



Peace: The second week focuses on peace—the peace Jesus brings to a broken world. This week invites believers to consider the peace that surpasses understanding (Philippians 4:7) and to seek reconciliation and harmony in their lives.

The Bethlehem Candle

First Lutheran Church

December 7, 2025

2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*At the heart of our Advent preparation stands John the Baptist,
who calls us to repent and make a new beginning.
As the darkness increases we turn toward the approaching light of Christ.
For Christians he is the root of Jesse, the righteous judge who welcomes all,
especially the poor and meek of the earth.
We wait with hope for that day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb,
and there will be no more hurt or destruction.
From the Lord's table we are sent in the spirit of John the Baptist
to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of God has come near.*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

CHESTERFIELD

Paul Bouman

Partita on Hark, the Glad Sound!

GATHERING

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

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

(Please kneel)

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Most merciful God,

C: we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.

**We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

We have not loved you with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.

**Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will
and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

P: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin,
and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved.
In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.
Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit,
that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

C: Amen.

GATHERING SONG

ELW # 239

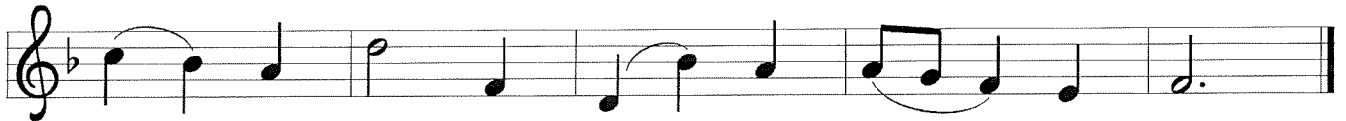
Hark, the Glad Sound!



1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, the Sav - ior
2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, in Sa - tan's
3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, the bleed - ing
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of peace, your wel - come



prom - ised long; let ev - 'ry heart pre -
bond - age held. The gates of brass be -
soul to cure, and with the trea - sures
shall pro - claim, and heav'n's e - ter - nal



pare a throne and ev - 'ry voice a song.
fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield.
of his grace to en - rich the hum - ble poor.
arch - es ring with your be - lov - ed name.

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702–1751

Music: CHESTERFIELD, Thomas Haweis, 1734–1820

GREETING

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

C: And also with you.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

P: We gather together to get ready for what? Only heaven knows.

L: O Emmanuel,

C: **Prepare us for your coming.**

P: We wait for the day when God will create a prevailing peace on the earth,
and natural-born enemies turn into newborn friends.

L: O Emmanuel,

C: **Prepare us for your coming.**

P: We get ready for God to come close by laying our lives open to Jesus,
asking him to sort through all our mixed motives.

L: O Emmanuel,

C: **Prepare us for your coming.**



Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.

Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is-ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.

He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.

P: Jesus, we welcome your presence now with the lighting of these candles,
whose flames bring warmth to winter
and fill this place with the glow of hope.

C: **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, Lord God,
to prepare the way of your only Son.

By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

(Please be seated)

+ + *Children may attend Sunday School*

WORD

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

FIRST READING

ISAIAH 11:1-10

L: A reading from Isaiah, the eleventh chapter.

- ¹ A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
- ² The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
- ³ His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see
or decide by what his ears hear,
- ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor
and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
- ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
- ⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb;
the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the lion will feed together,
and a little child shall lead them.
- ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
- ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.
- ¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations
shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

L: A reading from Romans, the fifteenth chapter.

⁴ Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.

⁵ May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors ⁹ and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles and sing praises to your name"; ¹⁰ and again he says, "Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people"; ¹¹ and again, "Praise the Lord, all you gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; ¹² and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the gentiles; in him the gentiles shall hope." ¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

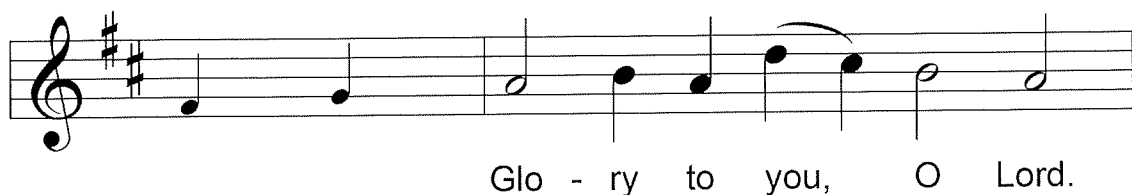


Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



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

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew, the third chapter.



¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming,
² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.' " ⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, ⁹ and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹ "I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

P: The gospel of the Lord.



(Please be seated)

REFLECTION

REVEREND CHRISTIAN DITTMER

(Please stand)

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry



1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es
 2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the
 3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge
 4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
 5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,
 way for God with - in, and let us all our
 and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
 rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -
 has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
 waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.
 on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.
 we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676–1749; tr. composite

Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621

APOSTLE'S CREED

L: In Christ, we have heard the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation.

C: **We believe in him**

and are marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.

L: Living together in trust and hope, we profess our faith:

C: **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.

((Please kneel))

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting
your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

L: With wisdom and understanding, inspire the faithful around the world. Unite
hearts and minds in work to address poverty, access to housing, and equity
among peoples.

Each petition concludes:

P: God of grace,

C: **hear our prayer.**

P: Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in
your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

C: **Amen.**

((Please stand))

PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING AND ORGAN MEDITATION

JEFFERSON

Lani Smith

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus
Char Pope, piano; Curtis L. King, organ

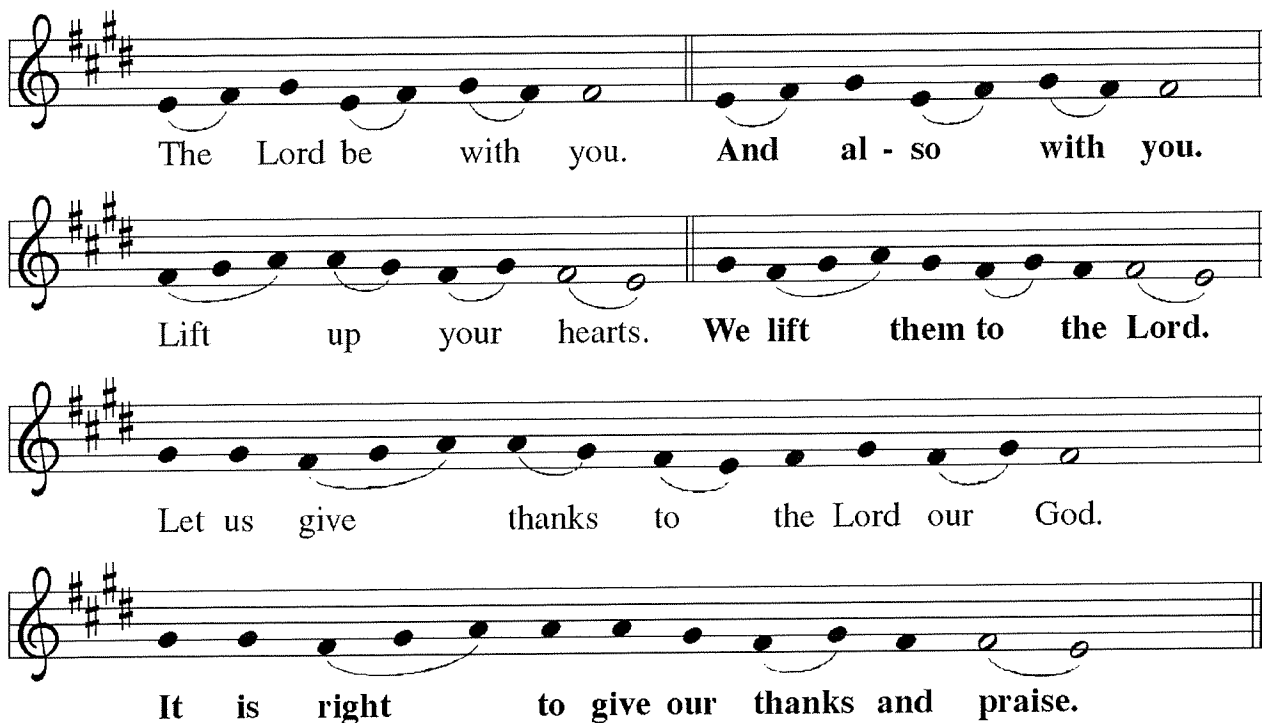
OFFERING PRAYER

L: Let us pray.
Nourishing God,
you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert.
Through this meal, satisfy our parched places,
that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come.

C: Amen.

(Please stand)

GREAT THANKSGIVING



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

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

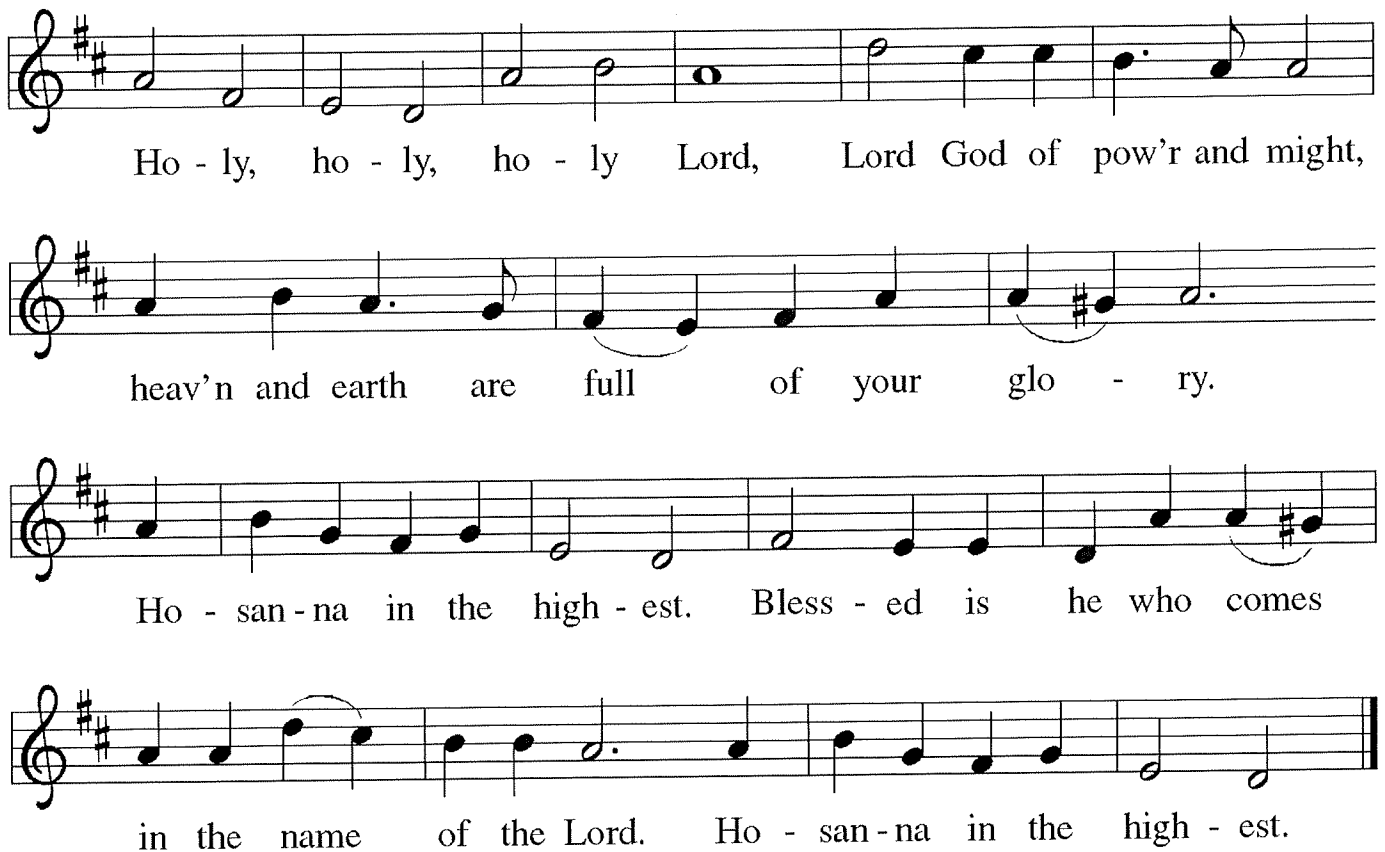
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.
And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the Church on earth
and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
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.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P: Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER

L: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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

P: Here is life. God is with us.
Come, receive what God has promised.

(Please be seated)

Communion is distributed in two manners

† *You may commune in your pews.*

Individual communion kits are available at the Narthex doors.

† *You may come to the Table, to receive the Body and Blood of Christ.*

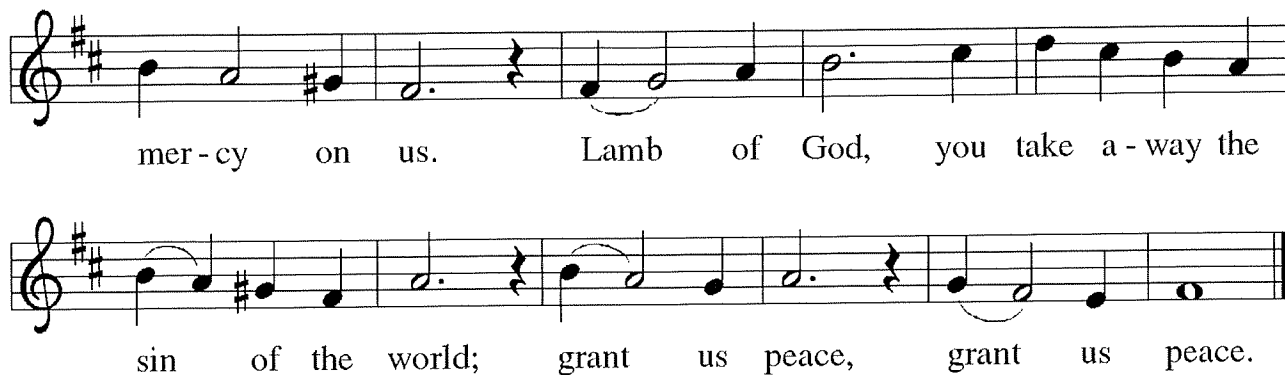
LAMB OF GOD



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



COMMUNION SONG

ELW # 254

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

1 Come, thou long-ex-pect-ed Je-sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo-ple to de-liv-er, born a child, and yet a king;
from our fears and sins re-lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for-ev-er, now thy gra-cious king-dom bring.
Is-rael's strength and con-so-la-tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e-ter-nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a-lone;
dear de-sire of ev-'ry na-tion, joy of ev-'ry long-ing heart.
by thine all-suf-fi-cient mer-it raise us to thy glo-rious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

L: Let us pray.

God our host,
at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness.
Send us forth, eager to share the feast,
welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

C: Amen.

SENDING

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

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

C: Oh God,
your everlasting love for us is always trustworthy and sure.
We are grateful for the goodness
you have shown us through the years,
and we ask now for confidence to go forward into the future.
Bless our community of faith, bless our healing,
bless the changes that are before us,
bless our pastoral leaders
who will shepherd us through this time of transition.
We thank you now for the wisdom you will show us
as we align with your will, and servant or servants
you are already preparing to send us in your blessed time.
Help us to keep looking to you to define our ministry
and our future.
In his name and for the sake of Jesus Christ,
our Savior and Lord. Amen.

BLESSING

P: May God who comes among us,
Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,
and good news to share today and always.





- 1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
- 2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
- 3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
- 4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!
 Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
 Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.
 His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:
 God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!
 All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:
 So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
 Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.

DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace.
 P: Keep awake.
 C: **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN

Paul Manz

Prepare the Royal Highway

Events in Review

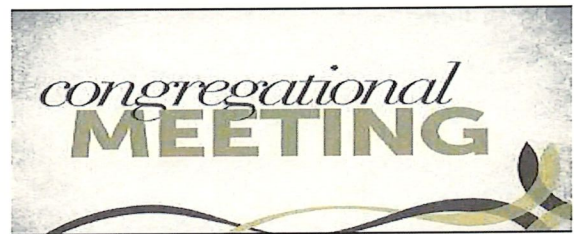
<u>Sunday</u>	Dec 7
10:00AM	Church Service
	Congregational Meeting after Service
<u>Monday</u>	Dec 8
10:00AM YES	Bible Study at Willows
5:15PM	Bell Choir Practice
<u>Tuesday</u>	Dec 9
<u>Wednesday</u>	Dec 10
9 AM	Peace Corp
<u>Thursday</u>	Dec 11
9 AM	Lifeline Screening
<u>Friday</u>	Dec 12
<u>Saturday</u>	Dec 13

Next Week

<u>Sunday</u>	Dec 14
10:00AM	Church Service
<u>Monday</u>	Dec 15
10:00AM	Bible Study at Willows
1:30PM	Bookworms
5:15PM	Bell Choir Practice
<u>Tuesday</u>	Dec 16
<u>Wednesday</u>	Dec 17
5:30 PM	Council Meeting
<u>Thursday</u>	Dec 18
1:00PM	Food Bank
<u>Friday</u>	Dec 19
<u>Saturday</u>	Dec 20



If you have a prayer request for today, please raise your hand during



Important Congregational Meeting will be held

TODAY

after church service.

Please plan to attend.

This is a very important meeting focusing on monetary issues that need to be brought before and voted on by the congregation.

Contact Us



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Interim Pastor

Pastor Mark Schuring

(740) 360-2306

theskipster55@gmail.com

Our Worship Leaders

Altar Guild: Mike & Bonnie Oberlander

Cantor: Elijah Shiley

Facebook Camera Rosses

Host: Janet Zirger

Reader: Jonathan Nominee

Worship Assistant Jonathan Nominee

Director of Music: Curtis L. King

Minister: Reverend Christian Dittmar

Emergency Pastors

Pastor Mark Schuring

(740) 360-2306

Mike Porter

(585) 813-5009

Pastor Philip Scherr

(814) 756-9435

Our Mission Statement

“God is among us!”

**“We are called to go out, care for all, share the gospel,
forgive, reconcile and trust God for all that we need.”**

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December 7, 2025