



**Christ
Lutheran**
CHURCH

2610 Campbell Street • Valparaiso,
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clcvalpo.org • office@clcvalpo.org



January 21, 2024

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 on 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.

As we continue through the time after Epiphany, stories of the call to discipleship show us the implications of our baptismal calling to show Christ to the world. Jesus begins proclaiming the good news and calling people to repentance right after John the Baptist is arrested for preaching in a similar way. Knowing that John was later executed, we see at the very outset the cost of discipleship. Still, the two sets of brothers leave everything they have known and worked for all their lives to follow Jesus and fish for people.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Song Without Words

Bonnet

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 livechat 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).*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
creator of darkness and light,
word of truth,
wind sweeping over the waters.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.
Silence is kept for reflection.

God, our rock and refuge,
we pour out our hearts before you.
We have known you but have not always loved you.
We have wounded one another
and sinned against you.
We have not always recognized the Holy Spirit
dwelling in each of us.
Remember your covenant.
Renew your creation.
Restore us,
that we might proclaim your good news to all.
Amen.

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters.
 God has spoken:
 The time of grace is now.
 In Jesus, the reign of God has come near.
 By the authority of † Jesus Christ,
 your sins are forgiven.
 You are God's beloved.
Amen.

GATHERING HYMN ELW #675

O Christ, Our Light, O Radiance True



1 O Christ, our light, O Ra - diance true, shine forth on
 2 Fill with the ra - diance of your grace the wan - d'ers
 3 Lord, o - pen all re - luc - tant ears and take a -
 4 Lord, let your mer - cy's gen - tle ray shine down on
 5 Make theirs with ours a sin - gle voice up - lift - ed,



those es - tranged from you, and bring them to your home a -
 lost in er - ror's maze. Set free all those whose hearts and
 way the need - less fears of those who trem - ble to ex -
 oth - ers strayed a - way. To those in con - science wound - ed
 ev - er to re - joice with wond - 'ring grat - i - tude and



gain, where their de - light shall nev - er end.
 minds some deep de - lu - sion haunts and binds.
 press the faith their in - most hearts con - fess.
 sore show heav - en's wait - ing, o - pen door.
 praise to you, O Lord, for bound - less grace.

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!

HYMN OF PRAISE



Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace



to God's peo-ple on earth. Glo-ry to God in the



high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



1 Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al - mighty God and Fa-ther,



we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace



to God's peo-ple on earth. Glo-ry to God in the



high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



2 Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God,



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world:



have mer - cy on us; you are seat - ed at the right



hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.

Refrain



Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace



to God's peo-ple on earth. Glo-ry to God in the



high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



3 For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord, you a -



lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly



Spir - it, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther.

Final refrain



Glo - ry to God in the high - est.



A - men, a - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Lord of time fulfilled,
who was not born an angel
but walked the common earth:
with those you called by the lakeside
may we share your mission
to bring good news to all,
to let the world know
that God is among us:
through Jesus Christ, the one who reigns.

Amen.

WORD

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

CHILDREN'S TIME

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

SPECIAL MUSIC:

Journey of the Heart

Alexander

READING: Jonah 3:1-5, 10

The book of Jonah is a comedy starring a reluctant prophet who is given a one-sentence message: Nineveh will be destroyed in forty days. Much to Jonah's dismay, the people of Nineveh repent. The point of the story is to get the reader to wrestle with the question "On whom should God have mercy?"

¹The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying, ²"Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." ³So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. ⁴Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" ⁵And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

¹⁰When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 62:5–12

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

Refrain



Psalm Tone



⁵For God alone I | wait in silence;
truly, my hope | is in God.

⁶**God alone is my rock and | my salvation,
my stronghold, so that I shall nev- | er be shaken.**

⁷In God is my deliverance | and my honor;
God is my strong rock | and my refuge.

⁸**Put your trust in God al- | ways, O people,
pour out your hearts before the one who | is our refuge. R**

⁹Those of high degree are but a fleeting breath;
those of low estate can- | not be trusted.

Placed on the scales together they weigh even less | than a breath.

¹⁰**Put no trust in extortion; in robbery take no | empty pride;
though wealth increase, set not your | heart upon it.**

¹¹God has spoken once, twice | have I heard it,
that power be- | longs to God.

¹²**Steadfast love belongs to | you, O Lord,
for you repay all according | to their deeds. R**

READING: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Paul does not disapprove of marriage or other human social institutions. He does, however, want Christians to live in the present in fervent anticipation of God's future, which even now has dawned through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

²⁹Brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, ³⁰and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, ³¹and those who deal with the world as

though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the Gospel.



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

HOLY GOSPEL: Mark 1:14-20

Before Jesus calls his first disciples, he proclaims a message that becomes known as “the gospel” or good news from God. God is ready to rule our lives. Those who realize this will respond with repentance and faith.

The Holy Gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God,
¹⁵and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

¹⁶As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁷And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” ¹⁸And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

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

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



1 Faith be - gins by let - ting go, giv - ing up what had seemed sure,
 2 Faith en - dures by hold - ing on, keep - ing mem - 'ry's roots a - live
 3 Faith ma - tures by reach - ing out, stretch - ing minds, en - larg - ing hearts,



tak - ing risks and press - ing on, though the way feels less se - cure:
 so that hope may bear its fruit; prom - ise - fed, our souls will thrive,
 shar - ing strug - gles, liv - ing prayer, bind - ing up the bro - ken parts;



pil - grim - age both right and odd, trust - ing all our life to God.
 not through mer - it we pos - sess but by God's great faith - ful - ness.
 till we find the com - mon - place ripe with wit - ness to God's grace.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

Music: RATISBON, J. G. Werner, *Choralbuch*, 1815

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APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
 creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the virgin Mary,
 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,
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
 and he will come 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.

*Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.

PRAYERS

As we celebrate Christ embodied in human form, we pray for God's blessing on the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

God our rock and deliverance, do not let your church be shaken; grant unity to the church throughout the world. We trust you never abandon your promises to the most vulnerable among us. Give your church wisdom and empathy in its varied ministries. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

God our hope and refuge, you placed the fish in the sea. Guide our care of oceans and all creatures that live in them. Hold us accountable for actions that endanger water sources and the people who depend on them. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

God who proclaims judgement and offers mercy, be a model to the leaders of our nation and the world. As they lead, may they follow in your way of justice and truth. In Cypress, Greece, and Turkey, bless the witness of churches and the efforts of all who work for justice, good government, and the welfare of all. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

God who cares for the suffering, care for survivors of assault and sexual abuse and sustain all who minister to them *as the martyr, Agnes, ministered to victims of abuse*. Keep safe any who live under threat of violence, those living in poverty, and any among us who are ill or in pain. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

God of resurrection and new life, as the first disciples shared the good news, empower us and this faith community to be open to your call. When we are uncertain of your call, assure us. When we have strayed from your ways, redirect us. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God who holds the saints against your tender bosom, we trust you welcome them into your care. Comfort those who grieve. As you taught Timothy, Titus, Silas, Lydia, Dorcas, and Phoebe, teach us to live in the hope of your salvation. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we offer these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We invite those worshipping by livestream to share a sign of peace in the 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 with 1) First Contact Porter County facebook.com/firstcontactportercounty and 2) the Christ Lutheran Mike Steiner Benevolence Fund.

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



OFFERTORY (8:00 am):

Allegro

Carvalho

OFFERTORY ANTHEM (10:30 am): *Glory to the King of Kings*

Thompson

Glory be to God the Father, glory be to God the Son; glory be to God the Spirit, great Jehovah, Three in One! Gloria! While eternal ages run. Glory be to him who loved us, washed us from each spot and stain! Glory be to him who bought us, made us kings with him to reign. Glory to the King of angels, glory to the church's King! Glory to the King of nations! Heaven and earth your praises ring! Gloria! Gloria in excelsis! Glory, blessing, praise eternal! Thus the choir of angels sing; Honor, riches, power, dominion! Thus its praise creation brings! Gloria! Glory to the King of Kings!

OFFERTORY PRAYER

The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

Blessed are you, Holy One,
for all good things come from you.
In bread and cup you open heaven to us.
Meet us at this table,
that we receive what we seek
and follow your Son, Jesus,
in whose name we pray.
Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

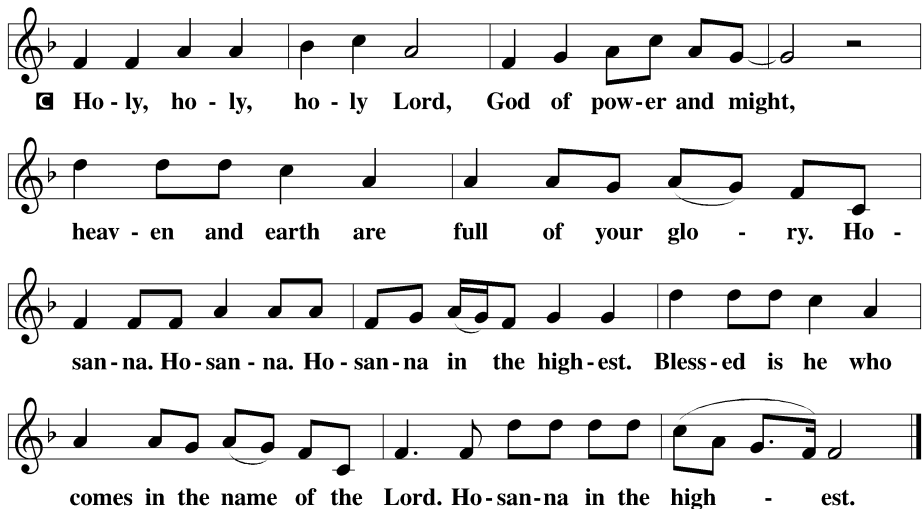
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

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, God of pow-er and might,
heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san-na. Ho-san - na. Ho - san-na in the high-est. 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, 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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

At Jesus' table, heaven and earth are joined as one.

Come and see.

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; they are received via 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

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

COMMUNION HYMNS: ELW #580

How Clear is Our Vocation, Lord



1 How clear is our vo - ca - tion, Lord, when once we heed your call
 2 But if, for - get - ful, we should find your yoke is hard to bear;
 3 We mar - vel how your saints be - come in hin - dranc - es more sure;
 4 In what you give us, Lord, to do, to - geth - er or a - lone,



to live ac - cord - ing to your word and dai - ly learn, re - freshed, re - stored,
 if world - ly pres - sures fray the mind and love it - self can - not un - wind
 whose joy - ful vir - tues put to shame the ca - sual way we wear your name,
 in old rou - tines or ven - tures new, may we not cease to look to you,



that you are Lord of all and will not let us fall.
 its tan - gled skein of care: our in - ward life re - pair.
 and by our faults ob - scure your pow'r to cleanse and cure.
 the cross you hung up - on, all you en - deav - ored done.

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000

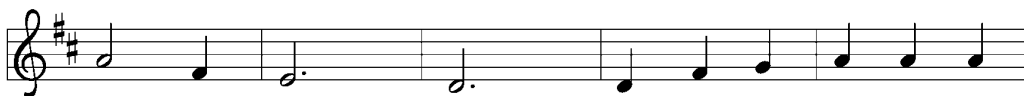
Music: REPTON, C. Hubert H. Parry, 1848–1918

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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.

Text: Kathleen Thomerson, b. 1934
 Music: HOUSTON, Kathleen Thomerson
 Text and music © 1970, 1975 Celebration

When all have returned to their places, the assembly stands.

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

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Giver of every gift,

Christ's body is our food, and we are Christ's body.

Raise us to life by your power

for the benefit of all and to your glory,

now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

INVITATIONS

Brief invitations are shared, especially those related to the assembly's participation in God's mission in the world.

BLESSING

God who names you,

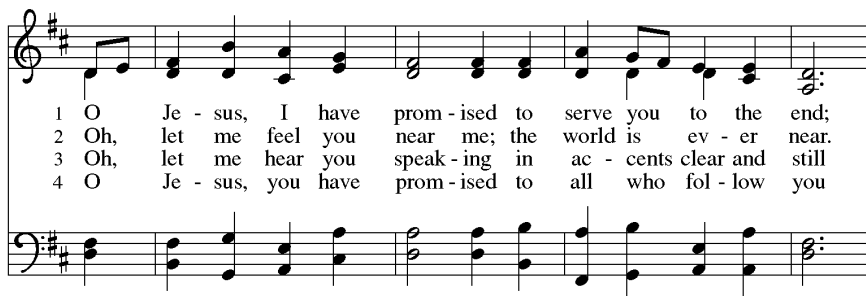
Christ who claims you,

and the Holy Spirit who dwells in you,

✠ bless you and remain with you always.

Amen.

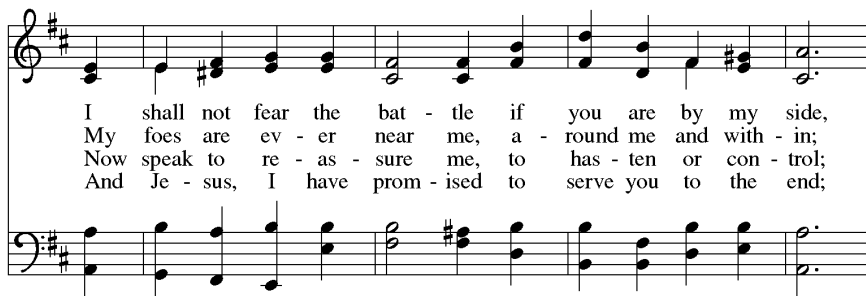
SENDING HYMN ELW #810

O Jesus, I Have Promised


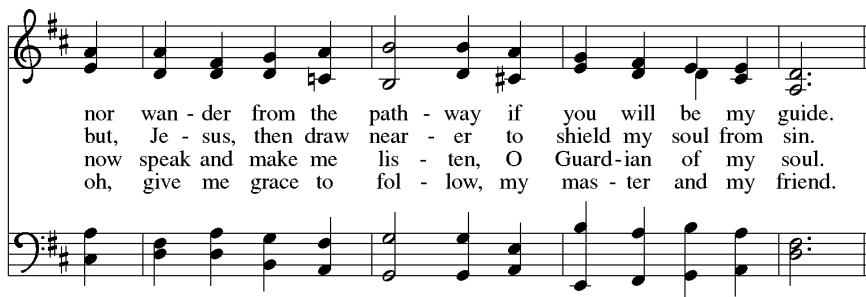
1 O Je - sus, I have prom - ised to serve you to the end;
 2 Oh, let me feel you near me; the world is ev - er near.
 3 Oh, let me hear you speak - ing in ac - cents clear and still
 4 O Je - sus, you have prom - ised to all who fol - low you



re - main for - ev - er near me, my mas - ter and my friend.
 I see the sights that daz - zle, the tempt - ing sounds I hear.
 a - bove the storms of pas - sion, the mur - murs of self - will.
 that where you are in glo - ry your ser - vant shall be too.



I shall not fear the bat - tle if you are by my side,
 My foes are ev - er near me, a - round me and with - in;
 Now speak to re - as - sure me, to has - ten or con - trol;
 And Je - sus, I have prom - ised to serve you to the end;



nor wan - der from the path - way if you will be my guide.
 but, Je - sus, then draw near - er to shield my soul from sin.
 now speak and make me lis - ten, O Guard - ian of my soul.
 oh, give me grace to fol - low, my mas - ter and my friend.

Text: John E. Bode, 1816-1874, alt.

Music: MUNICH, *Neuvermehrtes Gesangbuch*, Meiningen, 1693*Children join the pastors to send us in mission*

DISMISSAL

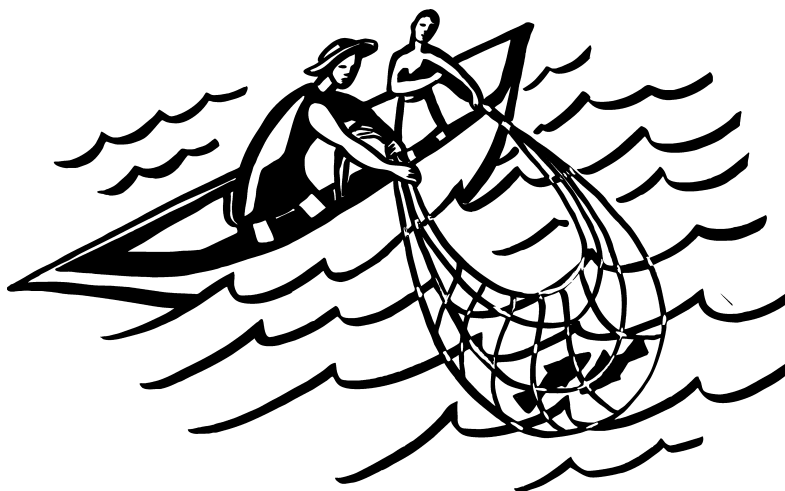
Children: Go in peace. God loves you.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Herr Christ, der Einge Gottes-Sohn

J.S. Bach





Worship Leaders

	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte	Olivia Hernandez	Lynx Vittitoe
Lector	John Buggeln	Phil Hahn
Prayer Assistant	Kathy Sutherland	Phil Hahn
Communion Assistants	Erin Schmidgall Chris Schmidgall	Phil Hahn Jacquie Chevalier
Ushers	Luke Venstrom Irene Adams	Bill Iltzsche
Sound/Light	Zach Wehner	Jeff Peiffer
Video/Livestream	-----	Tony Reinhold
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	
Worship Participant	Sanctuary Choir Isabel Ecklund-Baker, piano	

COMMEMORATIONS

Week of January 21, 2024

January 21

Agnes, martyr, died around 304

Agnes was a girl of about thirteen living in Rome. The details of her martyrdom are not clear, but she gave witness to her faith and was put to death as a result, most likely by the sword. The church has honored her as one of the chief martyrs of her time.

January 25

Conversion of Paul

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Ends

The week of prayer begun by the remembrance of Peter's confession now comes to an end as we recall the pivotal moment in the life of the other pillar of the early church, the apostle Paul. His encounter with the risen Christ turned him from persecutor of the followers of Christ to one of their leaders.

January 26

Timothy, Titus, and Silas, missionaries

These three early Christian men were missionary companions of the apostle Paul. Timothy became bishop of Ephesus, Titus bishop of Crete, and Silas was imprisoned with Paul at Philippi until they were delivered by an earthquake.

January 27

Lydia, Dorcas, and Phoebe, witnesses to the faith

Women as well as men were important Christian leaders from the beginning, as demonstrated by these coworkers of the apostle Paul. Lydia, a seller of purple goods, lent her home for a church; Dorcas was known for charitable works; and Phoebe was a deacon in the church at Cenchrae.

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Cyprus, Greece, Türkiye.**

We are **thankful** for:

- the 2,000-year presence and witness of the church in Asia Minor (now Türkiye, Cyprus, and Greece) – the region in which St Paul and other apostles first planted the seeds of the Christian faith – and for how Greek culture influenced the early church
- the Church Fathers who came from this area, along with many men and women who were Christian martyrs, and where seven ecumenical councils were convened
- the pioneering work of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in quest of Christian unity and for protection of the environment
those who have reached out to assist people who have fled to, and through, these lands

We **pray** for:

- the healing of memories and wounds inflicted by early 20th century genocides of Armenian, Greek, and Assyrian communities, and for current tensions in these lands
- enhanced respect for all minority groups and their claims,
- those who work for justice and reconciliation
- the people who struggle because of economic and political crises in these countries
more stable democratic governments that further the good of all

Stewardship Snippet

And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” – Mark 1:17

Are you ready for a new kind of wellness routine in 2021? Jesus calls all of us to follow him and become fishers of people. As we cultivate and care for relationships, we focus on bringing people (and ourselves) More deeply in the faith!

Each Call Unique

Aside from the proclamation that “the kingdom of God has come near,” Mark records no introduction on Jesus’ part about who he is or what he is about. He simply invites people, “Follow me.” Simon and Andrew, James and John make it look so easy: they just follow—no questions asked! If this is what true discipleship looks like, how can we ever measure up? But that’s not the point.

Jesus calls people in countless ways. Even these four fishers were likely not all moved by the same things. Perhaps Simon was frustrated by Roman dominance over his country, and the news of a new kingdom caught his ear; maybe Andrew was itching to do something different and inspiring. Did James and John sense a call other than inheriting their father’s business? Jesus would go on to invite dozens of others to join him—surely each discerning the call in a unique way. Their responses were also likely not as fast and easy as it appears from the outside. The four fishers might have been wrestling with matters of spirituality for months before Jesus showed up. Others who joined Jesus may have long prayed for solutions to injustice in society. The Gospel of Mark gives a summary, a tightened-up version, of Jesus’ earthly ministry. Many details are lost to time; others were only ever known by an individual and the one they came to call Messiah.

What we learn from these brief call narratives—and others in scripture—is that God reaches out in as many ways as there are people. God may get your attention in worship on a Sunday morning, at your work on a weekday, or in the night as you comfort a child in your care. Or—one never knows—God might just call from the shore when you are out in a fishing boat. Jesus’ “Follow me” might lead you somewhere you’ve never been, maybe away from friends and family and the career you planned. Or his invitation might nudge you right back home, taking up familiar routines in a new way, seeing loved ones with fresh vision.

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