



ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY

Epiphany 4

January 28, 2024



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

God's Word for this week

Authority is the power to determine what happens; the ability to give direction or even commands. Authority (as we know it) is always limited. Parents have authority over their children until they grow up and move out. A governor has authority over the people of his state only, not the neighboring state or anywhere else, and only as long as he's in power.

This week we see that there is one Man—only One!—who has absolute authority. There is no one, not even the demons, who is outside His authority. As the Son of God there is *no higher authority* than Jesus. And his authority is everlasting. But here is the best part of this epiphany truth: Jesus graciously uses His absolute authority for our benefit and blessing.

Before Worship

Take time for prayer and to review the lessons and the service notes.
For personal preparation for Communion, see Red Hymnal: p.156.

General Information

The restrooms are located in the fellowship hall.
Visitors – welcome, and please take a moment and sign the guestbook in the fellowship hall.
If you need special assistance for communion, please notify an usher and/or the pastor.

Serving in Worship

Music: Rachel Halldorson
Ushers: Josiah Kroll, Art Kutschied
Pastor: Wayne Halldorson
Pastor's Cell: 903-717-1922
Pastor's Email: grace.tx.pastor@gmail.com

Church Information

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Prayer Requests: prayers.grace.wels@gmail.com / text to 520-236-9673

T-Loop Hearing Assistance

If you have a hearing aid with a T-coil, you can connect it to the T-Loop device installed throughout the church building. Headsets are available for anyone needing hearing assistance. Personal earbuds can also be used with a head set. See Kris Martinson if you need assistance.




WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION

919 Blessed Jesus, at Your Word

CW 919 st. 1



1 Bless - ed Je - sus, at your Word we are gath - ered



all to hear you. Let our hearts and souls be stirred



now to seek and love and fear you, by your teach - ings,



sweet and ho - ly, drawn from earth to love you sole - ly.

Stand

In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

919 Blessed Jesus, at Your Word

CW 919 st. 2



2 All our knowl - edge, sense, and sight lie in deep - est



dark - ness shroud - ed till your Spir - it breaks our night

with the beams of truth un - cloud - ed. You a - lone to
 God can win us; you must work all good with - in us.

Text: tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.; Tobias Clausnitzer, 1619–1684
 Tune: Johann R. Ahle, 1625–1673, alt.
 Text and tune: Public domain

Opening Verses / Confession & Absolution

Oh, how I love your law!
I meditate on it all day long.

Your commands make me wiser than my enemies,
for they are ever with me.

I have more insight than all my teachers,
for I meditate on your statutes.

How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth! *(Psalm 119:97-99,103)*

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking,
 correcting and training in righteousness,
**so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every
 good work.** *(2 Timothy 3:16,17)*

Yet so often we have despised God’s Word and failed to gladly hear
 and learn it. For this, for poor management of all God’s gifts, and for
 all our other sins, we bow before Him and humbly ask His forgiveness:

Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. I have not always respected your authority, or the power of your Word.

For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity.

But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

919 Blessed Jesus, at Your Word

CW 919 st. 3

3 Gra - cious Sav - ior, good and kind, Light from Light, from
God pro - ceed - ing, o - pen now our heart and mind;
help us by your Spir - it's plead - ing. Hear the cry your
Church now rais - es; hear and bless our prayers and prais - es.

God gave His Word so “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name” (*John 20:31*). The Scriptures testify about Jesus, who lived a perfect life for you, died on the cross to pay for all your sins, and rose again to assure you of your salvation.

Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen. We are forgiven, renewed, and equipped for whatever lies ahead, because we have power in Jesus and in His Word.

919 Blessed Jesus, at Your Word

CW 919 st. 4

4 Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost, praise to you and
ad - o - ra - tion! Grant that we your Word may trust,
con - fi - dent of our sal - va - tion, while we here be -
low must wan - der, till we sing your prais - es yon - der.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, look with mercy on our weaknesses, and in all our dangers and needs stretch out the right hand of your majesty to help and defend us; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Be seated

THE WORD

First Reading

Deuteronomy 18:15–20

¹⁵The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. ¹⁶For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, “Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die.”

¹⁷The LORD said to me: “What they say is good. ¹⁸I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. ¹⁹I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name. ²⁰But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death.”

Psalms 29 Ascribe to the LORD

Psalms 29

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name;
worship the LORD in the splendor of His holiness.

Ascribe to the LORD, you heavenly beings,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

The voice of the LORD is powerful;
the voice of the LORD is majestic.

The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars.
And in His temple all cry, “Glory!”

The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;
the LORD is enthroned as king forever.
The LORD gives strength to His people;
the LORD blesses his people with peace.

**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.**

Second Reading

Hebrews 3:1–6

¹Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest. ²He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God’s house. ³Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. ⁴For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. ⁵“Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house,” bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. ⁶But Christ is faithful as the Son over God’s house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.

Verse of the Day

Mark 1:22

Alleluia. The people were amazed at His teaching, because He taught them as one who had authority. Alleluia.

541 How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds

CW 541 st. 1

1 How sweet the name of Je - sus sounds in
a be - liev - er's ear! It soothes our sor - rows,
heals our wounds, and drives a - way all fear.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds'. It consists of three staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter). The second staff continues: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter). The third staff continues: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter). The piece ends with a double bar line.

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt.
Tune: Alexander R. Reinagle, 1799–1877
Text and tune: Public domain

Gospel Reading

Mark 1:21–28

²¹They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²²The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. ²³Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, ²⁴“What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”

²⁵“Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” ²⁶The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

²⁷The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” ²⁸News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.



1 Rise, shine, you peo - ple! Christ the Lord has en - tered
 2 See how he sends the pow'rs of e - vil reel - ing;
 3 Come, cel - e - brate, your ban - ners high un - furl - ing,
 4 Tell how the Fa - ther sent his Son to save us.



our hu - man sto - ry; God in him is cen - tered.
 he brings us free - dom, light and life and heal - ing.
 your songs and prayers a - gainst the dark - ness hurl - ing.
 Tell of the Son, who life and free - dom gave us.



He comes to us, by death and sin sur -
 All men and wom - en, who by guilt are
 To all the world go out and tell the
 Tell how the Spir - it calls from ev - 'ry



round - ed, with grace un - bound - ed.
 driv - en, now are for - giv - en.
 sto - ry of Je - sus' glo - ry.
 na - tion his new cre - a - tion.

Text: Ronald A. Klug, b. 1939, alt.

Tune: Dale Wood, 1934-2003

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Tune: © 1974 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission: CCLI no. 11133502

Sermon

Deuteronomy 18:15-20 *"The VOICE of GOD:"*

541 How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds

CW 541 st. 4

4 O Je - sus, shep - herd, guard - ian, friend, my
Proph - et, Priest, and King, my Lord, my life, my
way, my end, ac - cept the praise I bring.

The image shows three staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The first staff begins with a '4' indicating the time signature. The second staff ends with a double bar line.

Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.**

Through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became truly human.**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

**He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayer of the Church

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon us.

When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident.

The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Eternal Lord, give us peace as we ponder the good news that you forgive our sins in Christ. Lead us to see clearly the path you have laid out for us. Help us always treasure your Word and take it to heart.

Work in us so that we believe and live the Word we have heard today.

Guard and guide the families of our congregation. Lead husbands and wives to love each other with commitment, respect, and patience. Help parents to grasp the eternal value of keeping their children close to Jesus all their lives. Grant joy to those who are single, and make them a blessing to others.

Protect us from the temptations that surround us; give us pure hearts and minds.

Give us passion to share the story of your love with our family and friends. Overcome unbelief, and open the hearts of people everywhere to believe the good news that Jesus has forgiven their sins and opened the gates of heaven.

Fill us with joy over every sinner who repents and comes to trust in you.

(Special prayers / Personal prayers . . .) Gracious God, you govern and direct all things and you love all people. Hear our prayers, spoken and silent, and answer them in your wisdom and grace.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Offering

THE SACRAMENT

Preface

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lived among us as a human being and revealed his glory as your only Son, full of grace and truth.

Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

541 How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds

CW 541 st. 3

3 Dear name! The rock on which I build, my
shield and hid - ing place, my nev - er - fail - ing
treas - ury filled with bound - less stores of grace.

The image shows three staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a '3' indicating a triplet. The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter). The second staff continues with: E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), F#3 (quarter), E3 (quarter). The third staff continues with: D3 (quarter), C3 (quarter), B2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), F#2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter). The piece ends with a double bar line.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Lord God, you are worthy to receive thanks and praise from all people. You created the world and all who live in it, and in your mercy you saved us. We give thanks to you for the grace of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Though in very nature God, He took the nature of a servant and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. He offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin and redeemed us from its curse and penalty. He rescued us from the terrors of death and restored eternal life with you. He conquered our enemies and gained for us the kingdom of grace and glory. May we always and only listen to Him – the One who speaks with absolute authority.

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.**

Words of Institution

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my † body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my † blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

541 How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds

CW 541 sts. 5-6



5 How weak the ef - fort of my heart, how
6 Till then I would your love pro - claim with



cold my warm - est thought, but when I see you
ev - 'ry fleet - ing breath; and may the mu - sic



as you are, I'll praise you as I ought!
of your name re - fresh my soul in death.

Distribution

Grace Lutheran Church follows the practice of close communion. This means that all our members are in agreement with the teachings of our church body. We welcome members of our church synod, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod to partake of the Lord's Supper with us today. We respectfully and lovingly ask that other visitors speak with our pastor after the service if there are any questions about this practice.

Song of Simeon



C: Lord, now you let your servant de - part in peace ac-cord-ing
to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have pre-
pared be - fore the face of all people, a light to light - en the
Gen - tiles and the glo - ry of your peo-ple Is - ra - el.

Thanksgiving

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good;
His mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through your Word and in this saving Gift. We pray that through these means you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and † give you peace.

Amen.

924 Abide, O Dearest Jesus

CW 924 sts. 1–4, 6



- 1 A - bide, O dear - est Je - sus, a - mong us with your grace
- 2 A - bide, O dear Re - deem - er, a - mong us with your Word
- 3 A - bide with heav'n-ly bright - ness a - mong us, pre - cious Light;
- 4 A - bide with rich - est bless - ings a - mong us, boun-teous Lord;
- 6 A - bide, O faith - ful Sav - ior, a - mong us with your love;



that Sa - tan may not harm us nor we to sin give place.
and thus now and here - af - ter true peace and joy af - ford.
your truth di - rect and keep us from er - ror's gloom - y night.
let us in grace and wis - dom grow dai - ly through your Word.
grant stead-fast-ness and help us to reach our home a - bove.

Acknowledgments

Setting Two from Christian Worship

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Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and ✝ give you peace.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

February Events

Next Sunday, February 4th – we'll have a Congregational Open Forum after the potluck lunch to fill everyone in on where we are currently / our finances / our plans / our outreach efforts going into 2024.

The following Sunday, February 11th there will be a Voter's Meeting (in place of the Council meeting) and the Ladies of Grace will also meet following worship.

Bible Classes

Please consider participating in one (or more) of our weekly classes – Genesis on Wednesdays at 3:00 pm / Revelation on Thursdays at 6:00 pm. The monthly Parables class on the last Friday of the month (10:30 am at Grace) with the men's and women's lunch out to follow at 11:30 am.

Please note that on February 7-8 both the Genesis and the Revelation classes will be cancelled, because Pastor and Rachel will be travelling to Houston for the Grow Conference which goes from Thursday to Friday (Feb. 8-9).

Mystery Quilt Weekend

Mystery Quilt Weekend is coming up! This year it will be spread over two weekends which means more quilting fun! It will take place on February 9 & 10, and February 16 & 17 at the GMC. Speak with Pam for more information. Bring a friend!

Directory Update

Please check your information in the directory on the table in the fellowship hall. If any changes / updates need to be made, please fill out a post-it note so we can keep the directory correct and up to date. Thank you!

Grow Conference

It's not too late to register for the Grow Conference! (the deadline is January 31) "The GROW Conference exists to bring together WELS lay members, both men and women, teachers, staff ministers, and pastors from across the South Central District to grow together in God's Word and grow in our various roles within the church. Our growth takes place at the conference through keynote speakers, specialized workshops, cross pollination with various WELS areas of ministry and parachurch organizations, and ample fellowship opportunities with one another." Don't miss out on this opportunity unique to our district!! sc.wels.net/grow-home

Upcoming Schedule

Today	9 / 10 am	Bible Class / Worship + Communion
Jan. 31	3:00 pm	Genesis Bible Class
Feb. 1	10:00 am	Mornings with Mommy (GMC)
Feb. 1	6:00 pm	Revelation Bible Class
Feb. 4	9 / 10 am	Bible Class / Worship
Feb. 4	11:00 am	Potluck Lunch
Feb. 4	11:30 am	Congregational Open Forum
Feb. 7-8	all day	Midweek Bible classes cancelled
Feb. 8-9	all day	Grow Conference in Houston
Feb. 9	10am to 5	Mystery Quilt Weekend part 1 a
Feb. 10	9 am to 5	Mystery Quilt Weekend part 1 b
Feb. 11	9 / 10 am	Bible Class / Worship + Communion
Feb. 11	11:00 am	Voter's Meeting (GMC)
Feb. 11	11:00 am	Ladies of Grace (Fellowship hall)
Feb. 14	6:00 pm	<u>Ash Wednesday Communion Service</u>
Feb. 15	10:00 am	Mornings with Mommy (GMC)
Feb. 15	6:00 pm	Revelation Bible Class