



The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

## **Prelude**

*Beside Still Waters*

**Gathering**— Surely God yearns, as any loving parent would, that we choose wisely. In this and in every moment, let us bring joy to God’s heart by choosing compassion for ourselves, our neighbors, and all of God’s creation. So, come, walk in the way that leads to life. It is better to be reconciled with another than to be proven right. Come, choose to live a genuine life. Life is too short for petty resentments. Come, walk in the way Christ invites us to travel. We give thanks for Christ’s way, and for the freedom to follow!~

**A Time of Prayer**— Open our eyes, Holy Spirit, to your love in our midst. We give you thanks for the power of our minds to choose right over wrong. Guide us now, that this power may not overwhelm, but inspire us. Help us choose compassion for ourselves and others. Teach us to set aside old resentments and grudges. Lift us, with all earth’s children and all your creation, to aspire to the abundant life Christ brings...~

**The Lord's Prayer** (unison)—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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

## **Choir**

*He Loves Us All*

## **We Hear God’s Word**

*Matthew 5:21-37 (NRSV)*

21 ‘You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, “You shall not murder”; and “whoever murders shall be liable to judgement.”<sup>22</sup> But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgement; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, “You fool”, you will be liable to the hell of fire.<sup>23</sup> So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against

you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. <sup>25</sup>Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. <sup>26</sup>Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

27 ‘You have heard that it was said, “You shall not commit adultery.” <sup>28</sup>But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup>If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup>And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.

31 ‘It was also said, “Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.” <sup>32</sup>But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

33 ‘Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, “You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.” <sup>34</sup>But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, <sup>35</sup>or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. <sup>36</sup>And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup>Let your word be “Yes, Yes” or “No, No”; anything more than this comes from the evil one.

*Deuteronomy 30:15-20 (NRSV)*

15 See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. <sup>16</sup>If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. <sup>17</sup>But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, <sup>18</sup>I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. <sup>19</sup>I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, <sup>20</sup>loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast

to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

**Meditation**

*Be Reconciled*

**Hymn**

*Praise Him! Praise Him!, #95*

**We Respond to God's Word with Our Giving**

**Invitation**—With gratitude in our hearts, we come before God to bring our gifts and offerings. God has called us together, here at Zion, as one body in Christ, to serve and enrich our community. May the gifts we bring this day be used by God for compassionate and caring ministry, as we answer that call.

**February Benevolence**—Southeast Association Eviction Ministry

**Doxology**

**We Give Thanks**— These offerings belong to you, O Lord, for you are the source of every blessing and joy. Employ these gifts to build your realm. Send them into the world to heal the sick, feed the hungry, and reconcile us to one another. By our prayers, our presence, our gifts, and our service, make your church a true instrument of peace. Amen.~

**Hymn**

*To God Be the Glory, 66*

**Benediction**— Bear witness to the way of Christ. Go with the compassion of God, the joy of Christ, and the wisdom of the Spirit. Go with God, and Christ will lead you in the way that leads to life. Amen.~

**Postlude**

*Postlude*