



Sunday, February 1, 2026

10:00 a.m.



Pastor Erik Allen

“The ‘Merciful Question’...”

# WE GATHER TO WORSHIP

## Prelude

“Prelude and Fugue in C”

Friedrich Zachow

## Gathering Song

Your People Sing Praises

## Call to Worship

P: Beloved, what worship does God desire of us?

C: **To do justice, love kindness, and live humbly with God.**

P: In our life together as the body of Christ, what worship does God desire of us?

C: **To do justice, love kindness, and live humbly with God.**

P: When we share the good news with all creation, what worship does God desire of us?

C: **To do justice, love kindness, and live humbly with God.**

P: Come, let us worship God with justice, kindness, and humility!

C: **We come to worship God with our voices and our lives. Thanks be to God! Amen**

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

*pass the peace as you feel comfortable*

## Song

Ancient Words

## Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Word who spoke life into being, the Wind stirring the waters.

C: **Amen.**

P: Let us turn in confession to the one who knows us completely.

*Silence is kept for reflection*

P: Mighty God, lover of justice,

C: **you call us to life in community, but we have served our own interests at the expense of our neighbors. We have sown deceit where honesty was needed. We say the right words, but our hearts are far from you. Turn us to seek your face. Knit us together and give us the mind of Christ, that we may do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

**P:** The former things have passed away, and new things God now declares: Like a spring of water that never fails, God covers you in the righteousness of Christ, and forgives your sin in ✠ Jesus' name. May the Spirit give you strength to live for others, and bless you with the gift of peace.

**C: Amen.**

### **Prayer of the Day**

**P:** Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C: Amen.**

*please be seated*

### **Lesson**

I Corinthians 1:18-31

### **Gospel**

Matthew 5:1-12

### **Gospel Response**

**P:** Word of God, Word of life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **Children's Message**

Pastor Erik

### **Sermon**

"The 'Merciful Question'..."

Pastor Erik

### **Hymn**

When the Poor Ones

ELW 725

### **The Apostles' Creed**

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended to the dead.**

**On the third day He rose again.**

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

**He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*please be seated*

## **The Offering**

If you would like, you may give online by scanning the QR code  
or Offering Plates are located at the back of the Sanctuary.  
*(Special Offerings for 1st Sundays are given to World Hunger through ELCA)*



## **Offering Response**

Give Thanks

## **Offertory Prayer**

**P:** God of majesty, no eye has seen, no ear has heard what you have prepared for those who love you, yet in this meal you reveal the wideness of your mercy. Use what we have gathered to feed us with the reign of God come near, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C:** **Amen.**

## **Prayers of the Church** *(the congregation joins in speaking the first names of those for whom we pray.)*

Members: Donna, Bob, Joan, Jeff, Lee, Marion, Kelly, Marj, Vickie

Family & Friends: Charles, Mark, Faizah, Chris, Chuck,  
Sylvia, Bill, Ken, Dana, Marie, Mary, Carol, Susan, Bob

## **Communion**

## **Words of Institution**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**C:** Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours, now and forever. Amen!

## Invitation to Communion

P: Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! Come to the table; taste and see.

C: Amen.

*please be seated.*

## Distribution

*All baptized Christians who seek the blessings of Christ's true body and blood in the bread and wine of Holy Communion are welcome. Those who do not wish to receive may come forward for a blessing. Please let your server know if you desire a gluten-free wafer.*

## Benediction

P: May the triune God, who has put a new song in your mouth and tuned your heart for praise ✠ bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

## Song

Hear the Call of the Kingdom

## Sending

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!

## Postlude

"Give Thanks"

J. Wayne Kerr

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## PRAYER REQUESTS

Members

Kelly Baugh

Lee Bucher

Bob Inskeep

Marion Loyda

Jeff Minich

Donna Otto

Vickie Samspon

Marj Schott

Family & Friends

Bob Bohn, Marcia Duhm, Mary Hall, Carol Happ, Brenda Ingle,  
Charles James, Ken North, Billy Ross, Chuck Sousa, Faizah, Chris, Wendy, Sylvia

## Announcements

### Share the Story! - Assistant Teacher for Gloryland

If you want to share the stories in the Bible to our youngest disciples, we could sure use your help! We are looking for an assistant teacher to help with the K-5 Gloryland class. We would like someone who can help the lead teacher with the week's activity or lesson by passing out supplies, taking part in group discussions, and assisting the kids as needed. We would appreciate your help once or twice a month, on Sundays at 9-9:45 a.m. (The schedule is flexible based on your availability, and you would know the dates ahead of time.) If you are interested in helping out or have any questions, please contact Liz Lichtenberger at [ehv1215@yahoo.com](mailto:ehv1215@yahoo.com). There's really nothing better than being the vessel that ignites the love of Jesus in someone's heart. Step out of your comfort zone and give it a try!!

### Altar Flowers

The Altar Flowers are given by Judie & Warren Buddenbaum in honor of their 65th Wedding Anniversary

### Midweek Lenten Drama Help Needed

We are still looking for volunteers to participate in short midweek Lenten dramas around the theme "Overheard Conversations by the Cross." Each week a couple of characters from the last week of Jesus' life will converse about what they've seen and heard. The parts are scripted and don't need to be memorized. Please let Pastor Erik know of your interest as soon as possible!

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## Weekly Activities

- SUNDAY, February 1  
4:00 pm Girl Scouts  
5:00 pm Catechism/Youth

- MONDAY, February 2  
10:00 am Craft Group  
6:30 pm Chinese Choir  
7:00 pm Aphasia Support

- TUESDAY, February 3  
4:30 pm Lion Dance  
7:00 pm Boy Scouts

- WEDNESDAY, February 4  
8:30 am Men's Bible Study  
9:30 am WOW  
3:00 pm Women's Prayer Group  
6:00 pm Friendship Bible Study  
7:00 pm Choir Practice

- THURSDAY, February 5  
6:15 pm Girl Scouts

- FRIDAY, February 6  
3:00 pm Shower Setup  
7:30 pm Chinese Dance Group

- SATURDAY, February 7  
10:00 am Baby Shower  
5:30 pm Chinese New Year

- SUNDAY, February 8  
9:00 am Christian Ed  
10:00 am Worship  
10:00 am Boy Scout Pancake Breakfast  
5:00 pm Bell Rehearsal  
5:00 pm Catechism/Youth

## WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

### Theme of the Week: The Lord's Call to Repentance

Praise the Lord that God does not give us what we deserve. The wages of sin, after all, is death. Instead, Christ dies for us, so that God may give us life and hope, peace and forgiveness. God delivers us from every evil and calls us to live before God in the kingdom. The Lord is our Shepherd and our Shield, to the point of death all to protect us. God uses divine might not to destroy us, but to keep us, and all of this is done without any merit or worthiness in us. Thanks be to God!

#### SUNDAY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 20:1–16: Undeserved Mercy

“That’s not fair!” Surely this is what the workers who labored through the day were thinking. “It’s not fair that we worked twelve hours, and they worked one, and we are paid the same.” True. It isn’t fair. This is the point Jesus is making. The inheritance that Christ gives to God’s children is not fair. Our salvation is not a fair payment for the work we’ve done. If God were to give us what we deserve, we would not receive the Kingdom. The wages of sin, after all, is death. Salvation is God’s gift, and we receive it purely by the grace of God in Christ. Jesus has borne the heat of the day and done the work for us. O Lord, we thank You that Your eye toward us is good, and that You, in mercy, give us what we could never deserve: eternal life. Amen.

#### MONDAY SCRIPTURE: Psalm 23: The Picture Changes

One of the best questions to ask when reading the Psalms is, “What’s the picture?” Psalm 23 is perhaps the most famous psalm because of the picture it paints. We are the guarded and safe sheep, tasting green grass and drinking cool water. But then, in verse five, the picture changes. Suddenly we are on a battlefield, surrounded by enemies who want to destroy us, yet we are not afraid. There is a table prepared for us to feast, and a cup that overflows. What a picture! With the Lord on our side, we barely notice our enemies. Instead, we rejoice in the overflowing cup of God’s kindness and the feast of God’s loving care. O Good Shepherd, Your goodness and mercy follow us, and we will dwell in Your house forever. Amen.

#### TUESDAY SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 9:24–10:5: The Struck God

“That Rock was Christ!” When we return to Exodus 17:6, we read an astonishing promise. The Lord says, “I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it...” The Lord should be striking the people because of their bitter complaining and unbelief. Instead, God stands on the rock to be struck. Jesus is the Rock that was struck. Jesus is God who was struck—beaten for our iniquity, wounded for our transgressions, nailed to the cross for our sins. From Christ’s side flows the water of God’s grace, the river of the Holy Spirit, sustaining us in the wilderness. O Lord Jesus, from Your side flow rivers of living water. Quench us and satisfy us with Your Spirit. Amen.

#### WEDNESDAY SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 1:4–10: The Building and Planting Word

The Lord puts the word in Jeremiah’s mouth “to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant” (1:10). God’s word does all these things. It breaks and binds. It kills and makes alive. It roots out and it plants. Note the order. We normally think like this: we live and then we die. But with the Lord the order is reversed: we die and then we live. Law first, and then Gospel. Contrition first, and then faith. God’s word shows us

how we truly deserve God's judgment, and then it shows us God's mercy in Christ. This is the rooting and the planting, and we rejoice in it. O Lord God, build and plant us with Your enlivening word, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**THURSDAY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 25:14–30: God as We Expect God**

Here is a puzzling verse from Psalm 18:26: “With the pure You show Yourself pure; and with the crooked You show Yourself perverse.” It's not easy to fully understand this text, but it points to a profound spiritual mystery. If we expect the Lord to be harsh and fierce, we often find God to meet those expectations. If, on the other hand, we expect the Lord to be kind and merciful through Christ, then we find God to be so. The Lord does not change, but faith in Christ not only forgives our sins; it also frees us to expect good gifts from our heavenly Father. Gracious God, we thank You for entrusting us with gifts and talents. Give us Your Holy Spirit, that we may freely spend ourselves in service to others. Amen.

**FRIDAY SCRIPTURE: Acts 17:22–34: The Resurrection Is the Stumbling Block**

Paul, alone in Athens, stands on the Areopagus among the philosophers and proclaims Christ. It seems they are listening until he speaks of the resurrection. “When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, they mocked...” How do we think of our bodies? How do we think of creation itself? The Greeks considered matter base and the body a prison. We know that we are God's good creation. We know that God has become human—dead, buried, and raised. We know that on the last day we will be raised from the dead. This is foolishness to the Greek mind, but the firm hope of all believers. O Lord, we give You thanks that in You we live, now and eternally. Amen.

**SATURDAY SCRIPTURE: Psalm 114: The Hills and the Sea Ran Away**

What a powerful little psalm that recalls the greatness of the Lord in the Exodus. The Lord went before the people, and the hills and the sea fled. “What ails you, O sea, that you fled?” The Lord is fearsome to those who oppose God's purposes and a champion to God's people. If God is marching out to battle, we want to follow behind, not stand in the way. Praise the Lord that Jesus has made us part of God's people, part of God's family. See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God! Lord God, we give You thanks that Your strength is our protection. Amen.