a family connection to him as well.

Why did the wine run out? Were too many people invited? Did more attend than were expected? It must have been an enormous affair. There was a workforce of servants and a master of the feast! Research indicates that First Century weddings could last seven days. Just when the party is in full swing, disaster strikes. The wine is exhausted!

We also learn some things about Mary. She must have been very close to the bride or groom because she had compassion for them and felt the need to help. It also appears that she is a widow since she didn’t turn to Joseph for assistance. Instead, she turned to her firstborn son.

Jesus is correct in answering her that it is not His responsibility for providing an alcoholic beverage for the party. Nevertheless, Mary has confidence that He will find a solution to the problem that has caused her to have anxiety on behalf of the newlyweds.

I’ve always been amazed by the amount of wine Jesus provided for this wedding. Clearly, Jesus is not against consuming alcoholic beverages. Doing the calculations, six stone jars containing 20 to 30 gallons each means that Jesus supplied the wedding feast with between 120 and 180 gallons of wine! I tried to picture that amount so I googled “six stone jars for purification.” That wasn’t helpful. But I did find it helpful to visualize this. There was enough to fill up to three 55-gallon barrels with wine! Imagine that! And this wasn’t the cheap stuff! It was the best!

As we are captivated by all these details of the Wedding at Cana, it is easy for us to miss the whole point of this account recorded in the Gospel of John. Ultimately, it is not about First Century weddings. It is not about Mary and her relationship with Jesus. It is not about the importance of thorough planning or the appropriateness of consuming alcoholic beverages. It is not about obeying Jesus or God’s blessings upon weddings and families, although all these things are touched upon and valuable for us to consider.

The heart and soul of this event in the life of Jesus are found in verse 11, “This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.” This sign or miracle at Cana manifested Jesus’ glory! As a result, His disciples believed in Him!

For centuries in the Church, faithful Christian people have begun the Epiphany season by hearing these three lessons read in successive services. First, they heard of the appearance of the star and the coming of the Wise Men. Next, they went to the Jordan River, witnessed Jesus’ baptism, and heard the voice from heaven. Finally, they learned of Jesus changing water into wine at the Wedding at Cana. Unfortunately, now, we only hear this miracle once every three years.

Both the words “Epiphany” and “manifest” come from the same Greek root. It means “to make visible or known that which has been hidden.” In Jesus’ day, as well as ours, the fact that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the world is hidden from sinful eyes. It can only be made known or manifest to us in miraculous ways.

Throughout Jesus’ earthly ministry, His miracles served to make known His divine nature. He changed water into wine. He made the deaf to hear, the blind to see, and the lame to walk. He fed the 5,000. He walked on the water and calmed the sea. He healed the sick and raised the dead.

The Sundays in the Epiphany season have two wonderful bookends. At the beginning of the season at Jesus’ baptism, God declared, “You are my beloved Son.” And then, at the end on the Mount of Transfiguration, we hear Him say, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” (Luke 9:35).

In a small way, at the wedding at Cana, the disciples are beginning to learn this amazing truth. Jesus is God of God and Light of Light. He is Very God of Very God who has come into the world to save sinners!

This Epiphany miracle has happened to each one of us. One by one, through word and sacrament, God has made manifest to us this truth. God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. And like the disciples, we have believed in Him!

Maybe the next time you hear a polka, attend a wedding or sip a glass of wine, you will remember that Jesus is God’s Son who died on the cross for you and your salvation. Maybe the next time you see a 55-gallon barrel, the Kickers, or Wolverine Gardens you will remember the Epiphany miracle that the Holy Spirit has changed the unbelief in your heart to faith in your savior. Hopefully, sometime during this Epiphany season, God will manifest His love and message of salvation through something you say or do.

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4-7).

God’s richest blessings to you in Christ.

L Lord, You manifested Your glory in the sign at Cana. As You restored creation through the cross, pour out upon us Your grace in abundance.

G Amen.

L Lord of glory, You blessed the wedding at Cana with Your presence and honored it with Your first miracle. Strengthen and give Your gladness to all married couples and their families. Be present in our homes and lives with Your free and abundant forgiveness, and preserve us in the true faith from each generation to the next.

G Amen.

L Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank You that of Your grace You have instituted holy matrimony.. We implore You, send Your blessing on every husband and wife. Let them live peaceably together in love and godliness. Strengthen them with Your gracious help in all temptations, and help them to raise their children in accordance with Your will. Grant us all to walk before You in purity and holiness, putting our trust in You and leading such lives on earth that, in the world to come, we may have everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

G Amen.

L Almighty God, send Your holy angels to watch over all of our loved ones, especially those who live in distant places. We thank You for the protection granted to all who have attended to our needs during the pandemic. As we witness this pandemic push our health care system to its limit, we ask for Your continued protection and grace to rest upon all who serve in the medical professions.

C Amen.

C I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

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.

L Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

L The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C Amen.

Alleluia! Let Praises Ring Lutheran Service Book 822, Lutheran Worship 437, The Lutheran Hymnal 23



1 Al - le - lu - ia! Let prais - es ring! To God the Fa -
2 Al - le - lu - ia! Let prais - es ring! Un - to the Lamb
3 Al - le - lu - ia! Let prais - es ring! Un - to the Ho -
4 Al - le - lu - ia! Let prais - es ring! Un - to our tri -



ther let us bring Our songs of ad - o - ra - tion.
of God we sing, In whom we are e - lect - ed.
ly Ghost we sing For our re - gen - er - a - tion.
une God we sing; Blest be His name for - ev - er!



To Him through ev - er - last - ing days Be wor - ship, hon -
He bought His Church with His own blood, He cleansed her in
The sav - ing faith in us He wrought And us un - to
With an - gel hosts let us a - dore And sing His prais -



or, pow'r, and praise, Whose hand sus - tains cre - a - tion.
that bless - ed flood, And as His bride se - lect - ed.
the Bride-groom brought, Made us His cho - sen na - tion.
es ev - er - more For all His grace and fa - vor!



Sing - ing, ring - ing: Ho - ly, ho - ly, God is ho - ly;
Ho - ly, ho - ly Is our u - nion And com - mu - nion.
Glo - ry! Glo - ry! Joy e - ter - nal, Bliss su - per - nal;
Sing - ing, ring - ing: Ho - ly, ho - ly, God is ho - ly;



Spread the sto - ry Of our God, the Lord of glo - ry.
His be - friend - ing Gives us joy and peace un - end - ing.
There is man - na And an end - less, glad ho - san - na.
Spread the sto - ry Of our God, the Lord of glo - ry!

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A word about John 2:1-11

From ancient times the account of Jesus attending the wedding at Cana has been associated with the Epiphany Season. The progression of lessons read in the Church followed this order:

The Coming of the Wise Men Jesus Baptism in the Jordan The Wedding at Cana.

At the wedding at Cana, Jesus turned water into wine. In fact it, was a massive amount of water that was changed to wine. Throughout the centuries Christians have attached this event to Epiphany because it was Jesus' first miracle! Indeed, it was an epiphany for His disciples. He manifested His glory and they believed.

Throughout the Epiphany season, we are reminded that Jesus is not simply another man but a man who is truly also God in the flesh. He performed many miracles during His earthly ministry. He still performs miracles today. The greatest miracle is the gift of faith, forgiveness and life for sinful people such as us.

Pastor Quardokus

Here is an explanation of “What do the D.A.N.K., the Kicker's Club, Wolverine Gardens, and Louis Rudlaff all have in common?”

“D.A.N.K.” stands for *Deutsch Amerikanischer Nathional Kongress*. In English, it is The German American National Congress. There is a D.A.N.K. clubhouse in Benton Harbor where I have attended many wedding receptions. It is also known locally for polka dances and fish fries.

The Kicker’s Club is a common way of referring to the St. Joe Kickers Sport Club in Berrien Springs, MI. It was founded by German immigrants as a soccer club. I have also attended many wedding receptions there.

Wolverine Gardens is a corner bar across the street from Trinity Lutheran Church, Glendora, MI (Buchanan address). In the past, it was known for regular polka dances. I once attended a 50 wedding anniversary party there.

Louis Rudlaff was my grandmother’s cousin. He was only a year older than my mother. He was the leader of the Polka-Nuts Band. He was well known for playing at many wedding receptions in the area.

Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

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Enhancing Your Worship

Meditating on God's Word and Works

I will meditate on your wondrous works. Psalm 119:27
My eyes are awake through the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NKJV

The Second Sunday after Epiphany

January 17 –22, 2022

Introduction

Most modern forms of mediation turn a person inward. Biblical meditation turns a person outward toward what God has said and done especially what He has said and done through Jesus for our salvation.

Each Sunday has its own special theme directing us to meditate on God's word and actions. This theme is found in the Propers of the Day (the parts of the service that change week to week). From Advent through the Easter season these themes focus our attention on the life of Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection. There is always much more in the propers than can be covered in any Sunday service. God willing, I will use the propers for Sunday to provide you with a devotion each day to help you meditate on what God has done for you.

Monday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

Verse of the Day: John 2:11

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia, This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia, And his disciples believed in him. Alleluia.

Introit Psalm 36:5–9; antiphon Song of Solomon 2:4

- L** [The Lord] brought me to the banqueting house,
and his banner over me was love.
- C** Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.
- L** Your righteousness is like the mountains of God;
your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast you save, O Lord.
- C** How precious is your steadfast love, O God!
The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
- L** They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.
- C** For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light do we see light.
- C** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

L [The Lord] brought me to the banqueting house,
and his banner over me was love.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

(Sorry for the delay. Time got away from me.)

Have you ever heard the expression, “Too clever by half”? That thought came to mind as I examined the introit for this week. It definitely relates to the Gospel lesson and the Wedding at Cana. However, it takes some digging to make the connection. I must admit that I didn’t see it at first. So if you didn’t notice the connection, you are in good company.

The antiphon is from the Song of Solomon. The Song of Solomon is a poem celebrating the love between a man and a woman that rejoices in the gift of marriage. It is often interpreted allegorically to mirror God’s love for His people or the importance of our love for Wisdom.

I was surprised to discover that the “banqueting house” is literally “house of wine!” Indeed, this is an appropriate verse for us to consider as we learn about Jesus turning water into wine at a wedding banquet in Cana. However, something that gives us more joy than wine is God’s banner of love over His people.

Psalms 36:5–9 celebrates this steadfast love of God for us. As promised in the marriage vows, He is faithful to us in His love! The faithfulness of His steadfast love moved Him to send us His Son to be our Savior.

We know from Ephesians 5 and other places in the Bible that the love Christ has for His Church is the ultimate example of love that should be evident in our marriages. The Apostle Paul reminds us:

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Because of sin, this ideal love is seldom experienced here on earth. But do not let this deter us from expressing that love to one another in our words of forgiveness and comfort expressed to our families and those around us.

Let us pray: Lord God, Our Heavenly Father, thank You that the banner of love over us is found in the cross of Jesus. Grant us the joy of expressing Your love to people around us as we live in the banqueting house of Your Church through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Tuesday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: John 2:11

L Alleluia, Alleluia, This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia, And his disciples believed in him. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, who governs all things in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear the prayers of Your people and grant us Your peace through all our days; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

There are two dominant worldviews today. They are mutually exclusive.

One worldview says that at some time in the distant past there was a “Big Bang.” At that time, the universe expanded from an initial state of high density and temperature. Everything that has happened since was determined at that instant and is governed by the laws of physics and chemistry.

In this way of thinking, every feeling of love, every act of kindness or hate, every thought was predetermined by the physics and chemistry established in that instant. Admittedly, most people who hold this worldview haven’t actually thought through the implications of their view.

The other worldview says that while we live in the universe controlled by the laws of physics and chemistry, they do not determine human thought and actions. Rather, God who is outside of the created universe has also created humanity and made us independent agents who are capable of transcending predetermined outcomes established by “the big bang.”

God has not simply set the universe loose on a trajectory towards oblivion. He is still active in governing the universe by His power.

Skeptics ridicule this idea by claiming that it makes God responsible for evil. But again, this is not carefully thought through. Since He created humans as independent agents, they were capable of disobedience to God’s perfect and holy will. Humanity chose to disregard God and carry out evil deeds. This is still the case today.

Fortunately, God still enters our world today with His mercy. He did this in a mighty way when His own Son was born into our universe to bring us life and salvation.

The physics and chemistry of our universe bring each life to an ultimate end in death. God in His love sent Jesus so that those who believe in Him would not perish but have eternal life!

Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, who governs all things in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear the prayers of Your people and grant us Your peace through all our days; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Wednesday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: John 2:11

L Alleluia, Alleluia, This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia, And his disciples believed in him. Alleluia.

Psalm 128

- L** ¹Blessèd is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways!
- C** ²**You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.**
- L** ³Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house;
your children will be like olive shoots around your table.
- C** ⁴**Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.**
- L** ⁵The LORD bless you from Zion!
May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life!
- C** ⁶**May you see your children's children! Peace be upon Israel!**

Kyrie

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Christ, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |

Some of my fondest memories from childhood are annual vacations to Northern Michigan. It was always a challenge to fit six of us into the car, three in the front and three in the back. Once, dad made a bench for between the seats so that we could sleep on the way. Finally, as our family prospered, dad and mom acquired a station wagon!

Part of the fun was the family sing-a-longs. I can still hear dad's deep bass voice booming out his favorites—"Darling You Can't Love One" and "I'm a Poor Old Country Boy" come to mind. Of course, we sang children's songs and some of mom's favorites, too. We all loved singing with Nat King Cole and "Those days of soda and pretzels and beer." The kids especially loved to emphasize "beer."

I wonder if families still do that. We did it with our family. But I suspect that is a by-gone era, never to be repeated. When I travel on the interstate, I see children in the back with earbuds listening to their "devices." Everyone has their personal playlists. We listen to satellite radio, internet radio, and podcasts just to name a few.

I wonder if Jesus had fond memories of His childhood trips up to Jerusalem for the festivals. We know that He was there when He was twelve and that He continued them as an adult with His disciples.

In those days, these were not just family trips. They were outings for the whole community. And as they traveled, they sang!

Bible scholars tell us that they sang the "Songs of Ascents" as they went on their pilgrimages to Jerusalem. There are fifteen psalms designated "Song of Ascents." They are psalms 120-134. "Ascents" refers to the fact that a trip to Jerusalem required ascending from below sea level in Galilee to 2,500 feet above sea level.

Walking on a long journey with family and friends and singing psalms is something I have never experienced. I believe that it must have been a cherished memory that children carried with them into adulthood.

Our psalm for this week is one of those "Songs of Ascents." It begins, "Blessèd is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways!" Can you imagine walking and singing these words with family and friends?

It is a psalm that rejoices in the blessings of family life. Husbands and wives, children and grandchildren are celebrated.

Like many of us, our family lived on the edge of poverty. In adulthood, my mother told me that there were many weeks when she wasn't sure how she would feed the family. Of course, as children, we didn't know that we were poor. I wouldn't trade my childhood for life in a mansion surrounded by an estate and attended by servants.

But the greatest blessing of my childhood is learning the Christian faith from my parents. Jesus was blessed to learn about God from His parents. We endeavored to pass it on to our children. Now we have the joy of seeing our children's children learn the faith from their parents.

Blessèd is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways!

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for the gift of families. Grant strength and wisdom to parents as they strive to pass the faith on to their children and their children's children. Bless our Christian schools. Cause the singing of psalms and hymns to flourish among us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thursday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: John 2:11

L Alleluia, Alleluia, This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia, And his disciples believed in him. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Isaiah 62:1–5

¹For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet,
until her righteousness goes forth as brightness,
and her salvation as a burning torch.

²The nations shall see your righteousness,
and all the kings your glory,
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will give.

³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

⁴You shall no more be termed Forsaken,
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate,
but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her,
and your land Married;
for the LORD delights in you,
and your land shall be married.

⁵For as a young man marries a young woman,
so shall your sons marry you,
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
so shall your God rejoice over you.

My wife and daughters love puzzles. They are very good at them. I don't have the skill or patience to complete more than a toddler's puzzle.

Last week, Valerie assembled a beautiful but very difficult puzzle. More than once, I thought I could help only to walk away disappointed. I couldn't find even one piece. Finally, when there were only a handful of pieces left, I again walked over to help. I desperately tried to find a piece that would fit while Valerie matched piece after piece. Finally, when only one piece remained, she let me put it into the puzzle.

Our Old Testament Lesson from Isaiah is somewhat like a puzzle piece. It is beautiful all by itself but it is just a glimpse or close-up of a bigger picture. To understand the full impact of these verses, we really need to read Isaiah chapters 60 through 62. These are wonderful chapters about the coming days after the exile when God will send the long-awaited Messiah and He will again bless His people.

This section begins with our annual Old Testament reading for Epiphany, Isaiah 60:1-6. You may recall these familiar words, “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you...”

Isaiah 61:1-2 were read by Jesus in the synagogue in Nazareth at the beginning of His ministry:

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

He then declared, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21).

Our Old Testament Lesson is part of this larger mosaic of blessings that God has for His people through the long-promised Messiah. We live in that time!

We live in the time that “as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you” (Isaiah 62:5).

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for allowing us to live in the time when we know the fulfillment of Your promises in Jesus. We know that because of His life, death, and resurrection that You rejoice in us. Help us to see the light of Christ in our lives as He binds up our broken hearts through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Friday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: John 2:11

L Alleluia, Alleluia, This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia, And his disciples believed in him. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

1 Corinthians 12:1–11

¹Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. ²You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. ³Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to

another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

I must admit that it was difficult for me to see the Epiphany or Wedding at Cana connection in our Epistle Lesson for this week. It wasn't until the fourth or fifth time that I read it that the light bulb finally came on. It is found in the famous words of I Corinthians 12:3, "no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit." (As an aside—ESV stands alone in translating the phrase "in the Holy Spirit." The other translations that I am familiar with all translate this phrase "by the Holy Spirit.")

The first truth that we recognize here is the impossibility for human reason or effort to bring someone to faith. It is never our "decision" to follow Jesus. It is always the Holy Spirit working in us that brings us to faith even when it may feel as though "I decided" to follow Jesus.

But reading this in the Epiphany season changes our focus to what does it mean that "Jesus is Lord"? At first glance, we may conclude that it means Jesus is the boss. He makes all the rules for my life. This view misses the point. Anyone could choose to follow Jesus' rules even if they don't believe in Him as Lord.

Saying "Jesus is Lord" is tantamount to saying "Jesus is God!" It takes the Holy Spirit for us to make this statement of faith. Saying "Jesus is Lord" means that we agree with the Angel of the Lord who told the shepherds "unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). It means that we agree with God the Father when He declared Jesus to be His beloved Son. It means that we agree with Thomas who called the resurrected Jesus, "My Lord and my God!" (Luke 20:28).

By the power of the Holy Spirit through the light of God's word, we join with the Apostle Paul and Christians of all time in our Epiphany confession of faith, "Jesus is LORD!"

Prayer: O Lord, Almighty God, thank You for sending Your only-begotten Son to be our Savior and Lord. Grant us faith to trust in Jesus and declare with Thomas that He is "my Lord and my God." Amen.

Saturday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Gradual Psalm 117:1–2a; 96:8

L Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples!

C For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.

L Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;

C bring an offering, and come into his courts!

Verse of the Day: John 2:11

L Alleluia, Alleluia, This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia, And his disciples believed in him. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

John 2:1–11

¹On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. ³When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” ⁴And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” ⁵His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

⁶Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So they took it. ⁹When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.” ¹¹This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

We end this week as we began with the Wedding at Cana and the unexpected miracle of changing water into wine. There are at least three reasons that this miracle is startling.

First, it appears that this was not the way Jesus had planned to reveal Himself to be the Messiah. When Mary requested help from Him, He answered, “My hour [time] has not yet come.

Throughout Jesus’ ministry, timing was always important. On other occasions, He will say, “My time has not yet come” (John 7:6). But later, He will declare, “The hour [time] has come” (Mark 14:41). However, at the wedding in Cana, Jesus is willing to alter His agenda for the sake of these newlyweds.

Second, in His temptation by Satan following His baptism, Jesus had refused to change stones into bread. Yet here He changes 120-180 gallons of water into wine. Why? He had compassion for people in need.

Finally, this miracle was mundane. It wasn’t making the lame walk, giving sight to the blind, or causing the deaf to hear. It wasn’t feeding the five thousand, walking on water, calming the sea, or raising the dead. It was simply changing water into wine.

I take comfort in the fact that Jesus is concerned for the everyday, commonplace, ordinary parts of life. I have heard of people who choose to pray only in times of great need. I am just the opposite. I pray all the time for unexciting, routine things. If I’m working on a car, I pray that God will help me turn a rusted bolt. If I’m late for a meeting I pray for green lights.

Maybe I’m bothering God unnecessarily but I take comfort in this miracle at the wedding in Cana that Jesus is interested in the little details of life. What may not be important to you can be very important to me.

God is first and foremost interested in our salvation. But He is also interested in providing our daily bread in all of its aspects.

Give us this day our daily bread.

What does this mean? God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread? Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

Luther’s Small Catechism

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