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**4th Sunday after the Epiphany**

“So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” *1 Corinthians 13:13*

**AS WE GATHER**

The Bible says, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son” (John 3:16). It is only on Good Friday, however, that we discover the depth and power of God’s love in the cross of the Lord’s death. And so it was that ever since the beginning of His earthly ministry, after His Baptism, we are given clear hints about the true nature of God’s love. Initially people marveled at Jesus’ preaching and miraculous healings. Yet not only did the crowds quickly reject our Lord, but Satan also was actively opposing Him from the beginning. The love of God is the power of God to defeat Satan and free the world from the grip of sin and death. The standard of love is the cross of Christ. In today’s Epistle, Paul describes love in and through Christ. Substitute “Christ” for “love” and you get, “Christ is patient and kind; Christ does not envy or boast; . . . Christ rejoices with the truth.” This love of Christ is given to us and through us. “Faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these” is the cross of Christ!

**Psalm** 71:1-6

**+ PREPARATION +**

**INVOCATION and OPENING SENTENCES** *John 1:10–12*

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the +Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

Pastor: Jesus Christ was in the world, and the world was made through Him,

**People: yet the world did not know Him.**

Pastor: He came to His own,

**People: and His own people did not receive Him.**

Pastor: But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name,

**People: He gave the right to become children of God.**

**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION** *John 1:14*

Pastor: God has come to us to make us His own children. Let us confess our sins even of unbelief that He may give us the faith to receive Him and His love.

**People: O God, we confess that we have often ignored Your voice and Spirit by choosing to go our own way. Without You, we are lost and confused and without hope. Without You, we do not know love. Come now to us and forgive our waywardness and weakness. Give us Your gifts of faith, hope, and love. Receive us again into the family of Your redeemed. Amen.**

Pastor: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. Upon your confession, 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.

**People: Amen.**

**+ SERVICE OF THE WORD +**

**HYMN** *“O Love, How Deep”* (*LSB* 544, vs. 1-5)

**COLLECT OF THE DAY** *(bulletin insert)*

**OLD TESTAMENT** Jeremiah 1:1-10

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**GRADUAL** *(bulletin insert, below Collect of the Day)*

**EPISTLE** 1 Corinthians 12:31b—13:13

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**HOLY GOSPEL** Luke 4:31-44

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to You, O Christ.**

**HYMN** *“Love in Christ Is Strong and Living”* (*LSB* 706)

**SERMON *“Must Words”***

# THE NICENE CREED *(LSB*,back inside cover)

**OFFERING**

# PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

*(after each petition):* Pastor: Lord, in Your mercy,

 **People: hear our prayer.**

**LORD’S PRAYER, SUNG** (*LSB*,front inside cover)

**+ SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT +**

**Divine Service and the Close Fellowship of Holy Communion**

*Our Lord speaks and we listen. His Word bestows what it says. Faith that is born from what is heard acknowledges the gifts received with eager thankfulness and praise. The gifts include the Holy Supper in which we receive His true body and blood to eat and drink. Those welcome to the table acknowledge the real presence of the body and blood of Christ, confess their own sinfulness, and in true faith wish to receive the forgiveness and strength promised through this Holy Sacrament, as* ***instructed*** *… and* ***in unity of faith*** *… with God’s people here in this congregation. It is our sincerest desire that you join in the intimacy of this fellowship. However,* ***if you are not, yet, an instructed and confirmed member-in-good-standing of a congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, please visit with the pastor about such a fellowship before communing****. If you wish to come forward for a blessing, you are welcome to join us at the rail to receive such. Please cross your arms in front of you to indicate that desire.*

**DISTRIBUTION**

 *“Son of God, Eternal Savior”* (*LSB* 842)

**POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING**

Pastor: Let us pray. Blessed Savior Jesus Christ, You have given Yourself to us in this Holy Sacrament. Keep us in Your faith and favor that we may live in You even as You live in us. May Your body and blood preserve us in the true faith to life everlasting; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

### BENEDICTION

**HYMN** *“O Love, How Deep”* (*LSB* 544, vs. 6-7)

**FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH,**

Rev. Curt Hoover, Rev. Alebachew Teshome,

Rev. Craig Fiebiger, Rev. Doug DeWitt

2640 Buckner Road, Thompson’s Station, TN 37179, (615) 791-1880

[www.faithlutheran-tn.org](http://www.faithlutheran-tn.org), Jan. 29/30, 2022

 **All are welcome …**

 **… Christ is honored.**