



**Christ
Lutheran**
CHURCH

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January 14, 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.

All the baptized have a calling in God's world. God calls not just pastors and deacons but also the youngest child, like Samuel. The story of the calling of Nathanael plays with the idea of place. Nathanael initially dismisses Jesus because he comes from Nazareth. But where we come from isn't important; it's where—or rather whom—we come to. Jesus refers to Jacob, who had a vision in a place he called “the house of God, and . . . the gate of heaven” (Gen. 28:17). Jesus says he himself is the place where Nathanael will meet God.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Fugue in G

J.S. Bach

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 ACS #979 *Making Their Way*



1 Mak - ing their way down through the a - ges, sin - ners and saints have
 2 Mak - ing their way all the world o - ver, Chris - tians as - sem - ble
 3 Mak - ing our way sea - son by sea - son, pil - grims, we jour - ney



heard God's call: wealth - y and poor, pow - er - ful, low - ly,
 on this day, hear - ing the Word, shar - ing the Ban - quet,
 till life's end, trav - el - ing light, shar - ing the rich - es,



Je - sus' dis - ci - ples, one and all. Gath - ered for wor - ship, of - fer - ing thanks,
 learn - ing to walk in Je - sus' way. Mem - bers of Christ, u - nit - ed in love,
 car - ing for strang - er as for friend, till in the joy of long - ing ful - filled,



the great - est with the least have come to share this feast.
 they seek our God to know, and so to - geth - er grow.
 to - geth - er we will come to our e - ter - nal home.

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

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.



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.

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.



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.

Summoning God,
inviting us to see
what we find so hard to notice—
the blinkers we wear,
the lies we accept:
as we are held in your gaze,
may our faith awaken
to see your kingdom growing
and heaven open wide;
through Jesus Christ, son of Joseph.
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:

Chaconne

Durand

READING: 1 Samuel 3:1-20

At a time when visions are rare and unexpected, the LORD comes to Samuel and calls him to speak the divine word. Though just a boy, Samuel responds to God obediently, as Eli the priest has taught him to respond. This marks the beginning of Samuel's prophetic ministry.

¹Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

²At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" ⁵and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. ⁶The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." ⁷Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." ¹¹Then the LORD said to Samuel, "See,

I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle. ¹²On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. ¹³For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. ¹⁴Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever."

¹⁵Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. ¹⁶But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." He said, "Here I am." ¹⁷Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you." ¹⁸So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, "It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him."

¹⁹As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. ²⁰And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the LORD.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

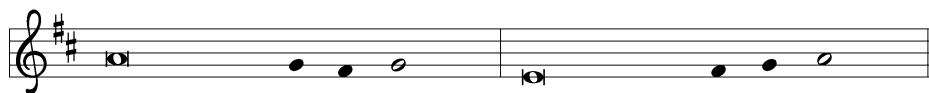
PSALM: Psalm 139:1–6, 13–18

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



- ¹LORD, you have | searched me out;
 O LORD, | you have known me.
- ²**You know my sitting down and my | rising up;
 you discern my thoughts | from afar.**
- ³You trace my journeys and my | resting-places
 and are acquainted with | all my ways.
- ⁴**Indeed, there is not a word | on my lips,
 but you, O LORD, know it | altogether. R**

⁵You encompass me, behind¹ and before,
and lay your¹ hand upon me.

⁶**Such knowledge is too wonder-¹ful for me;
it is so high that I cannot at-¹tain to it.**

¹³For you yourself created my¹ inmost parts;
you knit me together in my¹ mother's womb.

¹⁴**I will thank you because I am mar-¹velously made;
your works are wonderful, and I¹ know it well. R**

¹⁵My body was not hid-¹den from you,
while I was being made in secret
and woven in the depths¹ of the earth.

¹⁶**Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb;
all of them were written¹ in your book;
my days were fashioned before they¹ came to be.**

¹⁷How deep I find your¹ thoughts, O God!
How great is the¹ sum of them!

¹⁸**If I were to count them, they would be more in number¹ than the sand;
to count them all, my life span would need to¹ be like yours. R**

READING: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Paul helps the Corinthians understand that God has claimed the entirety of their lives through the death of Christ. Hence Christian relationships and conduct, including areas of human sexuality, are to reflect the reality that we belong to Christ and that the Holy Spirit lives within us.

¹²“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are beneficial. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. ¹³“Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food,” and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, “The two shall be one flesh.” ¹⁷But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. ¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

HYMN OF THE DAY **ELW #584** *The Son of God, Our Christ*

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



1 The Son of God, our Christ, the Word, the Way,
2 In ev - 'ry test, in tri - als man - i - fold,
3 To - day, as then, Christ sum - mons us to dare
4 In cit - y street, in town, or on the soil,
5 Wher - e'er we find our wit - ness should be made,



shared hu - man life and toiled through - out the day;
these ser - vants wit - nessed, by their faith made bold;
to fol - low bold - ly and his work to share,
may each serve Christ in faith - ful dai - ly toil,
what - e'er our task, be thou, O Christ, our aid,



from com - mon folk he called the twelve to be
and with the gifts and tal - ents which they brought
to help and heal the sick, the blind, the lame,
and in each thought and kind - ly word and deed,
that we may glad - ly give for thee our best



co - work - ers in his sa - cred min - is - try.
the church was found - ed and God's mes - sage taught.
de - clar - ing to the world his ho - ly name.
o - bey Christ's call and go where he shall lead.
and find each task di - vine - ly sent and blest.

Text: Edward M. Blumenfeld, b. 1927, alt.

Music: SURSUM CORDA, Alfred M. Smith, 1879–1971

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Music © 1941 Historic Church of the Ascension, Atlantic City, NJ, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

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.

Encourage the ministry and mission of the church, God of truth. Let the leaders of your church be trustworthy and accountable stewards, that all its resources and outreach bring hope and healing to communities. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Delight in the goodness of your creation, God of fig trees and fertile soil. Heal areas of the world harmed by human greed. Restore those recovering from natural disaster.

Protect our forests and waterways and all the creatures that live in them. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Call the leaders of every neighborhood and nation to serve faithfully, God of wisdom.

Give them visions of justice and unity. Lead them to action that promotes equitable partnership and uplifts those on the margins of society. Tend with your care the lands

and peoples of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Hold in your care any who suffer and struggle, God of compassion. You who know our inner hearts, be present with any who are oppressed, victims of racism or cultural bias, and all who long for respite or restoration. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Give this congregation the anticipation and excitement of Samuel, so inspired and empowered to do your work in the world, God of unity. Make us faithful as we build communities of inclusion and mutual care. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Trusting God who raised Jesus and will also raise us in spirit and truth, we remember all who have died and are at peace among the saints, especially the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. whose faithful advocacy for peace and justice continues to embolden the church, and Antony, Pachomius, and Henry whose witness teaches us to trust you. 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](https://www.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](https://clcvalpo.org/app) (download at clcvalpo.org/app).



OFFERTORY

Concertina on Psalm 42

Ruiter-Feenstra

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.

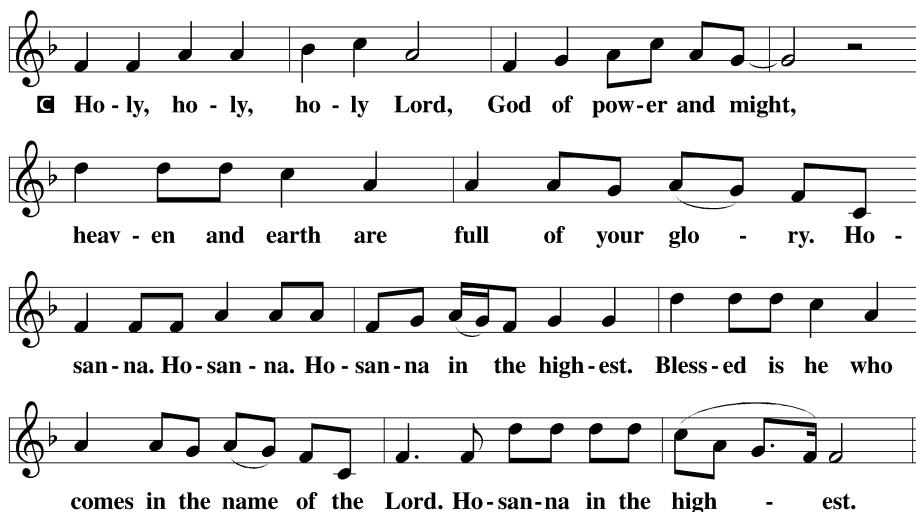
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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.

The musical score is written in G minor (one flat) and 3/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a square symbol (□) and contains the lyrics 'Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;'. The second staff continues with 'have mer - cy on us. Lamb of'. The third staff continues with 'God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have'. The fourth staff continues with 'mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the'. The fifth staff concludes with 'sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.' The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and dotted notes, with trills (marked with a '3' and a bracket) appearing in the first, third, and fourth staves.

COMMUNION HYMNS: ACS# 962

In This Feast of Love

Täs - sä pöy - däs - sä, *täs - sä*
 1 In this feast of love, in this
 2 In this bread and wine, in this
 3 Grant us peace, O Lord, grant us

pöy - däs - sä *syn - ti - sil - le*
 feast of love, Lord, you share your
 bread and wine, you have prom - ised,
 peace, O Lord; fill us with the

it - se - si an - nat, *Ju - ma - lan Ka - rit - sa!*
 blood and your bod - y, Je - sus, Lamb of God.
 Lord, to be with us, Lamb . . of God div - ine.
 joy of your Spir - it, ev - er - liv - ing Word.

Text: Jarkko Maukonen; tr. Mark Sedio, b. 1954
 Music: TÄSSÄ PÖYDÄSSÄ, Jarkko Maukonen; arr. Mark Sedio
 Text and music © 2017, 2020 Jarkko Maukonen, admin. Augsburg Fortress

ELW #685 *Take My Life, That I May Be*

1 Take my life, that I may be con - se - crat - ed, Lord, to thee;
2 Take my hands and let them move at the im - pulse of thy love;
3 Take my voice and let me sing al - ways, on - ly, for my King;
4 Take my sil - ver and my gold, not a mite would I with - hold;

take my mo - ments and my days; let them flow in cease - less praise.
take my feet and let them be swift and beau - ti - ful for thee.
take my lips and let them be filled with mes - sag - es from thee.
take my in - tel - lect, and use ev - 'ry pow'r as thou shalt choose.

The musical score consists of two systems. Each system has a vocal line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment line in the bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are printed below the vocal line of each system.

5 Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne.

6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure store;
take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836–1879, alt.
Music: PATMOS, William H. Havergal, 1793–1870

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 #676

Lord, Speak to Us, That We May Speak



1 Lord, speak to us, that we may speak in
2 Oh, lead us, Lord, that we may lead the
3 Oh, teach us, Lord, that we may teach the
4 Oh, fill us with your full - ness, Lord, un -



liv - ing ech - oes of your tone; as you have sought, so
wan-d'ring and the wa - v'ring feet; oh, feed us, Lord, that
pre - cious truths which you im - part; and wing our words, that
til our ver - y hearts o'er - flow in kin - dling thought and



let us seek your stray - ing chil - dren, lost and lone.
we may feed your hun - g'ring ones with man - na sweet.
they may reach the hid - den depths of man - y•a heart.
glow - ing word, your love to tell, your praise to show.

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836–1879, alt.

Music: CANONBURY, Robert Schumann, 1810–1856

Children join the pastors to send us in mission

DISMISSAL

Children: Go in peace. God loves you.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Fugue in C

Rheinberger

Worship Leaders

	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte	Shawn Longacre	Joey Rodeck
Lector	Paula Katsahnias	Karen Hernes
Prayer Assistant	Linda Mapes	Karen Hernes
Communion Assistants	Barbara Clements Kathy Sutherland	Amy Knauff
Ushers	Don MacMillan Tim Sutherland	
Sound/Light	Zach Wehner	Jeff Peiffer
Video/Livestream	-----	Ben Crill
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	
Worship Participant	Luke Venstrom, cantor Valerie Hernes, clarinet	
Communion Baker	Angela Wehner	

COMMEMORATIONS

Week of January 14, 2024

January 15

Martin Luther King Jr., renewer of society, martyr, died 1968

An American prophet of justice among races and nations, King was an eloquent preacher, a leader of the nonviolent resistance to race-segregated society, and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. Born on this date, he was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

January 17

Antony of Egypt, renewer of the church, died around 356

One of the earliest of the Egyptian desert fathers, Antony gave away his sizeable inheritance and became a hermit. Later he became leader of a group of monks who devoted themselves to prayer, worship, and labor.

January 17

Pachomius, renewer of the church, died 346

Born in Egypt, Pachomius became a Christian while a soldier. He became a hermit (a solitary monk) and organized others into a religious community. His rule for monasteries influenced later ones in both the Eastern and Western churches.

January 18

Confession of Peter

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Begins

Today the church remembers the apostle Peter's great acknowledgement of Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God." This festival serves as a fitting beginning to the week in which we particularly pray that all Christians might be united in faith and witness.

January 19

Henry, Bishop of Uppsala, martyr, died 1156

When Erik, King of Sweden, determined to invade Finland for the purpose of converting the people there to Christianity, Henry went with him. Henry is recognized as the patron saint of Finland.

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.**

We are **thankful** for:

- the ancient cultures and religions that have been sustained in this area for millennia
- those who continue to pursue peace in the midst of ethnic strife and terrorism
- the faithfulness of Muslims in expressing their faith and working with others
- Christians who practice their faith even when they are a small, often discriminated minority.

We **pray** for:

- women and others in these countries who are deprived of basic freedoms and human dignity
- those who misuse or exploit religious identity for extremist political ends
- the wise use of the benefits of oil and other natural resources for the sake of all
- the emergence of stable democratic societies based on the rule of law, social justice, and respect for religious and other freedoms.

Stewardship Snippet

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? --1 Corinthians 6:19

God has given us physical bodies, not to be abused but to be cared for so that we may be healthy physically, as well as mentally and spiritually. How can you better care for your “temple of the Holy Spirit” in 2024?

Faith, Seen and Unseen

“Follow me,” says Jesus to Philip. Then “Come and see,” says Philip to Nathanael. Early in the Gospel of John and in Jesus’ public ministry, the movement is already spreading. This transmission of faith from person to person is something like a fire jumping from one twig to another.

Sometimes, though, it can feel as if the spark just isn’t catching—not much transmission is happening any longer. Many people lament that their children, grandchildren, or other loved ones have abandoned the Christian faith. But have they truly? Maybe, similar to Nathanael, they have not yet personally encountered Jesus. Nathanael questions and doubts the words of the witness Philip until he experiences for himself that Jesus is the Son of God. Just as the message of the good news can spread like fire from twig to twig, so can faith ignite—or reignite—when one has a life-changing encounter with Jesus. There is no miracle for pastors or others to perform; we are simply called to prepare the way, to welcome all of God’s children, and to accompany people no matter where they are on their faith journey.

To change metaphors, sometimes faith flows like an underground stream. In some limestone terrains, a stream of water might disappear from the surface and reappear farther along in a different kind of terrain. The fact that the stream can’t be seen doesn’t mean it has stopped flowing. Likewise, faith is sometimes difficult to identify, but that doesn’t mean it’s not flowing in and through someone’s life. Visible signs of Jesus at work in a person are not always where or in the form we expect to see them. They can be in Sunday worship or in daily acts of kindness, compassion, grace, and love for ourselves and for others. Only Jesus knows what is in our hearts—already burning, deeply flowing, or yet to spark.

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