



# The Messenger

## International Lutheran Church

[www.ilcseoul.org](http://www.ilcseoul.org) | January 26, 2025 | Issue #942

## A NOTE FROM PASTOR CARL

### HEARING THE READING AND SEEING THE LIGHT

**And he [Jesus] began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:21 ESV)** Today we read the first recorded sermon that Jesus gave in Nazareth, the town that witnessed his growth and knew His family. We might be surprised to see that Jesus is met with some mixed reviews. But the response did not dictate the message. The good news was bold and clear. Today as we continue in this season of Epiphany here at International Lutheran Church, we are reminded how the light of Christ brings with it both the stark reality of our condition, and also the glorious, good news of the freedom we have in Jesus.

One of the things that I remember from our missionary training when I first came to Asia almost 30 years ago was the admonition to always take a camera with you and take pictures of everything you see in those first few months. These observations, we were told, can really help one to connect with the people and culture we are entering as we observe and see how things are different from what we are used to seeing. This admonition was certainly not meant to cultivate an attitude of superiority or of always comparing which is better or worse, but rather to maintain an honest curiosity and attitude of learning so that one can continue to notice the things that one doesn't expect. The other lens of course to look through when we experience something different is to pay attention to one's own reaction. This is how we learn and this is how we grow and change.

In today's gospel lesson, Jesus speaks in the synagogue of His youth. The town where he was nursed and nurtured, they were anxious to hear their "claim to fame" now speak to them. Jesus' ministry had already begun in the surrounding towns and villages. We might imagine the expectation that this would now bring to his own community. That there were two immediate reactions I guess should not surprise us when it seems that people today can hardly stand in solidarity about anything. The first reaction of course was what we might have expected: the crowds marvel at His teaching. They hear in this very brief sermon the good news for them. They hear and see the fulfillment of God's Word right before their eyes. They clearly got the message of gracious words, a message of jubilee - liberty and freedom from the oppression of debt and a future no longer strapped with the past. One way the Bible talks about sin and its consequences in our lives is in the sense of debts, payments, or accounts that can never be reconciled. For some interest is what makes the world go round, but we also know the damage of usury and how it can push people down. So when Jesus speaks of "liberation" to the down-trodden, it invokes yet another response. But this probably wasn't what we expected.

### SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:00 AM	<i>Bible Class</i>
10:00 AM	<i>Divine Worship Service</i> (in-person and live stream)
7:00 PM	<i>Bible Study</i> (live stream)

### OTHER EVENTS

Go to [ilcseoul.org](http://ilcseoul.org) > Upcoming for other events

For any who might have not noticed, a "home court" does not always mean an advantage. Jesus uses two very familiar Old Testament examples from the prophets Elijah and Elisha to make His point. If there were any two great prophets recognized by all it was Elijah and Elisha. Their ministry in word and deed was definitive of what a prophet is. Yet, what may have escaped Jesus' hearers of that day, and maybe perhaps us today, is that their message and miracles became for some a message of judgement, and for others still, the miracle of life. Here is where Luke's gospel shines with clarity in proclaiming who Jesus is and why He has come. He came for the least and the lost. He has come for the marginalized and outsider. Jesus has come to set us free from the debt of our past and not to use it as a tool to exploit and control our future. Luke says they understood the point Jesus was making, so much so that they were filled with wrath in contrast to the Spirit that was upon Jesus. They saw how the light was shining on their own darkness and they could not bear it. As they readied to throw Him from the cliff, they prefigured just how far Jesus was willing to go to deliver us from our debts. For Luke's gospel tells us of another hill, Calvary, from which Jesus would not walk away, but instead would walk directly to for you and me.

As we celebrate this season of Epiphany and the ever-increasing light and revelation that Jesus is the Son of God, we are brought into the brilliance of that day where we see the light as we hear the reading and all our debts are paid in full. God's blessings to you and your family during this Seollal Holiday.

*Pastor Carl*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Unless otherwise noted, you may direct inquiries for any announcement to [seoulilc.volunteer@gmail.com](mailto:seoulilc.volunteer@gmail.com). Links to online or live stream events will be included in either the electronic version of *The Messenger* or will be sent out on Sunday morning.

### HAPPY LUNAR NEW YEAR!

ILC wishes you a blessed new lunar year. If you are able to gather with loved ones over the break, or just relax and enjoy some time off, may you remember how Jesus is with you each and every day, and may you be comforted in His love.

### END OF YEAR GIVING RECORDS

Last call! If you would like a record of your giving for the year for tax purposes, please contact the church at [seoulilc.church@gmail.com](mailto:seoulilc.church@gmail.com). As we transition to our new software, now is the best time to request this information.

### CHURCH360

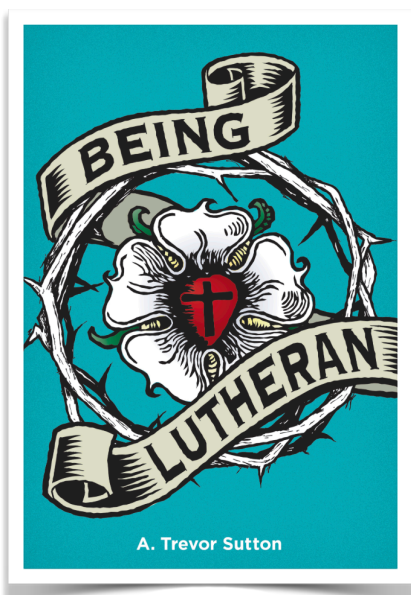
We are now transitioning to a new church management system called Church360. Thank you for your assistance in helping us get this software fully functioning as we reach out to individuals and families for information that can help us connect better with you.

### WORSHIP ASSISTANTS NOTICE

We will continue to fill in the volunteer duties with the names on our January volunteer list, recognizing that it will be difficult to know who will be in physical attendance due to the protests. If your name appears on the 'Worship Assistants' table and you are not planning to attend church in-person, please do not worry: we will be able to find another to take your place when the service begins.

### MEN'S GROUP FELLOWSHIP

The Men's Group meets online the first Saturday of each month a time of fellowship and discussion. Starting next month (Saturday, February 1, 7 - 9PM), the book that will guide the discussion is Trevor Sutton's *Being Lutheran*. A reminder will be sent out next week, as well as the link. We have a few copies of the book at church, so please ask James or Pastor Carl so you can get reading!



## GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

### ONLINE GIVING

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FAITHFULLY MAKING USE OF ONLINE GIVING.

If you are unable to attend in-person church, we encourage you to make use of offering your tithes and gifts via online giving. Giving in this way will be recorded for your personal end-of-year giving statement.

**CITIBANK 260-00497-243-01**

## READINGS

### January 26: Third Sunday after the Epiphany

OT	Nehemiah 8:1-3, 4-6, 8-10
NT	1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
Gospel	Luke 4:16-30

## WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

If you are interested in serving as a worship assistant, or need to make a scheduling adjustment, please write to [seoulilc.volunteer@gmail.com](mailto:seoulilc.volunteer@gmail.com). Thank you!

JANUARY 26	10:00 AM
ACOLYTE	Juwon & Carmen
GREETER	Ethan
USHERS	Dee Dee & Olivia
COMMUNION ASSISTANT	Martin
LIVE STREAM	Christian
KITCHEN HELPERS	Eric & Insun
OFFERING COUNTERS	Yoonsil & Adam