



FOLLOW
ME
AND I WILL
MAKE YOU
FISH FOR
PEOPLE

MARK 1:17



+ Third Sunday After The Epiphany +

January 20-21, 2024

AS WE GATHER

Can't somebody else do it? Those words and thoughts often come to our minds and out of our mouths when being asked to do something we'd rather not do. It happens in our work and jobs, it happens in homes and families, and it even happens within the church. It happened to Jonah when the Lord told him to go to Nineveh. Today we hear the second time God called to Jonah, telling him to again go to a place he'd rather not go. There are many times we hear things in Scripture we'd rather not hear when it comes to difficult things. Can't somebody else do it? Instead of that thought entering our minds, may we instead be reminded of God's continued promises and presence with us in whatever we do in faith, and wherever we are called to go—even to our own Ninevehs.

REGARDING COMMUNION

Jesus was born in a town called “house of bread” (Bethlehem) and laid in a feeding trough (a manger) where the livestock normally found their grain. Little surprise then that Jesus spoke of himself as “the bread who came down from heaven” (John 6:41) and as “a grain of wheat falling into the earth” (John 12:24)! Christmas is the celebration of the Eternal Son Jesus, God of God and Light of Light, taking on flesh and dwelling among us so that we behold in him the glory of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Our word “Christmas” simply means *Christ's Mass* and reminds us that Jesus is still present among us in body and blood through the sacred gifts of bread and wine. In this vein, Luther once said: “Word and Sacrament are the manger and swaddling clothes into which it has pleased Christ to lay himself.” May we come to Christ's manger (the Altar) humbled in repentance for all that is wrong in our lives so that we may receive his gracious meal for forgiveness and renewal. ***Since Christian denominations have differing understandings of Holy Communion, if you are not a member of a Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod congregation and have not communed here before, we ask that you speak with the pastor or elder prior to communing with us the first time. Those not communing are invited to cross their arms over their chests and approach the pastor for a blessing during the distribution. Also, if certain factors prohibit you from partaking of regular wine, non-alcoholic wine is available in the center circle of the tray. If you would like to begin sharing this sacred meal with us on a regular basis, please ask the pastor for a time of faith instruction and formation.***

**If you are in need of a gluten-free wafer for Communion,
please let Pastor or an Elder know.**

Liturgical Color:

Green is the color of life and growth in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Visitors: We are glad you have chosen to be with us today! We would especially like to follow-up with you beyond today, so please take a moment to leave your best contact information in the guest books at each entrance/exit or in the Record of Fellowship books found on each pew. **A cry-room for parents and children is just off from the front entryway, and there's a wonderful nursery downstairs at the end of the fellowship hall for you to make use of at any time.** Do you have any questions about anything here? Don't hesitate to ask one of the ushers or elders, or talk to the pastor.

Prelude

Pastoral Welcome

(Prayer request cards will be collected as the hymn is sung.)

Invocation Hymn..... "O Christ, Our True and Only Light" #839



1 O Christ, our true and on - ly light, En - light - en
2 Fill with the ra - diance of Your grace The souls now
3 O gent - ly call those gone a - stray That they may
4 Shine on the dark - ened and the cold; Re - call the
5 That they with us may ev - er - more Such grace with



those who sit in night; Let those a - far now
lost in er - ror's maze; En - light - en those whose
find the sav - ing way! Let ev - 'ry con - science
wan - d'ers to Your fold. U - nite all those who
won - d'ring thanks a - dore And end - less praise to



hear Your voice And in Your fold with us re - joice.
in - most minds Some dark de - lu - sion haunts and blinds.
sore op - pressed In You find peace and heav'n - ly rest.
walk a - part; Con - firm the weak and doubt - ing heart,
You be giv'n By all Your Church in earth and heav'n.

Divine Service, Setting One

Confession and Absolution

The sign of the cross † may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

Confession and Absolution.....page 151

- P** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.
- P** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- C** **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**
- P** Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.
- C** **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. 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. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. 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** In the mercy of almighty God . . . Lord Jesus Christ.
- C** Amen.

Service of the Word

Entrance Hymn "Come, Follow Me," the Savior Spake" #688 (4-5)

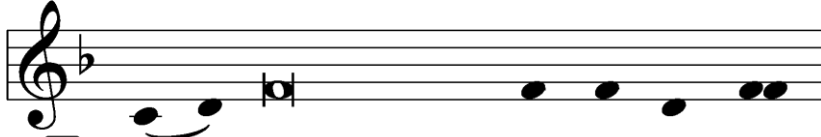
4 "I teach you how to shun and flee What harms your
5 Then let us fol - low Christ, our Lord, And take the
soul's sal - va - tion, Your heart from ev - 'ry guile to free,
cross ap - point - ed And, firm - ly cling - ing to His Word,
From sin and its temp - ta - tion. I am the ref - uge
In suf - f'ring be un - daunt - ed. For those who bear the



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.

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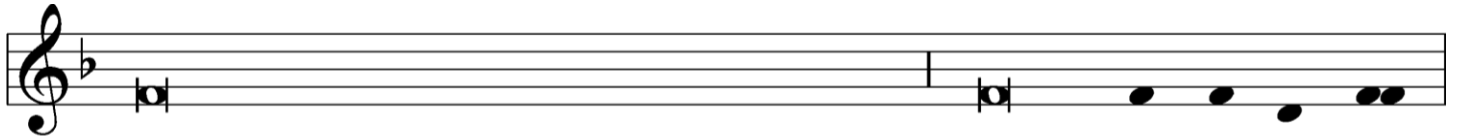
Kyrie.....*pages 152-153*



A In peace let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



A For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



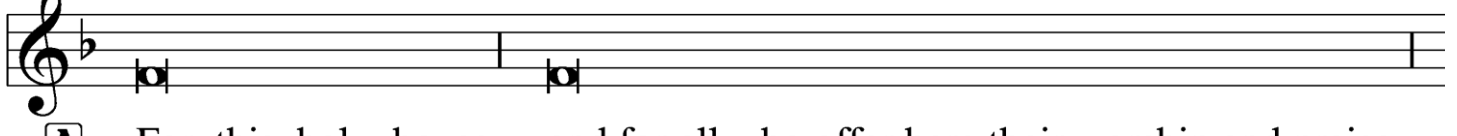
A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



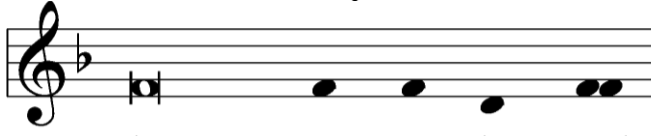
and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



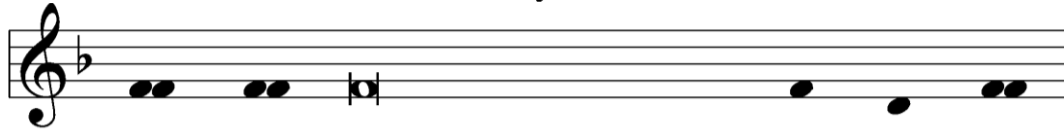
A For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise



let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.

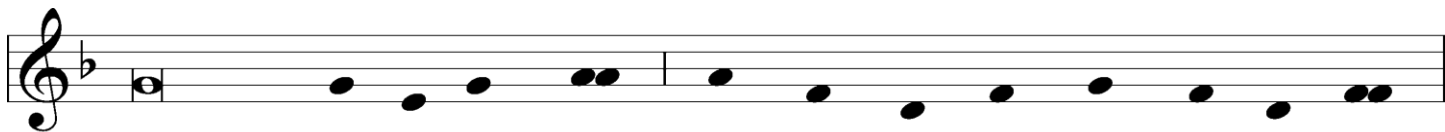


A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord.



C A - men.

Gloria in Excelsispage 154



A Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His peo - ple on earth.



C Lord God, heav-en-ly king, al-might-y God and Fa - ther:



We wor-ship You, we give You thanks, we praise You for Your glo-ry.



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.



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. A - men.

Salutationpage 156

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

P Let us pray.

Collect of the Day (*spoken in unison*)

Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities and stretch forth the hand of Your majesty to heal and defend us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated.

Old Testament **Jonah 3:1-5, 10**

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you." So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. . . .

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual *(spoken in unison)*

Praise the Lord, all nations!

Extol him, all peoples!

**For great is his steadfast love toward us,
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.**

**Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts! *(Psalm 117:1)***

Epistle Reading **1 Corinthians 7:29-35**

This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and 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 goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Please rise.

Alleluia and Verse *page 156*

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

Holy Gospel **Mark 1:14-20**

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the first chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

Hymn of the Day "O Christ, Who Called the Twelve", #856



1 O Christ, who called the Twelve To rise and fol - low You, For -
2 O Christ, who taught the Twelve The truth for a - ges sealed, Whose
3 O Christ, who led the Twelve A - mong the des - o - late And
4 O Christ, who sent the Twelve On roads they'd nev - er trod To
5 O Christ, th'a - pos - tles' Lord, The mar - tyrs' strength and song, The



sak - ing old, fa - mil - iar ways For ven - tures bold and new:
words and works a - wak - ened faith, The ways of God re - vealed:
broke as bread of life for all Your love com - pas - sion - ate:
serve, to suf - fer, teach, pro - claim The near - er reign of God:
cru - ci - fied and ris - en King To whom the saints be - long:



Grant us to hear Your call To risk se - cu - ri - ty And,
In - struct us now, we pray, By Your em - pow'r - ing Word. True
Lead us a - long the ways Where hope has near - ly died And
Send us on ways where faith Tran - scends ti - mid - i - ty, Where
Though gen - er - a - tions pass, Our trib - ute still we bring, Our



bound in heart and will to You, Find per - fect lib - er - ty.
teach - er, be for all who seek Their light, their life, their Lord.
help us climb the lone - ly hills Where love is cru - ci - fied.
love in - forms and hope sus - tains Both life and min - is - try.
hymns a sac - ri - fice of praise, Our lives an of - fer - ing.

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Sermon.....“Frayed Nets & ‘Fraid Nots”

Please rise.

Nicene Creed.....*page 158*

**I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,**

who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Church

P Arise and shine,

C for our light has come.

P . . . trusting in Your mercy through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Please be seated.

Offering

Please rise.

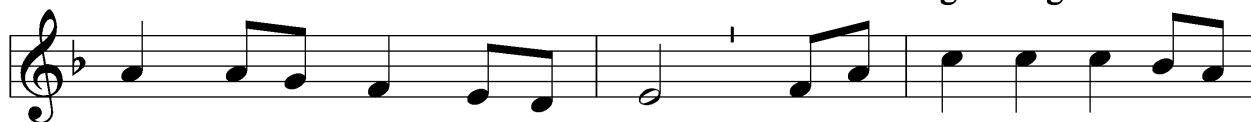
Offertorypages 159-160



C What shall I ren-der to the Lord for all His ben-e-fits to



me? I will of - fer the sac-ri-fice of thanks-giv - ing and will



call on the name of the Lord. I will take the cup of sal-



va - tion and will call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my



vows to the Lord now in the pres-ence of all His peo-ple, in the



courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Je - ru - sa - lem.

Service of the Sacrament

Communion Liturgypages 160-163

P The Lord be with you.

C And al - so with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

P It is truly good, right, and beneficial . . . evermore praising You and singing:

Sanctus.....*page 161*

C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r 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.

Prayer of Thanksgiving.....*page 161*

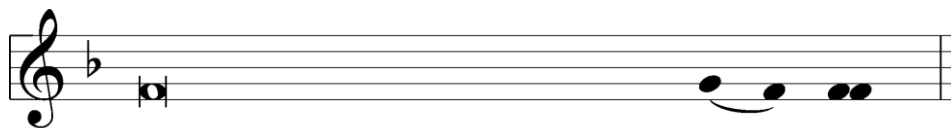
P Blessed are You . . . one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Lord's Prayer

The Words of Our Lord

Pax Dominipage 163



P The peace of the Lord be with you al - ways.

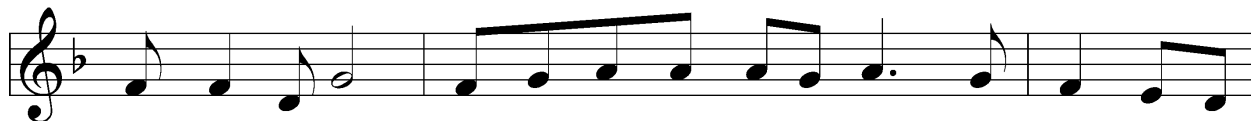


C A - men.

Agnus Dei.....page 163



C 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.

Communion Distribution

Sit (until motioned to rise and proceed forward if going for Communion or a blessing).

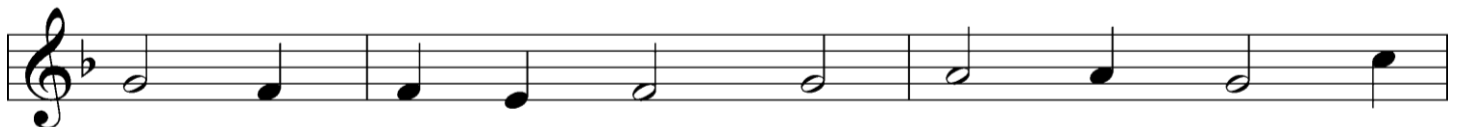
Instrumental/Silent Reflection

(Sunday Hymns)

Communion Hymn "Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly Pray" #623



| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|----------|---------|-------|-----------|-------------|-------|-----------------|---------|-------|-----|
| 1 | Lord | Je - sus | Christ, | we | hum - bly | pray | That | we | may | | |
| 2 | Give | us, | who | share | this | won - drous | food, | Your | bod - y | | |
| 3 | By | faith | Your | Word | has | made | us | bold | To | seize | the |
| 4 | One | bread, | one | cup, | one | bod - y, | we, | Re - joic - ing | | | |
| 5 | Lord | Je - sus | Christ, | we | hum - bly | pray: | O | keep | us | | |



feast on You to - day; Be - neath these forms of
 bro - ken and Your blood, The grate - ful peace of
 gift of love re - told; All that You are we
 in our u - ni - ty, Pro - claim Your love un -
 stead - fast till that day When each will be Your



bread and wine En - rich us with Your grace di - vine.
 sins for - giv'n, The cer - tain joys of heirs of heav'n.
 here re - ceive, And all we are to You we give.
 til You come To bring Your scat - tered loved ones home.
 wel - comed guest In heav - en's high and ho - ly feast.

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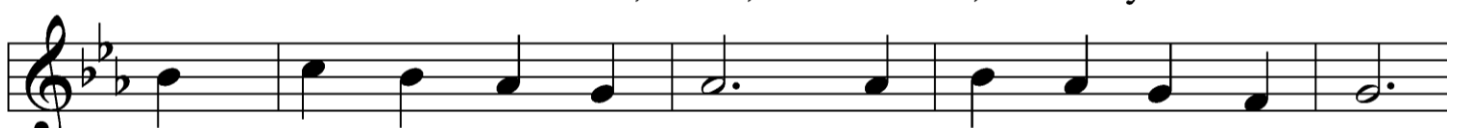
Communion Hymn *"The Gifts Christ Freely Gives #602*



1 The gifts Christ free - ly gives He gives to you and me
 2 The gifts flow from the font Where He calls us His own;
 3 The gifts of grace and peace From ab - so - lu - tion flow;
 4 The gifts are there each day The ho - ly Word is read;



To be His Church, His bride, His cho - sen, saved and free!
 New life He gives that makes Us His and His a - lone.
 The pas - tor's words are Christ's For us to trust and know.
 God's chil - dren lis - ten, hear, Re - ceive, and they are fed.



Saints blest with these rich gifts Are chil - dren who pro - claim
 Here He for - gives our sins With wa - ter and His Word;
 For - give - ness that we need Is grant - ed to us there;
 Christ fills them with Him - self, Blest words that give them life,



That they were won by Christ And cling to His strong name.
 The tri - une God Him - self Gives pow'r to call Him Lord.
 The Lord of mer - cy sends Us forth in His blest care.
 Re - stor - ing and re - fresh - ing Them for this world's strife.

5 The gifts are in the feast,
 Gifts far more than we see;
 Beneath the bread and wine
 Is food from Calvary.
 The body and the blood
 Remove our ev'ry sin;
 We leave His presence in
 His peace, renewed again.

6 All glory to the One
 Who lavishes such love;
 The triune God in love
 Assures our life above.
 His means of grace for us
 Are gifts He loves to give;
 All thanks and praise for His
 Great love by which we live!

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Communion Hymn *"Have No Fear, Little Flock" #735*

1 Have no fear, lit - tle flock; Have no fear, lit - tle
 2 Have good cheer, lit - tle flock; Have good cheer, lit - tle
 3 Praise the Lord high a - bove; Praise the Lord high a -
 4 Thank - ful hearts raise to God; Thank - ful hearts raise to

flock, For the Fa - ther has cho - sen To
 flock, For the Fa - ther will keep you In
 bove, For He stoops down to heal you, Up -
 God, For He stays close be - side you, In

give you the King - dom; Have no fear, lit - tle flock!
 His love for - ev - er; Have good cheer, lit - tle flock!
 lift and re - store you; Praise the Lord high a - bove!
 all things works with you; Thank - ful hearts raise to God!

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Please rise.

Nunc Dimittis *page 165*

Lord, now You let Your ser-vant go in peace; Your word has been ful -
 filled. My own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which You have pre -

pared in the sight of ev - 'ry peo - ple: A light to re -
 veal You to the na-tions and the glo-ry of Your peo-ple Is - ra - el.
 Glo-ry be to the Fa - ther and to the Son and to the Ho-ly Spir-it;
 as it was in the be-gin-ning, is now, and will be for-ev-er. A - men.

Post Communion Collect..... *page 166*

- P** Let us pray. Gracious God, our heavenly Father. . . one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

Benediction..... *page 166*

Sending Hymn..... *"God Has Spoken by His Prophets" #583*

1 God has spo - ken by His proph - ets, Spo - ken His un - chang - ing Word;
 2 God has spo - ken by Christ Je - sus, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Son,
 3 God is speak - ing by His Spir - it, Speak - ing to our hearts a - gain,
 Each from age to age pro - claim - ing God, the one, the righ - teous Lord.
 Bright - ness of the Fa - ther's glo - ry, With the Fa - ther ev - er one;
 In the age - less Word de - clar - ing His own mes - sage, now as then.
 In the world's de - spair and tur - moil, One firm an - chor holds us fast:
 Spo - ken by the Word In - car - nate, God of God, be - fore time was;
 Through the rise and fall of na - tions One sure faith yet stand - ing fast;
 God is king, His throne e - ter - nal; God the first, and God the last.
 Light of Light, to earth de - scend - ing, He re - veals our God to us.
 God a - bides, His Word un - chang - ing; God the first, and God the last.

Dismissal (Bethlehem's Mission)

- P** Grow in Christ,
- C** Live in Love and Share the Faith!

Postlude

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Next week's readings:

O.T. Deuteronomy 18:15-20; EP: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Gospel: Mark 1:21-28

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Attendance Saturday: 9 | Attendance Sunday: 36 |
| Total Offering: \$3,117.00 | Missions: \$0.00 |
| Home Use: \$2,317.00 | Benevolences: \$800.00 |

Serving us today:

Elders..... Jimmy Smithers (Sat), Willie Crespo, Evan Florida (Sun)
Musicians Jerrode Marsh
Altar Committee..... Darlene Laubenstein (Chair), Bambi Burden,
Julie Crespo, Diana Holland, Georgia Luker
Flower Committee Penny Humphrey (Chair), Lori Sloan

This Week's Schedule

| | | |
|-----------|------------|---|
| Sunday | 1:00 p.m. | Youth Catechesis |
| | 3:00 p.m. | Youth Get-Together/Ice Skating in Kansas City |
| Monday | | <i>Cindy's Day Off</i> |
| | 9:30 a.m. | Exercise Class |
| | 6:30 p.m. | 4-H Meeting |
| Tuesday | 9:30 a.m. | Quilting |
| | 5:15 p.m. | Education Board Meeting |
| Wednesday | 9:30 a.m. | Exercise Class |
| | 10:30 a.m. | Bible Study |
| | 6:30 p.m. | Choir Practice |
| Thursday | 9:30 a.m. | <i>Pr. Joel at Warrensburg Christian School</i> |
| | 1:00 p.m. | Games and Cards Group |
| | 3:30 p.m. | Adult Faith Formation Class |
| | 7:00 p.m. | Bible Study |
| Friday | 9:30 a.m. | Exercise Class |

| | | |
|----------|------------|---------------------|
| | 3:00 p.m. | Crafternoon |
| Saturday | 5:30 p.m. | Worship |
| Sunday | 9:15 a.m. | Christian Education |
| | 10:30 a.m. | Worship |

Prayers

For Sustenance, Healing, and Provision—We remember those who are dealing with illness, are homebound or in nursing homes, are undergoing and recovering from surgery, as well as going through hospitalization and rehabilitation: Charlie Becker, Mel Bockelman, Paula Brewer, Ray & Mary Carstensen, Galen Cobb, Bob & Barbara Compton, Marion Droege, Rev. Tom Fatka (Tommy Fatka’s dad), Peggy Forstad, Ana Fonseca (Willie Crespo’s grandmother), Wilma Gertz, Winnie & George Goldsmith (Steve’s parents), Karen Haase, Juanita Holcomb (Peggy Forstad’s mother), Mary Johnson, Wanda Kreisel, Lloyd McCarter, , Maryanna Savery, Rose Steitz, and & Joe Zeman.

For Military Members—We remember all service and support personnel who are deployed and stationed away from us and their families.

Prayer Requests & Spiritual Care—If you would like to make a prayer request, contact Pr. Joel or email the church office. Also, if you’re feeling the strain, feel free to call or text Pr. Joel or contact your elder or the church office. We rely upon the Holy Spirit and his gifts in Christ during every time of uncertainty and can never be thankful enough for the gift of each other!

Worship Services

Saturday Services start at 5:30 p.m. Sunday Services are at 10:30 a.m. Sunday Services are live on Facebook, YouTube and the webpage at blchurch.com.

Children & Youth

Youth Outing—This Sunday at **3:00 p.m.**, the youth will travel to Kansas City to go **ice skating**. Any middle school/high school students interested in going should let either Pastor or Penny know so we can figure out transportation.

Creation School—Join us on the first Friday **of each month from 10-11 am** for our faith-focused version of the trendy forest. We’ll do our best to enjoy creation in all weather, so be sure to dress appropriately. Please invite any families with young children that you know, as the hope is to welcome all in the community into our green space.

School and Christian Education

Sunday School is at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday mornings downstairs for ages Preschool through 12th grade. We start out with a combined opening with the adults to kick off each Sunday. The children continue working on songs with the goal of singing in the church service once per month. We invite all children to come and be a part of this time growing together in Christ!

Sunday Proverbs Bible Study—*Oh, to love wisdom and live wisely!* How many times have you said and thought that? Join us for our Sunday Bible study—*Living (& Loving) Wisdom*—which explores the book of Proverbs through the lens of the Ten Commandments and Christ “the Wisdom of God” (I Cor. 1:24. Pr. Joel is drawing from David Coe’s *Provoking Proverbs*. **We start at 9:15 a.m.** (in the conference room) and still have a lot of ground to cover!

Wednesday Bible Study—Join us **at 10:30 a.m.** in the conference room. We’re looking at the Apocrypha, from the time between the two Testaments. Come and find out what it’s about!

Thursday Bible Study at 7:00 p.m.—Pastor Bertels’ study on the book of Ezekiel meets in the conference room and is open to all who have the interest and time available. Come and join us!

Music

The Choir meets on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. for fellowship time and rehearsal from 7:00-8:00p.m. We are always looking for new members! Please contact Peggy Forstad with any questions about joining the choir.

Opportunities to Serve

Food Drive for Show-Me Christian Youth Home—If you’d like to begin 2024 by helping our younger friends, consider donating a pantry good (or a few) to Show-Me Christian Youth Home in La Monte. As part of a Thrivent grant, we are collecting canned and non-perishable foods for the group that helps youth in crisis by providing them a safe and loving home. Look for the collection bin at the north entrance during the month of January. If you’d like a Thrivent T-shirt, please see the church office. Any pantry item that parents could use at home would be welcomed there, too. Call or text Kaye at 660-441-7672 for more information. Learn more about the organization at showmehelpingkids.com.

Bulletin Board—A section of the bulletin board at the North entrance has been dedicated to our congregation members who are home-bound and in nursing homes. Please check it out to see how you can reach out to those who can no longer come to services regularly. Send a card or leave one in the pocket on the board to

be delivered during a visit. If you have a picture of a loved one you can share, please send it to Rebecca to have it posted!

Winter Trail Work and Garden Planning & Preparation—Keep your eyes open for opportunities in the near future on our Bethlehem Woods nature trail and in our backyard community gardens. Winter is the best time to think spring!

Fellowship

Friday Family Fun Night will take place on **February 2 at 6:00 p.m.** Cheese and Chocolate Fondue—who can resist that?! Sign up sheet for individual items is on the board near the mailboxes. (It's the 40th day after Christmas Day—the Presentation of Our Lord—the holy baby brought to the temple with two turtledoves!) We will also be making Valentine cards for the children to hand out at the nursing homes.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. Since this was such a hit last year, we will be having the Pancake Supper again on Tuesday, **February 13 starting at 5:30 p.m.** The Men's Club will be cooking and flipping pancakes that you will be able to enjoy with all different kinds of toppings. (This is a tradition that goes back to the medieval era for the day before Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent.)

Crafternoon-On the fourth Friday from 3-5 pm, let's get together to craft! A project and supplies will be waiting for you in the fellowship hall. We'll make seasonal crafts and cards that can be shared with others and conspire to deliver them with good cheer and a visit.

Exercise Class happens at **9:30 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays** in the Fellowship Hall. This class is low impact exercise open to anyone, men or women.

The Games and Card Group meets on **Thursdays at 1:00 p.m.** in the Youth Room downstairs. Everyone is welcome to come to this fellowship time.

The Quilting Group meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month from **9:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.** (September through May). Anyone is welcome to help with this project. No special sewing skills are needed. Bring your own lunch or go out and grab something. If you have any questions, please contact Georgia Luker.

This and That

Sermon Sketch Collage in the Luehrman Gallery—While most of the paintings & sketches by Dick Luehrman in the downstairs hallway gallery are unchanging, that's not the case for those grouped together on the east wall below the window—they rotate according to the seasons of the Church Year and were just switched out this past week. So, as we're in the short season of Epiphany and setting our sights toward Transfiguration Sunday and Ash Wednesday next month, spend some time with

those black and white sketches and reflect on what they individually and collectively show about Jesus the Christ—God’s Son made known to us in light and life, mercy and grace. Thanks to the Rich family for making this splendid rotation a reality!

The Johnson County Resource Center happens every Tuesday and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the basement of First Presbyterian Church (206 N. College)—providing breakfast, a hot lunch, and a place to hang out. Housing assistance and case management are provided, as well as Medicaid signup. **Katy Trail’s Mobile Medical Unit will not be able to resume its services until April 4.**

Ongoing thanks to those who generously give to the Bethlehem Emergency Fund, which enables Pr. Joel to assist members and certain people in the community who are in crisis situations. Much appreciation for your good support in shining the light of Christ! If you’d ever like to hear some of the stories of how these funds have been used, just ask Pr. Joel.

2023 Elders

Evan Florida (last name begins A-B) 660-238-4919, evan.keyrealty@gmail.com

Jimmy Smithers (last name begins C-E) 660-864-5370, jimmyds1980@gmail.com

Rich Vanderburgh (last name begins F-H) 660-864-3762, rvburgh@gmail.com

Sean Estanek (last name begins J-L) 440-396-6439, organvoicer@gmail.com

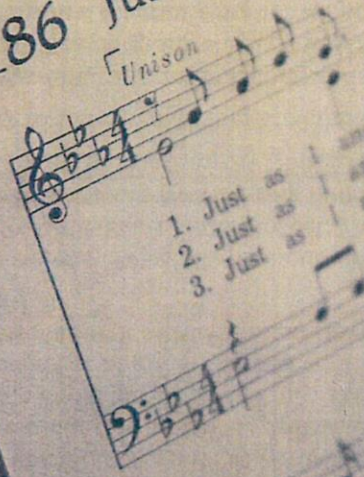
Willie Crespo (last name begins M-R) 660-679-8121, crespo6fam@gmail.com

Alan Miller (last name begins S-Z) 660-909-1764, alormiller@aol.com

Just As ... I AM

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”
(Ephesians 2:10)

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LFL

Charlotte Elliott wrote the familiar hymn “Just As I Am” in 1834. Born in 1789, a severe illness at age 32 left her unable to care for herself. Charlotte thereafter lived with her younger brother, Henry.

The parish he pastored in the resort town of Brighton, England, decided to hold a bazaar. Its proceeds would fund a school building and scholarships for underprivileged children.

Charlotte felt herself useless because she could not assist with preparations.

This hymn’s stanzas embodied her cries in answer to the despair. She then offered it as encouragement in a collection she called *The Invalid’s Hymnbook* (1836).

Just As I Am ... its beloved lines memorably testify to the sanctity of every human life. Almighty God does “receive, welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve” each member of our race with the heart of a Heavenly Father and the arms of a Gracious Savior. No ages, appearances, or abilities, no impairments or illnesses, not even guilt and grief can exclude from a place in His kingdom and a part in His family. We get to rejoice in our own lives and in our neighbors as gift and privilege. If our Lord’s forgiving favor can overcome sinful failures, then His lavish love will more than make up for human limitations.

“Just” has become an especially precious word for Lutherans. Its verb “justify” occupies the heart of the Gospel. The Holy One Himself gives the reason for every existence by declaring humankind righteous for the sake of Jesus Christ. “Just” means “worthy,” but it also means “barely.”

Any humanity from fertilization to final breath amounts to enough.

God’s creating work, redeeming labors, and calling activities never come up short. Persons undergoing surprise pregnancy, experiencing disability, or suffering terminal diagnosis matter as much as you and me. Indeed, they matter as much as the Son of Man, since Jesus incarnates all of our conditions and carries every sorrow. Even when human mouths cannot utter “I am,” Lord God lends them His own likeness and proclaims, “I AM!”

We Lutherans love life because He first loved all.



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Contact Information

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Our Mission

· Grow in Christ · Live in Love · Share the Faith

Our Vision

To be a community of believers, disciples, and servants while we deepen our personal faith and reach others for Christ.



Rev. Joel R. Kurz

Tuesday & Thursday: 8am–5pm, Wednesday & Friday: 10am-5pm

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Thursday: 9am-11am

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Please note that Bethlehem Lutheran Church has a closed-circuit video system. This allows for live streaming on the web, viewing of the service on screens in the building and helps to enhance our security. Please see a trustee or an elder if you have any questions.