



# Christ Lutheran CHURCH

2610 Campbell Street  
Valparaiso, Indiana 46385  
(219) 462-6660 • [clcvalpo.org](http://clcvalpo.org)



January 4, 2026

## We welcome you to Christ Lutheran Church! We are a community of people sharing God's love through Christ and growing together in faith.

We celebrate all the ways we are made in the image of God, seeking to see God in everyone. We honor and respect each person's age, ethnicity, family composition, gender identity, gender expression, life history, mental well-being, physical ability, relationship status, sexual orientation, skin color, and socioeconomic standing. Together, we strive to love and serve our neighbor and all creation, including working toward racial and social justice. We would love to walk with you on this creative adventure\* of faith, grace, and love.

\* *The first sermon ever preached at Christ Lutheran was titled "A Call to Creative Adventure."*

### **ABOUT WORSHIP**

We gather to worship weekly to hear and remember our shared hope: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ makes all things new, even us.

You will find everything that happens in worship printed in this bulletin, with hymns found in the red hymnals ("ELW") in the seats in front of you.

If you have a prayer request, note it on a yellow card from the seatback holder and pass it to an usher; the other side is for any information you would like about Christ Lutheran. Please feel welcome to remain seated as necessary during the service.

### **CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN CHURCH!**

God's people come in all shapes and sizes – it is a gift to the whole community when the smallest of us are present! Sitting with parents and learning to treasure times of worship is the foundation for helping build a growing faith in a child's life. There's some noise and movement that we expect from little ones - feel free to make use of the **activity bags, doodle pads, bookshelf in the overflow area and cry room at the back of the sanctuary** as needed. Whatever sacrifice of energy and effort you make to include your children in worship is multiplied as the good news of God's love takes root in their lives!

### **WHEN NURSERY CARE IS NEEDED DURING WORSHIP**

A fully equipped and staffed Nursery is available for both infants and toddlers during all services. The Nursery is located west of our gathering area in **Room 110**.

### **RESTROOMS**

Men's and women's restrooms off the Gathering Area and Church Hall have changing tables, as does the all-gender restroom near the nursery. A second all-gender restroom is through the Vestry off the East hallway, past the Welcome Center.

### **HOLY COMMUNION**

**Holy Communion** is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

Our services are on video, and occasional photographs are taken for our website and e-mail news. If you have concerns, please speak to a church staff member.

*Hearing assistance devices are available to those who need help with listening to the service and are located at the entrance to the sanctuary, or please see an Usher for assistance.*

**A Reminder: Please turn off all cell phones during worship services.**

*The feast of Epiphany (“manifestation”) concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God’s glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God’s love to all people.*

## **GATHERING**

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God*

**PRELUDE**

*Noël of the Magi*

Balbastre

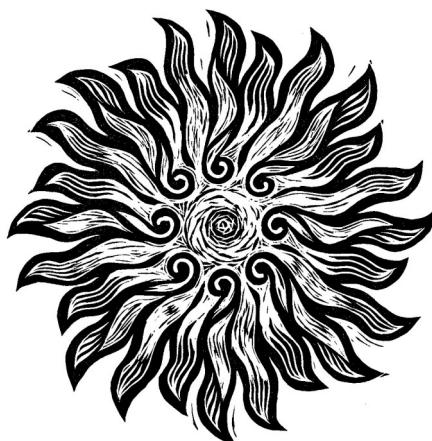
## **WELCOME**

*If you are joining us for the first time, welcome! We’d love to meet you, or if there’s anything you’d like to know about the ministry of Christ Lutheran Church, please consider filling out a Connection Card online (you can point your phone at the graphic to the right) or using a yellow Connection Card in the pew holders.*



**Prayer requests** can be posted to the live chat or use a yellow Prayer Request (on the backside of the Connection Card) and give them to an usher.

*If you are worshipping with us via livestream, consider **preparing your space for Communion**: light a candle (if appropriate and safe), and have a plate with bread/ cracker/tortilla and a cup for wine or grape juice (or an empty cup as a sign Jesus is sufficient in one or both elements).*



## GATHERING HYMN ELW #302

*As with Gladness Men of Old*

1 As with glad - ness men of old did the guid-ing star be - hold;  
 2 As with joy - ful steps they sped, Sav - ior, to thy low - ly bed,  
 3 As they of - fered gifts most rare at thy cra - dle, rude and bare,  
 4 Ho - ly Je - sus, ev - 'ry day keep us in the nar - row way;  
 5 In the heav'n-ly coun - try bright need they no cre - a - ted light;

as with joy they hailed its light, lead - ing on - ward, beam-ing bright;  
 there to bend the knee be - fore thee, whom heav'n and earth a - dore;  
 so may we with ho - ly joy, pure and free from sin's al - loy;  
 and when earth-ly things are past, bring our ran - somed souls at last  
 thou its light, its joy, its crown, thou its sun which goes not down;

so, most gra - cious Lord, may we ev - er - more be led by thee.  
 so may we with will - ing feet ev - er seek thy mer - cy seat.  
 all our cost-liest trea - sures bring, Christ, to thee, our heav'n-ly king.  
 where they need no star to guide, where no clouds thy glo - ry hide.  
 there for - ev - er may we sing al - le - lu - ias to our king.

## **GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
**And also with you.**

*Children: This is the day that the Lord has made.  
Let us rejoice and be glad in it!*

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

Shepherd of Israel  
and Light of all Nations,  
made known in the gifts  
of those who call to other names  
and walk on different ways:  
may unjust powers  
and the hatred within us  
be dismayed by your friendship  
and dethroned by your love;  
through Jesus Christ, the open arms of grace.  
**Amen.**

## **WORD**

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.*

## **CHILDREN'S TIME**

*The assembly is seated at children are invited for a time together.*

## **READING: Isaiah 60:1-6**

*Jerusalem is assured that nations will make a pilgrimage to her because the light of God's presence is in her midst. The bountiful food of the sea and the profits of international trade will come streaming to Jerusalem and thereby declare God's praise.*

<sup>1</sup> Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

<sup>2</sup> For darkness shall cover the earth  
and thick darkness the peoples,  
but the LORD will arise upon you,  
and his glory will appear over you.

<sup>3</sup> Nations shall come to your light  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

<sup>4</sup> Lift up your eyes and look around;  
they all gather together; they come to you;  
your sons shall come from far away,  
and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms.  
<sup>5</sup> Then you shall see and be radiant;  
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,  
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you;  
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.  
<sup>6</sup> A multitude of camels shall cover you,  
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
all those from Sheba shall come.  
They shall bring gold and frankincense  
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

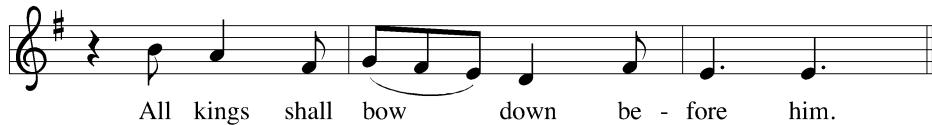
The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### PSALM: Psalm 72:1–7, 10–14

*The congregation is invited to sing the psalm refrain when indicated (R). Verses will be chanted alternately by the leader and the people.*

#### Refrain



All kings shall bow down before him.

#### Psalm Tone



Give the king your justice, O God,  
and your righteousness to the king's son;  
<sup>2</sup>that he may rule your people righteously  
and the poor with justice;  
<sup>3</sup>that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,  
and the hills, in righteousness.

<sup>4</sup>**Let him defend the needy a- mong the people,  
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor. R**

<sup>5</sup>May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,  
from one generation to another.

**6Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,  
like showers that wa- ter the earth.**

<sup>7</sup>In his time may the righteous flourish;  
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.

**10 May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles pay tribute,  
and the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. R**

<sup>11</sup>May all kings bow down before him,  
and all the nations do him service.

**12 For the king delivers the poor who cry out in distress,  
the oppressed, and those who have no helper.**

<sup>13</sup>He has compassion on the low- ly and poor,  
and preserves the lives of the needy.

**14 From oppression and violence he re- deems their lives,  
and precious is their blood in his sight. R**

## **READING: Ephesians 3:1-12**

*What had been hidden from previous generations is now made known through the gospel ministry of Paul and others. In Christ both Jews and Gentiles participate in the richness of God's promised salvation.*

<sup>1</sup> This is the reason that I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you gentiles,  
<sup>2</sup> for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me  
for you <sup>3</sup> and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in  
a few words, <sup>4</sup> a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the  
mystery of Christ. <sup>5</sup> In former generations this mystery was not made known to  
humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: <sup>6</sup>  
that is, the gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in  
the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

<sup>7</sup> Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was  
given me by the working of his power. <sup>8</sup> Although I am the very least of all the saints, this  
grace was given to me to bring to the gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ <sup>9</sup>  
and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who  
created all things, <sup>10</sup> so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety  
might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. <sup>11</sup> This  
was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our  
Lord, <sup>12</sup> in whom we have access in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*The assembly stands to welcome the Gospel.*

C Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?  
You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al- le- lu - ia.

## GOSPEL: Matthew 2:1-12

*God's promise shines bright in the night as magi follow a star to honor a new king. Strangers from a faraway land, they welcome the long-awaited messiah of Israel.*

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.” <sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, <sup>4</sup> and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” <sup>9</sup> When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup> On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

*The assembly is seated. Time for reflection follows the sermon.*

## HYMN OF THE DAY ELW #303

*Brightest and Best of the Stars*

*The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.*

1 Bright-est and best of the stars of the morn - ing,  
2 Cold on his cra - dle the dew - drops are shin - ing;  
3 What shall we give him, in cost - ly de - vo - tion?  
4 Vain - ly we of - fer each am - ple ob - la - tion,  
5 Bright-est and best of the stars of the morn - ing,

dawn on our dark - ness and lend us your aid.  
low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;  
Shall we bring in - cense and of - f'rings di - vine,  
vain - ly with gifts would his fa - vor se - cure;  
dawn on our dark - ness and lend us your aid.

8

Star of the east, the ho - ri - zon a - don - ing,  
an - gels a - dore him in slum - ber re - clin - ing,  
gems of the moun - tain and pearls of the o - cean,  
rich - er by far is the heart's ad - o - ra - tion,  
Star of the east, the ho - ri - zon a - don - ing,

guide where our in - fant re - deem - er is laid.  
mak - er and mon - arch and sav - ior of all.  
myrrh from the for - est or gold from the mine?  
dear - er to God are the prayers of the poor.  
guide where our in - fant re - deem - er is laid.

## 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 with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic 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

## PRAYERS

*Our prayers draw on the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle and the Church's calendar of Commemorations. Further information is found each week at the end of the bulletin.*  
Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

Repairer of the breach, you separate us from our sin and unite us with one another. Heal the animosity in our hearts, and bind us together in love. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Author of life, you sent your spirit over the waters, your breath into your children, and guiding stars across the sky. Awaken us to the plight of the planet and send us to care for your creation. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Light that leads the way, you make yourself known to the nations. Illuminate just paths and guide leaders in the church and the world in your holy will. Bless the lands and people of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine; open the hearts and minds of leaders to new ways forward, and empower the witness of churches, especially the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Voice of the silenced, you cast the mighty from their thrones and fill the hungry with good things. Grant those in need the courage to demand equality and those with abundance the wisdom to share. Respond to any who call out in need this day.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Proclaimer of promises, you raise up prophets and messengers in the places we least expect. Equip us to listen well to those who bring both good news and painful truths. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Redeemer of the saints, you gift us with many people throughout our lives who point the way to you. We give you thanks for the recently departed and all who have loved us. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**

## SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*We invite those worshiping by livestream to share a sign of peace in the live chat, and for those in person we turn to offer them our greeting of peace before sharing a sign of peace with one another: **Peace be with you!***

## MEAL

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ*

### **OFFERING**

*This congregation serves our neighbors, community, and the world through the participation and support of its members and guests. Because offerings are never just about us, this month we are sharing a portion of your gifts 1) First Contact Porter County [facebook.com/firstcontactportercounty](https://facebook.com/firstcontactportercounty) and 2) the Christ Lutheran Mike Steiner Benevolence Fund.*

*If you wish to give electronically, use the QR code, browse to our secure on-line portal at [clcvalpo.org/give](https://clcvalpo.org/give) or use our CLC app (download at [clcvalpo.org/app](https://clcvalpo.org/app)).*

### **OFFERTORY**

*Noel Étranger*

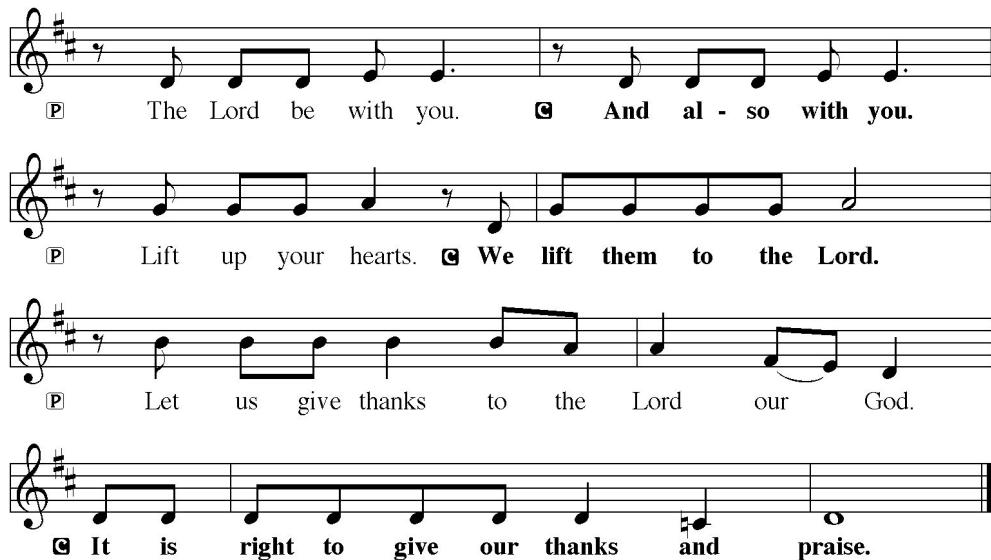
D'Aquin

### **PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS**

*The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.*

Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, fill to the brim our  
cup of bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown,  
that we may be fed, we may be fed with the bread of life.  
Gath-er the hopes and the dreams of all; u-nite them with the  
prayers we of-fer now. Grace our ta-ble with your pres-ence,  
and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

## GREAT THANKSGIVING



The Lord be with you. And also with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

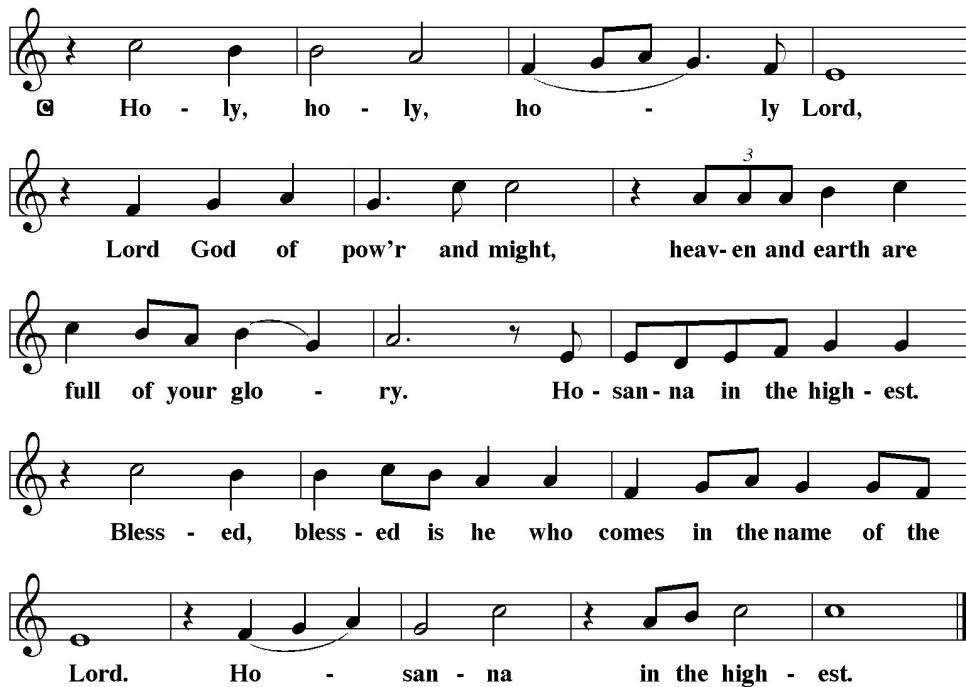
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*The pastor continues the prayer then all join in singing:*

### SANCTUS

*(An ancient practice invites us to make the sign of the cross in honor of Jesus at the words "Blessed is he.")*



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord,

Lord God of pow'r and might, <sup>3</sup>heav-en and earth are

full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless - ed, bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the

Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

## TABLE PRAYER

### LORD'S PRAYER

*Children: The Spirit makes us one. We pray as Jesus taught us:*

**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

God is now in flesh appearing.

Come to the feast of joy!

**Thanks be to God!**

## DISTRIBUTION

*The assembly is seated. The pastor invites those worshipping via **livestream** to commune:*

The body of Christ, given for you.

**Amen (receive the bread)**

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

**Amen (receive the cup)**

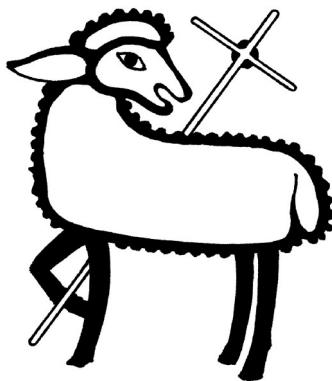
**In-person distribution:** When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. **WINE** is lighter-colored and **GRAPE JUICE** is dark; wine is received either by Common Cup or from individual cups in the trays. **USED GLASSES** are placed in the basket located near the ramp. **GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE**, please indicate to the server that you require this.

## LAMB OF GOD

C Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;  
have mer-cy on us, have mer-cy on us, have mer - cy.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;  
have mer-cy on us, have mer-cy on us, have mer - cy.

Lamb of God, you take a- way the sin of the world; grant us peace.



## COMMUNION HYMNS

ELW #301

*Brightest and Glorious Is the Sky*



1 Bright and glo - rious is the sky, ra - diant are the  
 2 On that ho - ly Christ - mas night through the dark - ness  
 3 Sa - ges from the east a - far, when they saw this  
 4 Him they found in Beth - le - hem, yet he wore no



heav - ens high where the gold - en stars are shin - ing.  
 beamed a light; all the stars a - bove were pal - ing,  
 won - drous star, went to find the king of na - tions  
 di - a - dem; there they saw a maid - en low - ly



All their rays to earth in - clin - ing beck - on us to  
 all their lus - ter slow - ly fail - ing as the won - drous  
 and to of - fer their ob - la - tions to the child, the  
 with an in - fant pure and ho - ly rest - ing in her



heav'n a - bove, beck - on us to heav'n a - bove.  
 star drew nigh, as the won - drous star drew nigh.  
 new - born king, to the child, the new - born king.  
 lov - ing arms, rest - ing in her lov - ing arms.

5 Guided by the star, they found  
 him whose praise the ages sound.  
 We too have a star to guide us,  
 which forever will provide us  
 with the light to find our Lord,  
 with the light to find our Lord.

6 And this star, as bright as day,  
 that will never lead astray  
 with its message so appealing,  
 is the word of God, revealing  
 Christ, the way, the truth, the life,  
 Christ, the way, the truth, the life.

ELW # 815

## *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light*

1 I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to  
 2 I want to see . . . the bright-ness of God. I want to  
 3 I'm look - ing for . . . the com - ing of Christ. I want to

fol - low Je - sus. God set the stars to give  
 look at Je - sus. Clear Sun of righ - teous-ness,  
 be with Je - sus. When we have run . . . with

light to the world. The star of my life is Je - sus.  
 shine on my path, and show me the way to the Fa - ther.  
 pa - tience the race, we shall know the joy of Je - sus.

*Refrain*

In him there is no dark-ness at all. The night and the

day are both a - like. The Lamb is the light of the

cit - y of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands as the minister continues.

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.  
**Amen.**

**POST COMMUNION CANTICLE    ELW #200            *Now Lord***

Now, Lord, you let your ser - vant go in  
peace: your word has been ful - filled. My  
own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which you have pre -  
pared in the sight of all peo-ple: a light to re -  
veal you to the na-tions and the glo - ry of your  
peo-ple Is - ra - el. Glo - ry to the Fa - ther,  
and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Spir - it,  
as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and  
will be for - ev - er. A - men.

## **SENDING**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world*

### **INVITATIONS**

*The assembly is seated as brief invitations are shared, especially those related to the assembly's participation in God's mission in the world.*

### **BLESSING**

The triune God,  
glorious Mystery,  
holy Incarnate One,  
abiding Comforter,  
☩ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.

**Amen.**

### **SENDING HYMN ELW #314      *Arise, Your Light Has Come!***



1 A - rise, your light has come! The Spir - it's call o - bey;  
2 A - rise, your light has come! Fling wide the pris - on door;  
3 A - rise, your light has come! All you in sor - row born,  
4 A - rise, your light has come! The moun - tains burst in song!



show forth the glo - ry of your God which shines on you to - day.  
pro - claim the cap - tive's lib - er - ty, good tid - ings to the poor.  
bind up the bro - ken - heart-ed ones and com - fort those who mourn.  
Rise up like ea - gles on the wing, God's pow'r will make us strong.

*Children join the pastors to send us in mission.*

### **DISMISSAL**

*Children: Glory to God in the highest!  
And peace to God's people on earth!  
Thanks be to God!*

### **POSTLUDE**

*Joy to the World*

Heldt

*As worship concludes we move to the Gathering Place, where we are invited to greet one another and share in fellowship.*

<b>Worship Leaders</b>	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte		Caleb Burnside
Lector	Ruthie Ridley	Doug Schmidt
Prayer Assistant	Kathy Sutherland	Denise Maragos
Communion Assistants	Bob Luckett Betty Luckett	Phil Hahn
Ushers	Luke Venstrom Don MacMillan	
Sound/Light		Tony Reinhold
Video/Livestream	—————	
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartush	
Cantor	Lisa Jennings	
Communion Baker	Candace Jacques	

## **Ecumenical Prayer Cycle**

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine**.

We are thankful for:

- lands and monuments sacred in the origins of Judaism, Christianity and Islam
- those who unceasingly work for peace and reconciliation in the Holy Land
- the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel
- those who continue to welcome the multitudes of refugees in their lands.

We pray for:

- ending the violence racking this region, that the people might live together in peace, security and respect for each other
- those who have grown weary and disillusioned in searching for solutions
- an end to religious differences being exploited to perpetuate conflict and further displacement of people
- political leaders who will courageously bring about justice and reconciliation for the sake of all.





## In This Kind of Time

Make no mistake: The world with the guiding star from the east, where covert seekers of signs traveled by night vision, desperate to find a child king, was not a mockup for mantelpiece arrangements swaddled in soft light; not a trio of characters auditioning for some future, twinkling-light Christmas pageant or a living-nativity reenactment. That world was a troubled world, a desperate world, an unfair and brutal world, where wealth bought power, and where ruthlessness and fear danced a deadly tango. It was a world under empire; a world choked by Herod; a world of injustice and occupation, threats and massacre, of fragile hope and cementing anger.

In such a world, during such a time, came some traveling souls. Seeking. Searching. Pursuing. Risking. Wanting. Needing. Offering. Bravely daring a heavenly light to fail them. “We have come to pay him homage,” they confessed. Homage to one who was destined to be shepherd among the lowly, voice for the muted, provider for the hungry, mender for the worn-out, embrace for the dejected, but loser in the eyes of the empire. In other words, these travelers were defying the empire of greatness, denying its lies, and challenging its supremacy. They followed that strident light to offer gifts and to offer themselves, among lowliness.

In secret, the weight of empire wobbles. Herod plots. The powers conspire. A king is frightened.

In such a time . . . Epiphany happens! This awakening breaks forth—this fulgent way of seeing, this vision of God’s direction in the now and the here; in this world, in yours, in theirs; in those circumstances and ours—a startling, unremitting shaft, or a motioning illumination, to beckon God’s beloved people, God’s treasured creation, out of darkness by another road.

Epiphany, in this kind of time.

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