

ST. JOHN'S WORSHIP

Sunday, January 31, 2021
St. John's Baptist Church | Charlotte, NC
Epiphany

Introduction

**"THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT
IS IN HEAVEN."**

**"THOSE WHO OPPRESS THE POOR INSULT THEIR MAKER,
BUT THOSE WHO ARE KIND TO THE NEEDY HONOR HIM."
-PROVERBS 14:31**

Greeting and Prayer of Submission Rev. Allison Benfield

Call to Worship

Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker,
but those who are kind to the needy honor him.
We as God's People declare this is the year of God's favor
and through God's Spirit working in our lives
we will set the captives free, we will clothe and feed them
sharing with them the grace and love of God!

Hymn of Praise *Be Thou My Vision* SLANE

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my treasure Thou art.

You teach us clearly to walk in your ways,
caring for all bringing joy to their days.
We are your people, Lord mold us to be,
a house for your spirit the whole world can see.

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Isaiah 58:1-12

Ellen Smith, reader

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

This is the written word of God for the people of God, Thanks be to God.

Song

Lord, I Want to Be a Christian in My Heart
IN MY HEART

Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, in my heart.
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.
In my heart, in my heart,
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.

The Church at Prayer & the Lord's Prayer

Rev. Lee Gray

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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Reflection

**"Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker,
but those who are kind to the needy honor him." -Proverbs 14:31**

Song

Take My Life and Let It Be

Scripture Reading

James 2:1-7, 14-18

Ellen Smith, reader

My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you? What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith.

This is the written word of God for the people of God, Thanks be to God

Song of Response

Time for the Waiting to End

by J. Kevin Gray

People are talking about the world we live in;
they say that it's time for a change.
Well I don't know about you my friend
but it's time for the waiting to end.
There's poor in the streets and kids with no shoes
in a country where the wealthy can live as they choose
how much more do you need before you see my friend
that it's time for the waiting to end
Don't wait for your mother your sisters or brothers
don't wait for your fathers and friends
Cause it starts with your actions your heart and your hands
it's time for the waiting to end
We blame the government, we blame the man.
We blame each other as fast as we can
We wait for action from those we think can,
but it's time for the waiting to end
We pray to the Lord each day that we live.
We ask him to bring the world peace,
but aren't we his hands and part of his plans
it's time for the waiting to cease
I've heard it said many times what can be done
this world is so big I'm so small
But when you use Love to accomplish your deeds
the biggest of walls they will fall.
Don't wait for your mother your sisters or brothers
don't wait for your fathers and friends
Cause it starts with your actions, your heart and your hands.
It's time for the waiting to end.

Message

The God Who Calls Us to Restore the Streets

Rev. Dennis W. Foust, PhD

Hymn

God of Freedom, God of Justice

REGENT SQUARE

God of freedom, God of justice, God whose love is strong as death, God who saw the dark of prison, God who knew the price of faith: touch our world of sad oppression with your Spirit's healing breath.

Make in us a captive conscience quick to hear, to act, to plead; make us truly sisters, brothers, of whatever race or creed: teach us to be fully human, open to each other's need.

Reflection

"Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker,
but those who are kind to the needy honor him." -Proverbs 14:31

Commissioning the Scattered Church

Dr. Foust

Postlude

March

by Gioachino Rossini

J. Noel Lance