

September 18, 2022 - 125th Anniversary Picnic Jeremiah 29:11

I have three things here - aspirin, an epi-pen with epinephrine, and gold. What do aspirin, epinephrine, and gold all have in common? 1897. Aspirin was invented in 1897; epinephrine was discovered in 1897; and gold - "there's gold in them there hills" - gold in the Klondike led to the Klondike gold rush of 1897. Gold, epinephrine, aspirin have something else in common; they can all make life better. Aspirin helps with aches and pains; epinephrine or adrenaline energizes, gets the blood moving, gives us a jump start; and gold, gold can buy Klondike ice cream bars.

Imagine a world where you don't need aspirin, or Tylenol, Motrin, acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Imagine a world with no aches or pains. No arthritis, no headaches, no back-aches, no aches, no pains. Imagine how good life could be with no aches, no pains.

It gets better. Imagine a world where you never need epinephrine; you never run out of adrenaline; you never need a caffeine or sugar fix. Hard to imagine, isn't it? In the morning when your parents are dropping you off for school, I can sometimes guess who forgot their coffee. Without their caffeine, some people can hardly put one foot in front of the other, one thought after another. And it's not just in the morning, is it? Sometimes later in the day I see it; I feel it - a tiredness that no amount of caffeine could ever fix. What makes you most tired? It's not lack of sleep, is it? A world of worry and frustration, a world on edge, a world always demanding more and more, and no matter what you do, it's never enough, never good enough - that's more tiring than not enough sleep, isn't it? Imagine a world where you're never tired because your world doesn't drain you; instead, your world energizes you - with the best kind of energy.

No aches, no pains, never tired. It gets even better. Imagine a world where gold is practically worthless, practically worthless because there is so much of it. So much gold, they use gold to pave the streets, gems and jewels for the walls, pearls for the gates. Imagine living in the lap of luxury, your home, your dream house, built with the best of the best.

That's the life you get to look forward to. And it gets better; you're with God and his people. Every day you're celebrating life and love together with God and his people. That's the life God has for you with Jesus - in heaven.

So what's next? Some days, most days, God gives us a taste of heaven. But some days, what's next? What should we expect? Jeremiah told his people to expect exile. If we were them, instead of living the life we want, we should expect living a life of being stepped on, pushed around, having to go where we don't want to go, having to do what we don't want to do. And what does Jesus tell us to expect? Storms, storms of trouble. So, what's next? Some days, we don't want to know.

But as bad as our worst day might be, it could be worse. We could be those people Jesus talked about in our Gospel lesson, those people building their lives without him, building their lives on sand. Instead of building their lives on God and his Word, they thought their way better than God's way. And what happened? Life looked good, until trouble came. And then, they were swept away, because they built their lives on sand. Or we could be those people Jeremiah talks to in the next paragraph. On the good days, instead of listening to God, they listened to the world around them. And then when trouble came, instead of turning to God, they blamed God and thought that

living the life of the world was the answer. They were in for a rude awakening. The day was coming when God would say: “Enough! I’ve had enough!” And he would judge and curse and condemn all the way to hell.

It doesn’t have to be that way for you, for me, for anyone. We have something better to look forward to than getting swept away, something better to look forward to than an endless exile in hell. In our lesson, we have God’s promise to his people in exile: **“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”** Jesus gives us God’s promise for the world: **“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”**

What’s next? We get to look forward to eternal life, life with God in heaven. Why? Not because we’re here today. Not because we have a St. John connection. Not because we’re good people, or try to be good, or want to be good. No, we get to look forward to life with God because God loves you. He loves you even after those days you turned your back on his love. He loves you even after what you’ve done, the way you’ve hurt people he loves. He loves you; he wants you to be with him; he wants you to enjoy the best of what he has to offer; he wants you to enjoy life the way that it is supposed to be.

So he doesn’t just tell us: “Get it right, or else.” And he loves you so much he doesn’t just say: “You’re fine just the way you are.” He knows better than that. He wants better for us, and he knows we can’t get ourselves right on our own. So he gives us Jesus. He gives us Jesus to take our place. In life, Jesus lived a life of love, God’s love. With love, he said what needed to be said; with love, he did

what needed to be done. Not for himself, but for people like you and like me.

And what did it get him? The cross. Jesus was killed on a cross. Why? One part of the answer - people couldn't stand Jesus telling God's Truth. Sounds like today, doesn't it? Another part of the answer - Jesus died on the cross to take your place, my place, the place of everyone out there in the world. Why? He was living God's love. On the cross, Jesus took the sin of the world, your sin, my sin, as his own; on the cross Jesus took God's judgment on sin. Now, with Jesus, God doesn't see you and what you've done wrong. Instead, with Jesus, God sees you with what Jesus did right. That's right. With Jesus, God sees you forgiven and right. He sees you with Jesus living the love of God.

That's what's next for us, isn't it? We get to live the love of God with Jesus. We live in a broken, mixed up, messed world like every generation before us. It can be tempting to point our fingers at their sin, the world's sin. Jesus didn't do a whole lot of that, did he? Instead Jesus pointed to our sins in here, so we can be the people God calls us to be - a people sharing his love and shining his light.

How? How do we live the love of God with Jesus? Instead of hiding in our own little comfort zone, instead of getting on a high horse and stomping against their sin, we do like Jesus. What did Jesus do? He met the world in its mess and he showed God's love; he pointed to heaven and shared God's hope; he went to the cross and forgave. Instead of hiding, instead of high-horse stomping, he met us and mingled. He mingled face to face, heart to heart, with people in their hurt. He mingled, face to face and heart to heart with people worn out by the world around them, worn out by the world inside them. He mingled, face to face and heart to heart, with people - some

of them had gold, most of them did not. And what did Jesus do? He offered the hurting and heartbroken something better than aspirin; he offered the tired and worn out something better than an adrenaline rush; he offered the poor in spirit something better than gold. He offered the life and the love of God here, and the life and love of God forever in heaven.

So what's next for us? Like Jeremiah says, "We'll have some times of struggle." Like Jesus says, "We'll have some times of trouble." But in the struggle and the trouble, we have something better coming. As God told his people, "**For I know the plans I have for you,**" declares the LORD, "**plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.**" So what's next? For us? For our congregation? How about this? To live the love of God with Jesus - to share with the hurting something better than aspirin, to share with the tired something better than an adrenaline rush, to share with our world something better than gold. You have God's promise to share: "**For I know the plans I have for you,**" declares the LORD, "**plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future**" - in Jesus. Amen.

September 17 & 18, 2022

NEW MORNING PRAISE

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we see changes all around us. Since our congregation was founded in 1897, life in Libertyville has changed in ways that most people wouldn't have imagined in 1897. We've experienced change here at St. John also, but more significantly we've experienced the unchanging love and grace of our Lord. As we celebrated our anniversary in January, we looked back (a copy of that celebration sermon is included with this service folder).

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we look forward - "What's Next?" As you can imagine we have challenges and storms ahead of us; as God promises we have blessing and life ahead of us. Here at St. John we are blessed to have our Lord equip us and our next generations with the foundation we need for the challenges and storms, the foundation that sets us up for God's blessing and life!

OPENING HYMN

"Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"

Hymn 624

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation!
Let all who hear now to his temple draw near, joining in glad adoration!

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things is wondrously reigning
and, as on wings of an eagle, uplifting, sustaining.
Have you not seen how all that's needful has been
sent by his gracious ordaining?

Praise to the Lord, who has fearfully, wondrously, made you,
health has bestowed and, when heedlessly falling, has stayed you.
What need or grief ever has failed of relief?
Wings of his mercy did shade you.

Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work and defend you;
surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend you.
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do as with his love he befriends you.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him!
Let the amen sound from his people again; gladly forever adore him!

OPENING SENTENCES

Musical notation for the first opening sentence. It consists of a single staff in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The melody begins with a quarter note G, followed by a quarter note A, and a quarter rest. This is followed by a triplet of quarter notes G, A, and B, and then a quarter note G. The lyrics "O Lord, o-pen my lips." are written below the staff.

Musical notation for the second opening sentence. It consists of a single staff in G major and 3/4 time. The melody begins with a quarter note G, followed by a quarter note A, and a quarter rest. This is followed by a quarter note B, a quarter note C, and a quarter note D. The lyrics "And my mouth shall de-clare your praise." are written below the staff.

Musical notation for the third opening sentence. It consists of a single staff in G major and 3/4 time. The melody begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G, a quarter note A, and a quarter note B. This is followed by a quarter note C and a quarter note D. The lyrics "Hasten to save me, O God." are written below the staff.

Musical notation for the fourth opening sentence. It consists of a single staff in G major and 3/4 time. The melody begins with a quarter note G, followed by a quarter note A, and a quarter note B. This is followed by a quarter note C, a quarter note D, and a quarter note E. The lyrics "O Lord, come quickly to help me." are written below the staff.

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION OF SINS

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: Amen.



Give glory to God, our light and our life.



Come, O come, let us wor - ship.

COME, O COME, LET US SING TO THE LORD

Come, O come, let us sing to the Lord,
let us shout with joy to our saving Rock;
come, enter in with our songs of praise,
come, enter in with thanksgiving.

You are a great and a wondrous God,
cupping in your hands all the depths of earth.
You made the hills and the mountains high,
you made the seas and the dry land.

Come, let us worship and, bowing low,
kneel before the One who has made us all.
You are the God whom we call our own,
we are the flock that you shepherd.



O my people, hear my teaching;
listen to the words of my mouth.

I will utter things from of old,
what we have heard and what our fathers have told us.

We will not hide them from our children;
we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord. *Refrain*

The LORD decreed statutes for Jacob
And established the law in Israel.

So the next generation would know them,
And they in turn would tell their children.

Then they would put their trust in God
And would not forget his deeds
but would keep his commands.

**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. *Refrain***

FIRST READING*Jeremiah 29:11-14*

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SCHOOL CHILDREN SING (SATURDAY)*"Go into the World"**"Hark the Voice of Jesus Crying"***Hymn 745****Children vs. 1 & 2****Congregation vs. 3 & 4**

If you cannot be a watchman, standing high on Zion's wall,
pointing out the path to heaven, off'ring life and peace to all,
with your prayers and with your off'rings you can do what God demands;
you can be like faithful Aaron, holding up the prophet's hands.

Let none hear you idly saying, "There is nothing I can do,"
while the multitudes are dying, and the Master calls for you.
Take the task he gives you gladly, let his work your pleasure be;
answer quickly when he calleth, "Here am I, send me, send me!"

GOSPEL

Matthew 7:24–27

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker 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 into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From there 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.**

HYMN

"The Church's One Foundation"

Hymn 855

The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
she is his new creation by water and the Word.
From heav'n he came and sought her to be his holy bride;
with his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.

Elect from ev'ry nation, yet one o'er all the earth;
her charter of salvation: one Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses, with ev'ry grace endued.

The Church shall never perish. Her dear Lord, to defend,
to guide, sustain, and cherish, is with her to the end.
Tho' there be those that hate her and strive to see her fail,
against both foe and traitor she ever shall prevail.

Tho' with a scornful wonder the world sees her oppressed,
by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed,
yet saints their watch are keeping; their cry goes up, "How long?"
and soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song.

Mid toil and tribulation and tumult of her war
she waits the consummation of peace forevermore
till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest,
and the great Church victorious shall be the Church at rest.

SERMON

Jeremiah 29: 11-14

HYMN

"Speak, O Lord"

Hymn 633

Speak, O Lord, as we come to you to receive the food of your holy Word;
take your truth, plant it deep in us, shape and fashion us in your likeness,
that the light of Christ might be seen today
in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.

Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us all your purposes for your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience, holy reverence, true humility;
test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity.

Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see
your majestic love and authority.

Words of pow'r that can never fail, let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds,
help us grasp the heights of your plans for us,
truths unchanged from the dawn of time,
that will echo down through eternity.

And by grace we'll stand on your promises,
and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.

Speak, O Lord, till your Church is built,
and the earth is filled with your glory.

PRAYER

M: May this be a time, O Lord, for confession and repentance. Forgive us for the apathy that harms our faith and hinders our works. Forgive us for boasting of our past achievements and for blaming others for our present problems. Rid us of indifference to public worship and Bible study. Destroy the distrust that plagues us, and shatter every thought and word that harms the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

C: **Create in us pure hearts, O God, and renew steadfast spirits within us.**

M: Let this be a time, O Lord, when you renew us again by Word and sacrament, when you reform our hearts and minds, and when you restore to us the joy of fellowship and service. Grant to us in this age and in this place the courage, steadfastness, and dedication of those who have gone before us.

C: **May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers; may he never leave us nor forsake us.**

M: Let this be a time, O Lord, when we recommit and reconsecrate ourselves to the ministry of the gospel. Let us find joy in our unity, zeal for our work, and success in our labor.

C: **May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us, that his ways may be known on earth, his salvation among all nations. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless and keep you.
Amen.

The Lord's face ever shine upon you.
Amen.

The Lord grant you peace for all your days.
Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

“God’s Word Is Our Great Heritage”

Hymn 640

God’s Word is our great heritage and shall be ours forever;
to spread its light from age to age shall be our chief endeavor.
Through life it guides our way, in death it is our stay.
Lord, grant, while worlds endure, we keep its teachings pure
throughout all generations.

OFFERING

*If you prefer online giving, you may scan this code with
your mobile device.*



*(You heard our school children sing today.
Tuition Grant Fund envelopes are available in the pew rack
to support affordable tuition for our school.)*

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- **We are blessed** to serve 93 students in Preschool – 8th Grade.
- **We are blessed** to work with parents and guardians who cherish our school and help us cultivate a “Family Feel” in our ministry efforts.
- **We are blessed** with a ministry team ready to serve the lambs and families entrusted to our care.
- **We are blessed** to help students grow spiritually and academically in a loving, safe, Christ-centered educational environment.
- **We are blessed** to individualize learning in multi-age classrooms where students can fully use their gifts and talents guided by caring, loving teachers.
- **We are blessed** to be nationally recognized for educational excellence through WELSSA & NCPSA.
- **We are blessed** to be recognized for educational excellence by the state of Illinois.
- **We are blessed** with graduates who are well-equipped for the high school years and beyond.
- **We are blessed** with a congregation and community who support us with their prayers and offerings.
- **We are blessed** with a Jesus who loves us and blesses us as his own family.