



# Christ Lutheran

CHURCH

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



January 25, 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.**

*Jesus begins his public ministry by calling fishers to leave their nets and follow him. In Jesus the kingdom of God has come near. We who have walked in darkness have seen a great light. We see this light most profoundly in the cross—as God suffers with us and all who are oppressed by sickness, sin, or evil. Light dawns for us as we gather around the word, the font, and the holy table. We are then sent to share the good news that others may be “caught” in the net of God’s grace and mercy.*

## **GATHERING**

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

### **PRELUDE**

*Cantilene in F*

Rheinberger

### **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).*

### **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

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

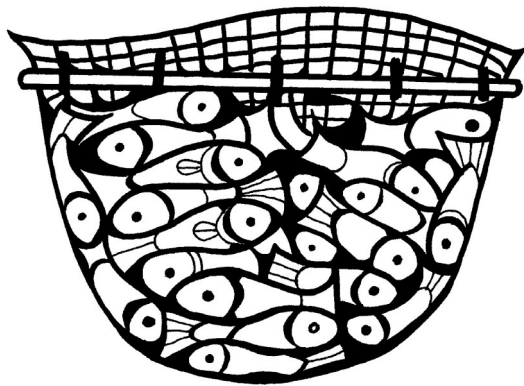
Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,  
the Creator of heaven and earth,  
the Word who spoke life into being,  
the Wind stirring the waters.  
**Amen.**

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

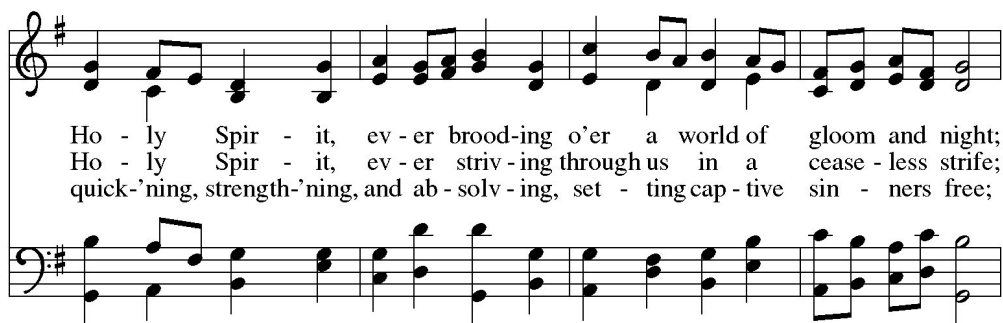
Mighty God, lover of justice,  
**you call us to life in community,**  
**but we have served our own interests**  
**at the expense of our neighbors.**  
**We have sown deceit where honesty was needed.**  
**We say the right words,**  
**but our hearts are far from you.**  
**Turn us to seek your face.**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

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

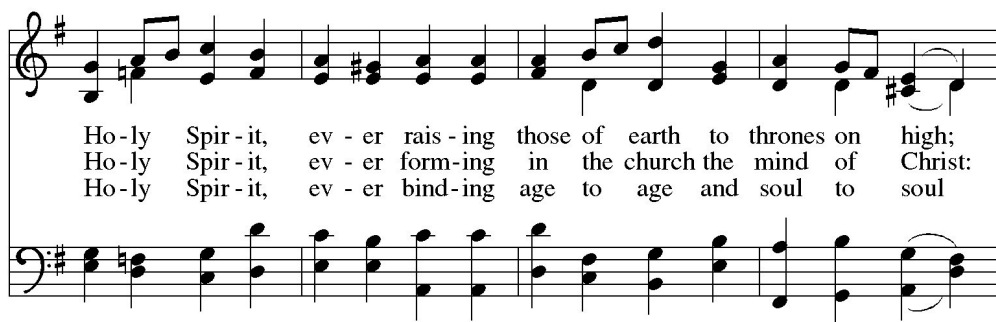




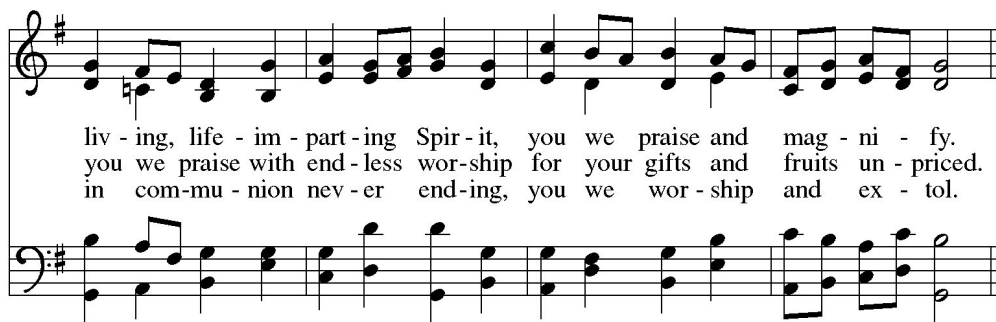
1 Ho-ly Spir-it, ev - er dwell-ing in the ho - liest realms of light;  
 2 Ho-ly Spir-it, ev - er liv - ing as the church's ver - y life;  
 3 Ho-ly Spir-it, ev - er work-ing through the church's min - is - try;



Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er brood-ing o'er a world of gloom and night;  
 Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er striv - ing through us in a cease - less strife;  
 quick-'ning, strength-'ning, and ab - solv - ing, set - ting cap - tive sin - ners free;



Ho-ly Spir-it, ev - er rais - ing those of earth to thrones on high;  
 Ho-ly Spir-it, ev - er form-ing in the church the mind of Christ:  
 Ho-ly Spir-it, ev - er bind-ing age to age and soul to soul



liv - ing, life - im - part - ing Spir - it, you we praise and mag - ni - fy.  
 you we praise with end - less wor - ship for your gifts and fruits un - priced.  
 in com - mu - nion nev - er end - ing, you we wor - ship and ex - tol.

## **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.*

God of all people,  
you sent your Son  
into the shrouded world  
into the borderlands;  
may his dawning light  
give hope to the broken,  
the persecuted,  
the alien and the excluded,  
that we might feel the kingdom drawing near  
and turn to follow him;  
through Jesus Christ, the morning star.

**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.*

## **READING: Isaiah 9:1-4**

*The northern tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali experienced the gloom of defeat by Assyrian military forces, but they are assured that their condition will be reversed when God makes a light-filled appearance. The joy they will experience will resemble celebrations of great harvests, because God will deliver them from everything that diminishes or oppresses them.*

<sup>1</sup> There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time [the LORD] brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

<sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.

<sup>3</sup> You have multiplied exultation;  
you have increased its joy;

they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.  
<sup>4</sup> For the yoke of their burden  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

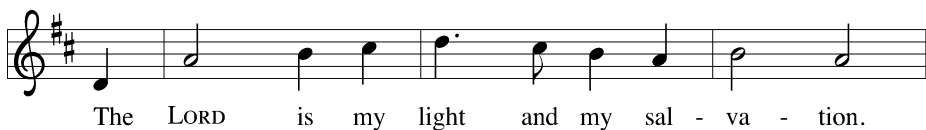
The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

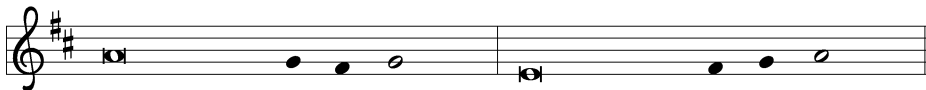
## PSALM: Psalm 27:1, 4–9

*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



The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom then <sup>|</sup> shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I <sup>|</sup> be afraid?

<sup>4</sup> **One thing I ask of the LORD; one <sup>|</sup> thing I seek;**

**that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life;**

**to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek God <sup>|</sup> in the temple.**

<sup>5</sup> For in the day of trouble God will <sup>|</sup> give me shelter,

hide me in the hidden places of the sanctuary, and raise me high up- <sup>|</sup> on a rock.

<sup>6</sup> **Even now my head is lifted up above my enemies <sup>|</sup> who surround me.**

**Therefore I will offer sacrifice in the sanctuary, sacrifices of rejoicing;**

**I will sing and make music <sup>|</sup> to the LORD. R**

<sup>7</sup> Hear my voice, O LORD, <sup>|</sup> when I call;

have mercy on me and <sup>|</sup> answer me.

<sup>8</sup> **My heart speaks your message— <sup>|</sup> "Seek my face."**

**Your face, O LORD, <sup>|</sup> I will seek.**

<sup>9</sup> Hide not your face from me, turn not away from your ser- <sup>|</sup> vant in anger.

Cast me not away—you have been my helper; forsake me not, O God of <sup>|</sup> my  
salvation. **R**

## READING: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

*Paul calls on the Corinthians to end their dissensions and share the unified outlook of the gospel. Discord arises when we forget that we belong not to human leaders or institutions but to Christ. Indeed, the unifying word of the cross of Christ is the center of the gospel and the power of God's salvation.*

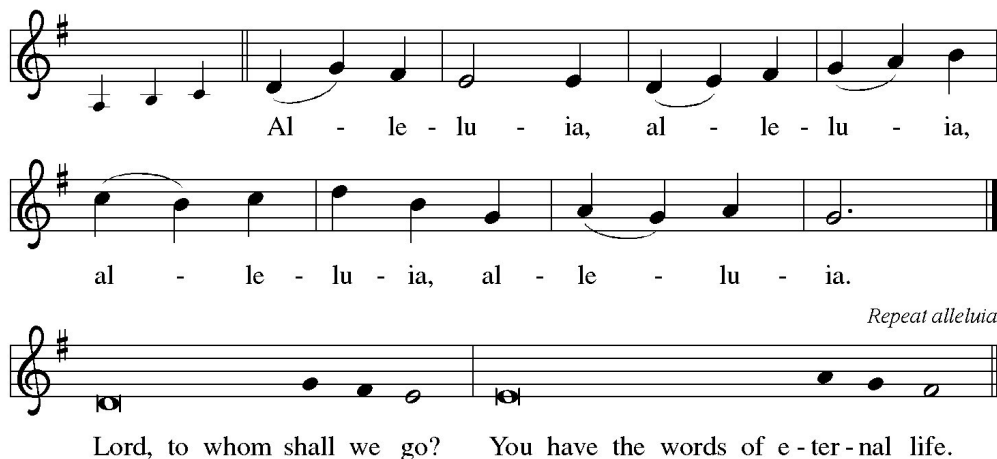
<sup>10</sup> Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you but that you be knit together in the same mind and the same purpose. <sup>11</sup> For it has been made clear to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. <sup>12</sup> What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." <sup>13</sup> Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup> I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup> so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. <sup>16</sup> I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else. <sup>17</sup> For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel—and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

<sup>18</sup> For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*The assembly stands to welcome the Gospel.*



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



## **GOSPEL: Matthew 4:12-23**

*Jesus begins his public ministry shortly after John the Baptist is imprisoned by Herod. He proclaims the nearness of God's reign and calls four fishermen to be his first disciples.*

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>12</sup> Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. <sup>13</sup> He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup> so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

<sup>15</sup> “Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,  
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles—  
<sup>16</sup> the people who sat in darkness  
have seen a great light,  
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death  
light has dawned.”

<sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

<sup>18</sup> As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishers. <sup>19</sup> And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people.” <sup>20</sup> Immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>21</sup> As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. <sup>22</sup> Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

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

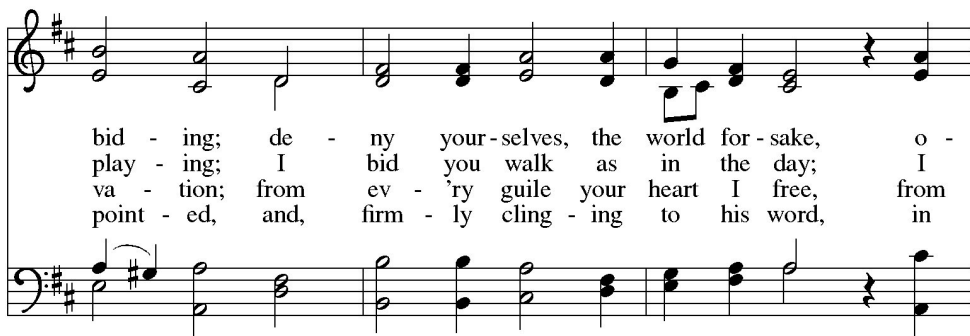
# HYMN OF THE DAY ELW #799

## *Come Follow Me, the Savior Spake*

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



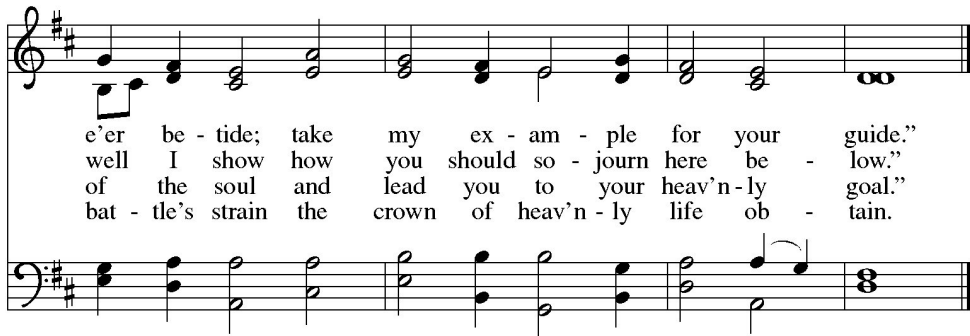
1 "Come, fol - low me," the Sav - ior spake, "all in my way a -  
 2 "I am the light; I light the way, a god - ly life dis -  
 3 "I teach you how to shun and flee what harms your soul's sal -  
 4 Then let us fol - low Christ, our Lord, and take the cross ap -



bid - ing; de - ny your-selves, the world for - sake, o -  
 play - ing; I bid you walk as in the day; I  
 va - tion; from ev - 'ry guile your heart I free, from  
 point - ed, and, firm - ly cling - ing to his word, in



bey my call and guid - ing. Oh, bear the cross, what -  
 keep your feet from stray - ing. I am the way, and  
 sin and its temp - ta - tion. I am the ref - uge  
 suf - f'ring be un - daunt - ed. For those who bear the



e'er be - tide; take my ex - am - ple for your guide."  
 well I show how you should so - journ here be - low."  
 of the soul and lead you to your heav'n - ly goal."  
 bat - tle's strain the crown of heav'n - ly life ob - tain.

## 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

*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.*

As God's beloved children united in Christ, let us pray for the church, the whole human community, and the well-being of the earth, our home.

*A brief silence.*

Holy One, you entrust the message of the cross and the mission of the gospel to the church in every land. Guide the newly baptized and deepen the faith of all who follow Christ. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Holy Creator, you lavish creation with splendor, and we praise you for the gift of life. Teach us to live as wise stewards, sharing the earth's resources with all inhabitants of this garden planet. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Holy Judge, your power is love, and you judge the nations by the measure of Christ. Free any who are unjustly accused or wrongly condemned. We pray for those in government – our city council and mayor, our state legislators and governor, our national legislators and president – that you will open their hearts to care for the needs of all our neighbors. We pray for the lands, people, and churches of Cypress, Greece, and Turkey, that you will empower all who work for the common good. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Holy Love, you care for vulnerable young children, frail elders, and any who are sick. We pray for all who are affected by natural disasters, and all who are endangered locally by extreme cold. Provide for their needs and relieve their suffering. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Holy Giver, you gather, forgive, and shape us as disciples of Christ. Nurture in us a spirit of patience and respect, that we may love one another as you love us.

Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Holy Guide, we pray for our Little Lamb Preschool community, for Cheryl and Trinity who teach the Terrific Teddies class, and for these students and their families: Catalina, Chip, Elliot, Everett, Finley, Grace, Graham, Karsyn, Lane, Logan, StellaRae, and Timothy. Bless the students in their growth and learning, that they might know your love more and more each day; strengthen and equip their families in their calling to nurture your beloved children. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Holy Savior, you free us from the power of death. As you were faithful to Titus, Timothy, Silas, Lydia, Dorcas, Phoebe, and Thomas, lead and guide us until we come at last into the communion of all your saints in light. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Confident that the Holy Spirit receives our prayers and answers us, we commend all for whom we pray to God's loving-kindness made known to us in Christ Jesus our Savior.

**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 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://www.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](https://clcvalpo.org/app) (download at [clcvalpo.org/app](https://clcvalpo.org/app)).*



**OFFERTORY (8:00 am):**

*Fugue in C*

Pachelbel

**OFFERTORY ANTHEM (10:30 am):**

*Follow Me!*

arr. Carter

*Fisherman Peter on the sea, drop your net now and follow me! Brother James, son of Zebedee, leave your fishing and follow me! Brother John, son of Zebedee, leave your fishing and follow me! All you people now come along, hear Jesus calling and join His song. He will show us the way to go, so come and follow and don't be slow.*

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

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

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

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

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

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

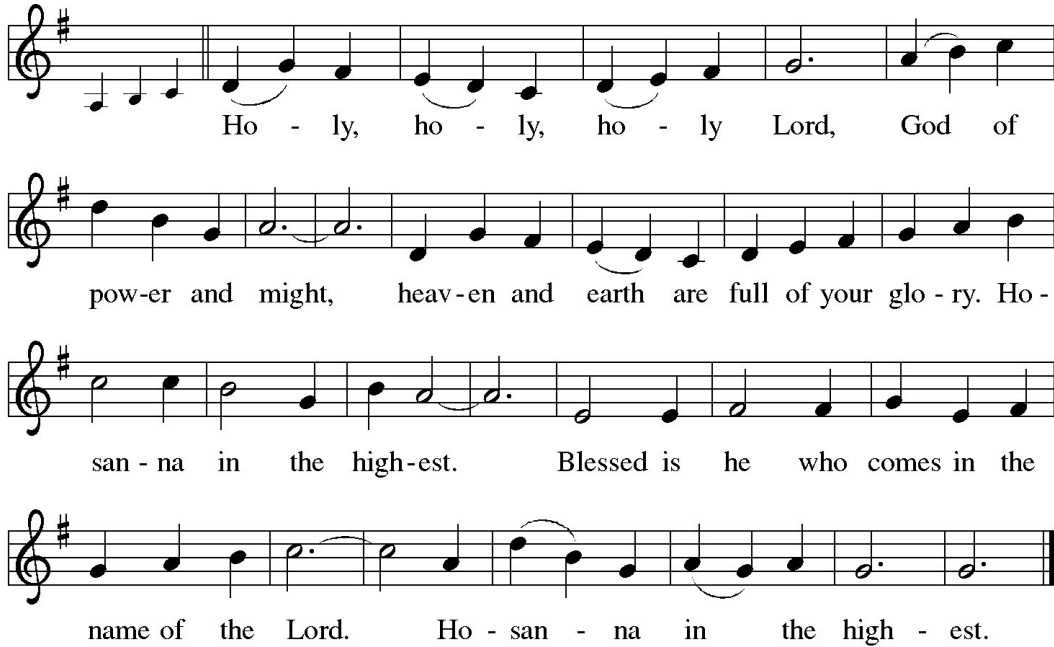
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

## 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 in the high-est. Blessed 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

Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Come to the table; taste 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; 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

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 -

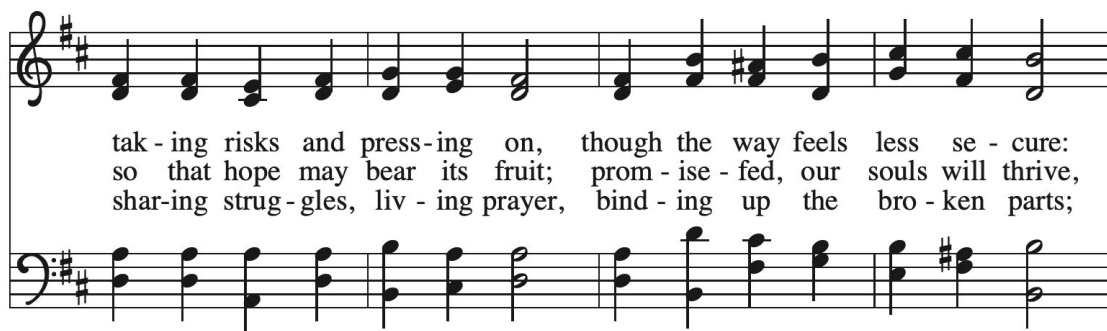
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

## COMMUNION HYMNS

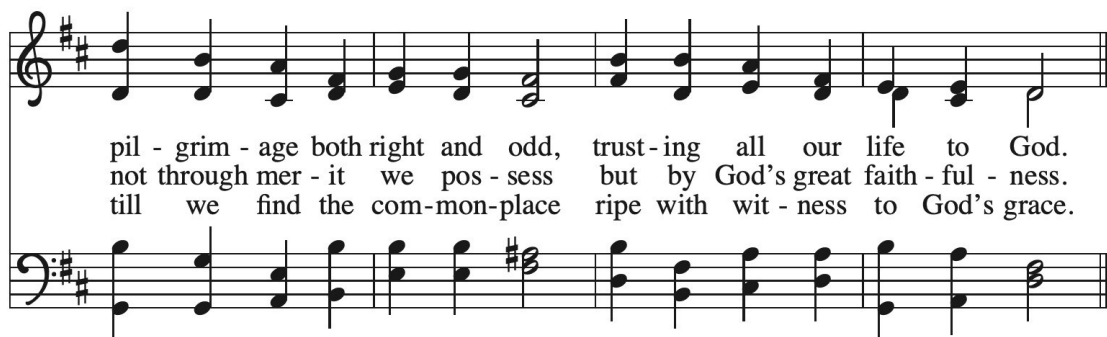
### ACS #1004 *Faith Begins By Letting Go*



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.



# ELW #798     *Will You Come and Follow Me*



1 "Will you come and fol - low me if I but call  
 2 "Will you leave your - self be - hind if I but call  
 3 "Will you let the blind - ed see if I but call  
 4 "Will you love the you you hide if I but call  
 5 Lord, your sum - mons ech - oes true when you but call



your name? Will you go where you don't  
 your name? Will you care for cruel and  
 your name? Will you set the pris - 'ners  
 your name? Will you quell the fear in -  
 my name. Let me turn and fol - low



know and nev - er be the same?  
 kind and nev - er be the same?  
 free and nev - er be the same?  
 side and nev - er be the same?  
 you and nev - er be the same.



Will you let my love be shown, will you let my  
 Will you risk the hos - tile stare, should your life at -  
 Will you kiss the lep - er clean, and do such as  
 Will you use the faith you've found to re - shape the  
 In your com - pa - ny I'll go where your love and



name be known, will you let my life be  
 tract or scare? Will you let me an - swer  
 this un - seen, and ad - mit to what I  
 world a - round, through my sight and touch and  
 foot - steps show. Thus I'll move and live and



grown in you and you in me?"  
 pray'r in you and you in me?"  
 mean in you and you in me?"  
 sound in you and you in me?"  
 grow in you and you in me.

*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.**

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Radiant God,  
we have seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.  
In the sacrament of his body and blood  
you have drawn us to your heart.  
Send us from this table with delight,  
that our lives may reflect the beauty of your love,  
and bear witness to all we have seen and heard,  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
**Amen.**

## **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.*

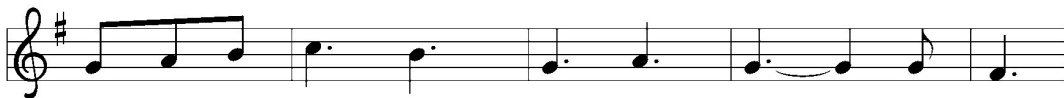
## **BLESSING**

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

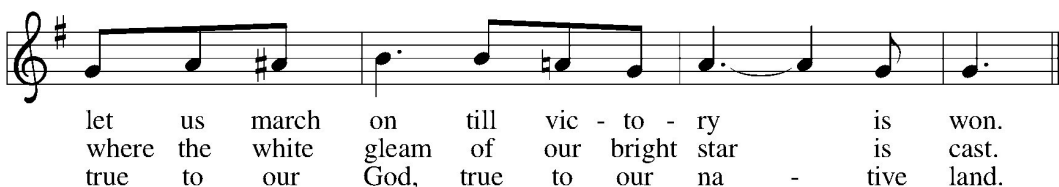
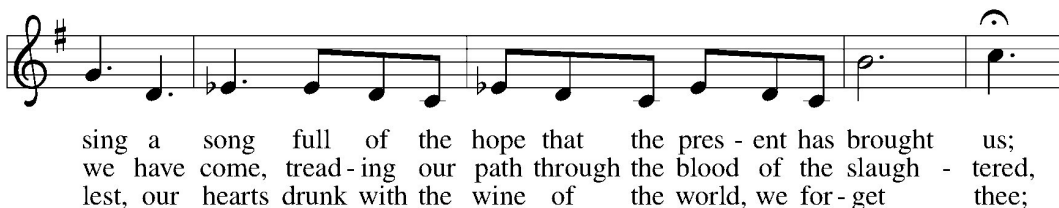
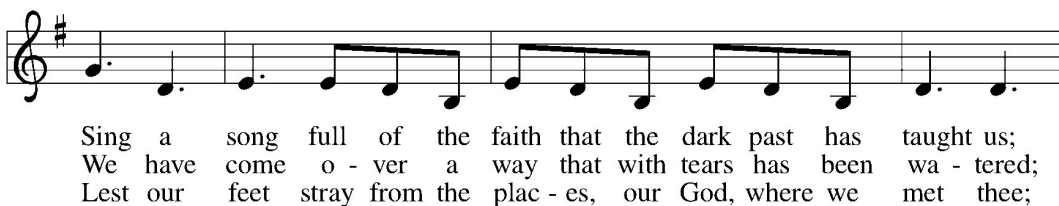
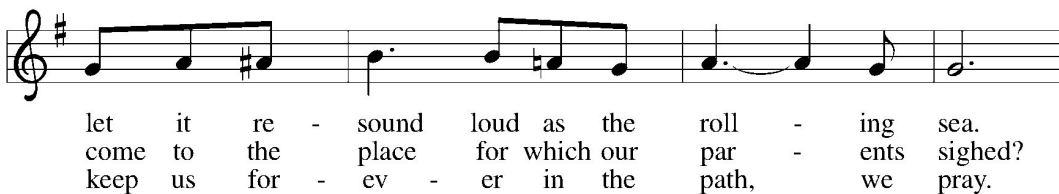
## **SENDING HYMN ELW #841      *Lift Every Voice and Sing*** *(10:30 am – st. 1 sung by the sanctuary choir)*



1 Lift ev - 'ry voice and sing till earth and heav - en ring,  
2 Ston - y the road we trod, bit - ter the chas - t'ning rod,  
3 God of our wea - ry years, God of our si - lent tears,



ring with the har - mo - nies of lib - er - ty.  
felt in the days when hope un - born had died;  
thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;



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

## **DISMISSAL**

*Children: Go in peace. Do justice.*

**Thanks be to God!**

## **POSTLUDE**

*Tuba Tune in D*

Lang

*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		Maya Bull
Lector	Phil Hahn	Phil Hahn
Prayer Assistant	Robin Nelson	Phil Hahn
Communion Assistants	Erin Schmidgall Chris Schmidgall	Holly Knauff Phil Hahn
Ushers	Luke Venstrom Irene Adams	
Sound/Light		Tony Reinhold
Video/Livestream	_____	
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	
Cantor	Luke Venstrom	
Communion Baker	Angela Wehner	

## **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.

## **COMMEMORATIONS**

Week of January 25, 2026

### **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.

#### **January 28 ~ Thomas Aquinas, teacher, died 1274**

One of the most brilliant and creative theologians in the church's history, Aquinas worked to bring together scripture and the philosophy of Aristotle. A member of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), Aquinas was also a hymnwriter.

## Just How Near Is It?

This anxious question is as old as Christians' faith: How near? How near is the kingdom of heaven? Near when angels announce a holy birth. Now? Near when Jesus unrolls a scroll in the synagogue, declaring the acceptable time. Now? Near when miracles of sight and sound and speech, bread and water and wine astound. Now? Near when the Son of David trots into Jerusalem on a donkey, talks of paradise at Golgotha, abandons the tomb. Now? Near when parades of calculations and predictions, numbering of days and decoding of signs make their guesses. Now?

John the Baptizer, eagerly baptizing converts and then, if hesitantly, Jesus himself—John the broadcaster, on behalf of a Savior for the world—gets arrested and executed. The hailed Messiah, Jesus, takes up residence in a tiny fishing village in a land overtaken and occupied by an empire of corruption and death. It would seem—or it *should* seem, if it does not—to anyone paying attention that the kingdom of heaven, if anywhere at all, was nowhere near.

“Repent” was Jesus’ inaugural message. Such a hard thing for people enduring in the hardest of times to hear. Repent of what, for what? By that time, ancient promises made in the name of God must have worn thin at best, if they had not already been tossed out as defective. In how many ways had unreliable promises and hopes for some heavenly kingdom been smashed in their collisions with each dawning day that proved to be just a copy of the grueling one before it?

Repent. Turn around. Pursue life in another direction. A gutsy dispatch! But it caught fire. It spread. It drew crowds because everywhere Jesus went, all through the everyday places of hard-hit dreams and suffering spirits and pained bodies—exactly in those places—Jesus showed himself to be the heavenly good news that heals, the joyful reason to repent of fear. So, welcome and become the kingdom of heaven now and here.

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