

## Recognize the Holy One

Scriptures for This Sunday – Mark 1:21-28/1:19-25 IV; Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Doctrine and Covenants 161:3d

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### Welcoming Statement

Welcome! All are welcome in the name of Jesus Christ: Healer, Counselor, Friend. Our theme today is Recognize the Holy One, drawn from a story in the Gospel of Mark where Jesus heals a man thought of as an unclean spirit in Jesus' day. Many different illnesses during this time were attributed to possession by an evil or unclean spirit. May we this day Recognize the Holy One and be freed of stigma, welcomed in God's love, lifted up in grace, and transformed in the care of the Holy Spirit.

### Call to Worship - Scripture Reading: Psalm 111

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,  
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.
- <sup>2</sup> Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them.
- <sup>3</sup> Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever.
- <sup>4</sup> He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds; the Lord is gracious and merciful.
- <sup>5</sup> He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant.
- <sup>6</sup> He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations.
- <sup>7</sup> The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.
- <sup>8</sup> They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.
- <sup>9</sup> He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever.  
Holy and awesome is his name.
- <sup>10</sup> The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.

### Hymn of Recognition - "We Would See Jesus" CCS 35

We would see Jesus! Lo, his star is shining above the stable while the angels sing;  
there in a manger on the hay reclining; haste, let us lay our gifts before the King.

We would see Jesus on the mountain teaching, with all the list'ning people gathered round,  
while birds and flowers and sky above are preaching the blessedness which simple trust has found.

We would see Jesus in his work of healing at eventide before the sun was set;  
divine and human, in his deep revealing of God and humankind in service met.

We would see Jesus; in the early morning still as of old he calls us, "Follow me";  
let us arise, all lesser service scorning. Lord, we are thine, we give ourselves to thee!

*Words: J. Edgar Park, 1879–1956; Words: Public Domain*

### Invocation Prayer

### Liturgy of Grace

As Community of Christ, we seek to be more understanding of mental health challenges in our membership and communities. For too long, ignorance and stigmatized responses have occurred.

1 in 4 people will be affected by mental health or neurobiological disorders in their lifetimes. Globally, more than 300 million people are currently affected by depression.\*

Globally, 800,000 people take their own lives each year. Four out of five are in low or middle-income countries.\*

We offer Community of Christ as a safe space where we will strive to understand how best to share the good news of Jesus Christ in a world where darkness and despair are often present.

We pledge to be respectful, compassionate, and empathetic.

To be good listeners. When you want to share, we are here to listen confidentially, without judgment.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of hope. We are not trying to pry, but you can talk to us. If you are not currently under the care of a mental health professional, we can refer you to the help you need.

As Community of Christ, we desire to be good neighbors, friends and family members to all. For those individuals or those with family members experiencing depression, anxiety, substance abuse or other conditions we want you to know that this is a safe space, a spiritual home for all who seek the joy, hope, love and peace of Jesus Christ.

*\*World Health Organization, www.who.int, 2017*

Prayer for Peace - *Light a Candle.*

Holy Counselor and Beloved Source of Therapy,

Each of us, even in our weakness and separation from God, still have those moments when we recognize the Holy One of God. Help us find the strength in those moments to cast out ignorance and overcome darkness. Guide us in the way of peace.

When inner calm seems to elude us, help us to reach out to you, Oh God, for the peace that passes all understanding. When sadness surrounds us, help us to imagine our best possible future and find hope in the possibility of healing and wholeness. When the pain seems too great, help us reach out for help. For we know we are loved.

We know that your peace can be found in the smile of a friend, the hug of a family member, the memories of an old photograph, the gift of a community that surrounds us with love. Grant peace for each one present. Grant peace for each one known. Grant peace for the whole world. Amen.

The Good News of Healing - Scripture Reading: Mark 1:21-28

<sup>21</sup> They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. <sup>22</sup> They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. <sup>23</sup> Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, <sup>24</sup> and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." <sup>25</sup> But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" <sup>26</sup> And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. <sup>27</sup> They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." <sup>28</sup> At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

Hymn of Wholeness - "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say" CCS 31

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto me and rest;  
I bring good tidings of release to you who are oppressed."  
I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad;  
I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Behold, I freely give  
the living water! Thirsty one, stoop down and drink and live."

I came to Jesus and I drank of that life-giving stream;  
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "I am this dark world's light;  
look unto me; your morn shall rise, and all your day be bright."  
I looked to Jesus, and I found in him my star, my sun;  
and in that light of life I'll walk till trav'ling days are done.

*Words:* Horatius N. Bonar, 1808–1889, alt.; *Words:* Public Domain

## Message

In the context of Mark's Gospel, God's creation is broken. Satan's demons live in people. Nature is chaotic and threatening. Illness brings impurity. Religious and political leaders dominate—instead of serving—the people. Into this world, Jesus brought good news: God's rule has come, and healing can begin!

The story of the man with the unclean spirit is Mark's first example of how Jesus, as God's agent for God's rule, can restore wholeness. But in this Gospel, the disciples don't understand Jesus' identity or true purpose. The reader knows because Mark announces that Jesus is the anointed one, the Son of God. Unclean spirits recognize and obey Jesus. The sea and wind recognize his authority. In the end, even a Roman centurion announces that "Surely this man is the Son of God." Here, in these verses, Mark prepares us for the ironic fact that at first all creation recognizes Jesus except the people closest to him.

After being tested in the desert, Jesus announced the rule of God; called Simon, Andrew, James, and John; and began to teach in the synagogue in Capernaum. There, a man with an unclean spirit approached him and called him by name, identifying him as the holy one of God.

In Jesus' day, a name was more than a label. It stood for one's character, personality, even destiny. To know someone's name was to lay claim to them. People believed that if enemies knew your name, they had power over you. So when the man with the unclean spirit named Jesus, he was trying to control Jesus. Jesus told him to be quiet and commanded the unclean spirit to leave. First-century people believed Satan had power over unclean spirits. The exorcism of the unclean spirit is a direct result of Jesus' successful confrontation with Satan in the desert.

The unclean spirit in this man foreshadows all that is wrong in the humans whom Jesus will encounter. The man was present in the synagogue—suggesting the religious authorities in Galilee and Jerusalem. He was afraid of Jesus, just like the disciples, the religious leaders, and the Romans. He tried to wield power and control over Jesus, as both the disciples and the religious leaders tried to do. And the unclean spirit was willing to destroy to save itself and secure its future. In the end, it was Jesus who showed power and brought about wholeness and salvation.

New teachings with new authority need new commitments and loyalty. Many who were curious sought this Jesus. Others were confused or uneasy with a new expression of authority. The authorities in Jerusalem noticed, and they felt fear. Simon responded with an invitation to his mother-in-law's house, where she lay sick. Jesus healed her. She immediately got up and began to serve her guests. She fulfilled the pattern of servant ministry, the role Jesus tried over and over to explain to his followers.

Did the man who was healed become a follower? The Gospel doesn't tell us. He experienced a transforming moment with Jesus, but his response is hidden within his history.

## Questions to Consider

1. How is God's rule bringing wholeness into the world today? Give examples.

2. How have you allowed fear, domination, self-preservation, and rebellion to keep you far from the rule of God? How have you overcome those things to minister?
3. Who do you say Jesus is? How do you respond to Christ's touch in your life?
4. What is the Holy Spirit prompting you to do in your life and ministry? In the life of the congregation? In your pursuit of mission and the rule of God?

### Disciples' Generous Response

Giver of all gifts and source of life. We gather here with hearts full of gratitude.

**And yet we confess that at times we spend unwisely, impulsively, compulsively.**

Help us to Spend Responsibly. Avoid selfishness. Seek help for hoarding.

**Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.**

Giver of all gifts and source of life. We gather here with hearts full of compassion.

**And yet we confess that at times we respond with less than our true capacity.**

Help us to Share Generously, supporting what matters most:

**The Mission of Jesus Christ!**

During the Disciple's Generous Response, we focus on aligning our heart with God's heart. Our offerings are more than meeting budgets or funding mission. Through our offerings, we are able to tangibly express our gratitude to God who is the giver of all.

As we share our mission tithes either by mailing them to the financial officer or through eTithing, use this time to thank God for the many gifts received in life. Our hearts grow aligned with God's when we gratefully receive and faithfully respond by living Christ's mission.

### Blessing of Local and Worldwide Mission Tithes

### Hymn of Liberation - "In Christ We Live" CCS 326

In Christ we live, whose life was more than teaching love and doing good.

In Christ we meet, whose trust in God derision, fear, and hate withstood.

In Christ we hope, whose death exposed the evil bent, the tragic flaw  
in leaders, followers, and friends, religion, government, and law.

In Christ we grieve the trampled lives of people shunned, abused, oppressed.

In Christ we vow to serve the weak and lobby for the dispossessed.

And if we find out how and when to show them they are not alone,  
we will not proudly be their voice, but humbly help them find their own.

Their kindness, anger, or distrust are angels, calling us to see  
the fear, the need to have and hold, that frame our own captivity.

In Christ we live, and life is more than learning love and doing good,  
so praise, and pray, and trust in God who makes the earth our neighborhood.

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### Benediction

### Sending Forth

You are a beloved child of God. This is your community. You are loved. Even when you feel pain, know that God loves you. Never give up. We are here for you. We love you. You are never alone. We will always try to understand and we will always care. You are a beloved child of God. Amen.