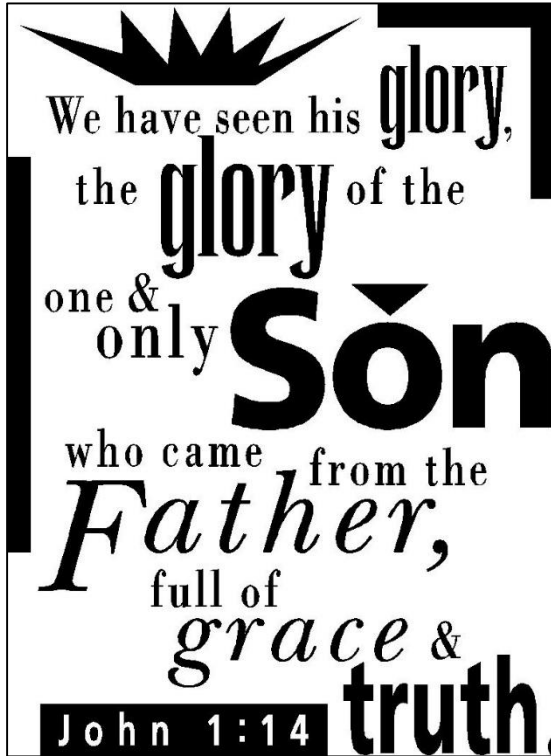


# Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE



✠ Holy Communion ✠

Second Sunday of Christmas

January 5, 2025

**SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS**



*Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.*

**GATHERING**

**PRELUDE**

*Stand*

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

**P:** Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
whose steadfast love is everlasting.

**C:** Amen.

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

*Kneel*

**P:** God-with-us,

**C:** **we confess that we have turned away  
those seeking shelter,  
claiming there is no room when we have plenty.  
We have made power and wealth our idols,  
while you show us true glory: a baby in a manger.  
We have overlooked the shepherds,  
expecting good news in prettier packaging.  
Too often, we have valued violence  
instead of your peace.  
Turn us from our ways to your ways.  
Grant us the grace to begin again.  
Free us from all that keeps us bound,  
and forgive our sin,  
through Jesus Christ, who gives himself for us.  
Amen.**

**P:** Hear the good news and rejoice!  
You are God's chosen ones,  
holy and beloved,  
† forgiven in Christ,  
and freed to respond in joy.

**C:** Amen.

*Stand*

**GATHERING HYMN**

*Angels, from the Realms of Glory*.....LBW 50

**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.

**CANTICLE OF PRAISE**



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



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.

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**P:** Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen**

*Sit*

**WORD**

**FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:7-14**

*God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gift of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.*

**A:** A Reading from Jeremiah:

<sup>7</sup> Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,  
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;  
proclaim, give praise, and say,  
"Save, O LORD, your people,  
the remnant of Israel."

<sup>8</sup> See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,  
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,  
among them the blind and the lame,  
those with child and those in labor, together;  
a great company, they shall return here.

<sup>9</sup> With weeping they shall come,  
and with consolations I will lead them back,  
I will let them walk by brooks of water,  
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;  
for I have become a father to Israel,  
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

<sup>10</sup> Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,  
and declare it in the coastlands far away;  
say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him,  
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock."

<sup>11</sup> For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,  
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

<sup>12</sup> They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,  
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,  
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
and over the young of the flock and the herd;

their life shall become like a watered garden,  
and they shall never languish again.

<sup>13</sup> Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,  
and the young men and the old shall be merry.

I will turn their mourning into joy,

I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

<sup>14</sup> I will give the priests their fill of fatness,  
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,  
says the LORD.

**A**: The word of the Lord.

**C**: **Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 147:12-20**

*The cantor sings the refrain; the congregation repeats it.*



Wor - ship the LORD, O Je - ru - sa-lem; praise your God, O Zi - on.

*Sung responsively between the cantor and congregation.*



<sup>12</sup> Worship the LORD, | O Jerusalem;  
praise your | God, O Zion,

<sup>13</sup> **who has strengthened the bars | of your gates  
and has blessed your chil- | dren within you.**

<sup>14</sup> God has established peace | on your borders  
and satisfies you with the | finest wheat.

<sup>15</sup> **God sends out a command | to the earth,  
a word that runs | very swiftly. R**

<sup>16</sup> God gives | snow like wool,  
scattering | frost like ashes.

<sup>17</sup> **God scatters | hail like bread crumbs.  
Who can stand a- | gainst God's cold?**

<sup>18</sup> The LORD sends forth the | word and melts them;  
the wind blows, and the | waters flow.

<sup>19</sup> **God declares the | word to Jacob,  
statutes and judg- | ments to Israel.**

<sup>20</sup> The LORD has not done so to any | other nation;  
they do not know God's judgments. | Hallelujah! **R**

**SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:3-14**

*In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.*

**A:** A Reading from Ephesians:

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup> He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup> that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup> In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, <sup>12</sup> so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup> In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; <sup>14</sup> this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

**A:** The word of the Lord.

**C:** Thanks be to God.

*Stand*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Al - le - lu - ia. al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

**CANTOR:** All the ends <sup>l</sup> of the earth have seen the victory <sup>l</sup> of our God.

**C:** Repeat the Alleluias

**GOSPEL: John 1:1-18**

*John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.*

**P:** The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the first chapter.

**C:** Glory to you, O Lord.

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") <sup>16</sup> From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

**P:** The Gospel of the Lord

**C:** Praise to you, O Christ.

*Sit*  
**SERMON**..... Janet Stroble

*Stand*  
**HYMN OF THE DAY**  
**Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**..... LBW 60

**APOSTLES' CREED**

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended into hell.**

**On the third day he rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again 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**

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

*A brief silence is held after the introduction.*

**P:** Filled with good news of great joy, let us offer our prayers for the church,  
the earth, and all people.

*After each petition:*

**P:** God of grace,

**C: receive our prayer.**

*The prayers conclude:*

**P:** We commend these prayers to you, O God, trusting your grace made  
known to all, through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Savior and  
Lord.

**C: Amen**

**PEACE**

**P:** The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C: And also with you.**

*The pastor and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

Peace be with you. **R:** Peace be with you.

*Sit*



**MEAL**

**OFFERING**

*The Offering is received as the Lord's table is prepared.*

**ANTHEM**

***The Rose E'er Blooming* ..... Ruth Elaine Schram**

*Stand*

**OFFERTORY**

*As the gifts are presented, the Offertory is sung*

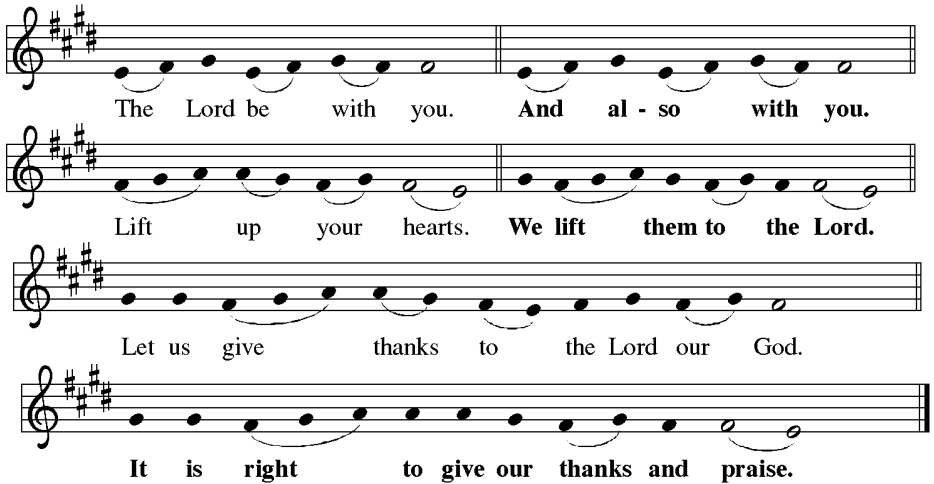
**What child is this, who, laid to rest,  
on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the king,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the babe, the son of Mary!**

**So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;  
come, peasant, king, to own him.  
The King of kings salvation brings;  
let loving hearts enthrone him.  
Raise, raise the song on high,  
the virgin sings her lullaby;  
joy, joy, for Christ is born,  
the babe, the son of Mary!**

**OFFERING PRAYER**

**A**: Let us pray:

**C**: God of heaven and earth,  
from the beginning, you have called forth life,  
in which you take delight.  
The trees, the fields, and the seas sing for joy.  
Bless now these gifts, received from your bounty,  
that we may join the chorus of creation  
to tell of your salvation from day to day.  
Amen.

**GREAT THANKSGIVING**


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

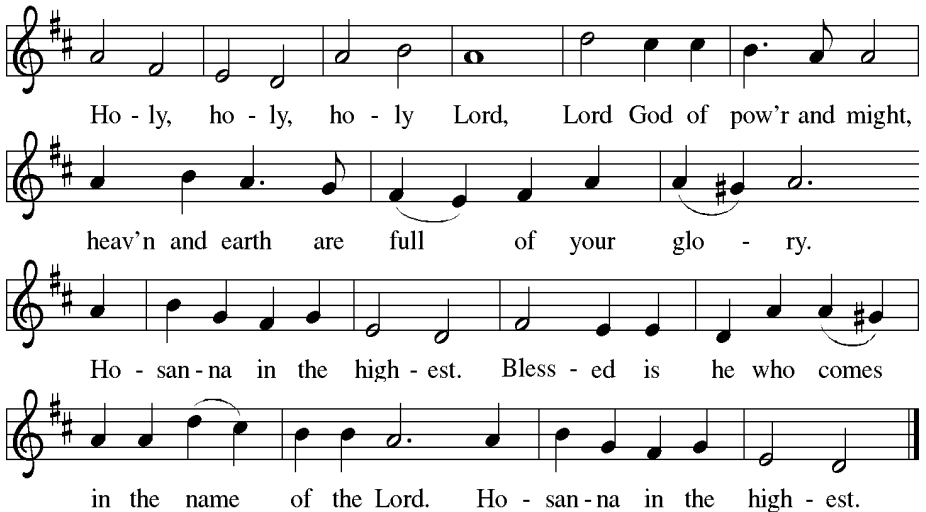
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

**PREFACE**

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. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. 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:



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.

**EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

**P**: Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life,  
at the birth of time your Word brought light into the world.  
In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary,  
to shine in our darkness and to make us your sons and  
daughters.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us,  
his death and resurrection, we await his coming again  
when all things will be restored in him.

By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that,  
held and nourished by you, we may live as your children,  
shining with the light of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father,  
with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and  
forever.

**C**: **Amen**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
 hallowed be thy name,  
 thy kingdom come,  
 thy will be done,  
 on earth as it is in heaven.

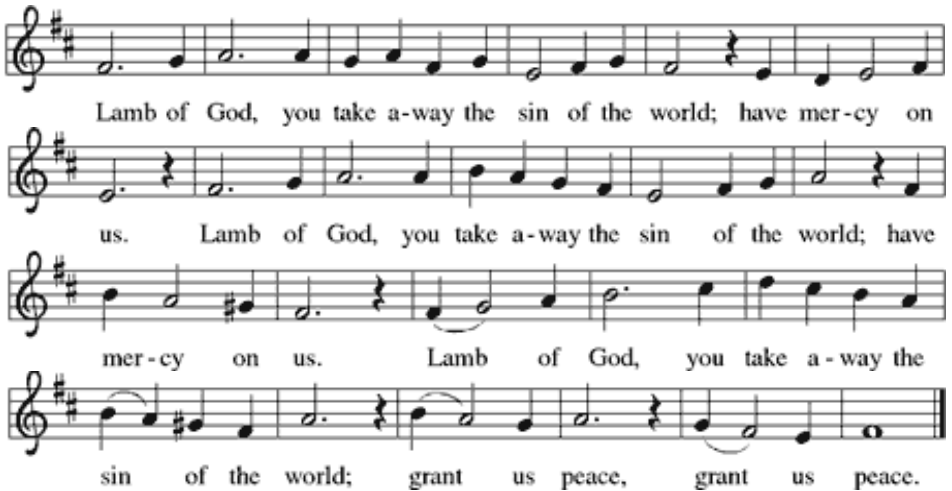
Give us this day our daily bread;  
 and forgive us our trespasses,  
 as we forgive those  
 who trespass against us;  
 and lead us not into temptation,  
 but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,  
 and the power, and the glory,  
 forever and ever. Amen.

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

**P**: A child has been born for us, a Son given to us.  
 Come, receive the gift of Jesus.

**C**: Thanks be to 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**

*All baptized believers are invited to this holy meal. Those not communing are invited for a blessing. Please follow the instructions of the ushers to gather at the altar table.*

*As the ministers give the bread and wine, they say these words to each communicant:*

**The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.**

*The communicant may say: Amen*

**COMMUNION HYMN**

***Of the Fathers Love Begotten ..... LBW 42***

*Stand*

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

**C:** Amen

**POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

**A:** Let us pray.

Merciful God,  
we thank you for Jesus, who is our heavenly food.  
Strengthened by this goodness,  
send us forth to announce your peace,  
comfort the afflicted,  
and share the good news of great joy.

**C:** Amen

***SENDING***

**BLESSING**

**P:** The God of love,  
Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,  
lavish you with grace,  
illumine your path,  
and increase your joy,  
today and always.

**C:** Amen

**SENDING HYMN**

***Let Our Gladness Have No End..... LBW 57***

**DISMISSAL**

**A:** Go in peace. The Word of God dwells in you richly.

**C:** Thanks be to God.

**POSTLUDE**

## SERVICE ASSISTANTS

**Ushers:** Mike Larson, Brian Bair, Al Cole, Sally Congdon, Kim Brofee;  
**Lay Assistant:** Anita Bair; **Comm. Asst.:** Pam Eveleth; **Acolyte:** Karrah Bair  
**Altar Guild:** Rita Strickler, Carol Winter  
**Greeters/Communion Presenters:** Dennis and Sue Shoemaker  
**Cantor:** Candy Watkins; **Flower Delivery:** Jody Fuller

## IN BLESSED MEMORY

**The Altar Flowers** are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of my brothers, Dave and Chuck Hallow by the Carol Armstrong family.  
**The Sanctuary Lamp** burns in honor of Ethel Emenheiser's 97<sup>th</sup> birthday by her daughter and son-in-law Susan and John Bryan.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Welcome to Messiah Church!** It is our joy to have you worship with us. If you are visiting, please make yourself known and leave your name & information to a congregation member. *We hope to see you again.*

**This morning we welcome Janet Stroble**, an Authorized Lay Worship Leader (ALWL) of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. Janet has received extensive training so as to provide worship leadership and preaching, and has been authorized by the bishop of the synod to preside at the Eucharist.

**We will un-decorate the church** immediately following worship today.

**Pledge cards and Time & Talent forms are due now.**

**Bible Study and Fellowship will begin** Wednesday, January 16 at 6:30 pm. *All are welcome!*



**MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**REV. A. BRUCE AMME, PRESIDING AND PREACHING**  
**JARED GIST, ORGANIST**

324 South Howard Street | South Williamsport, PA 17702  
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## **Beyond Boundaries**

One difficulty with the Gospel of John as we read it in our own context is grappling with passages that draw boundaries between who is “in” and who is “out.” The gospel sometimes edges toward contempt, or at least uncharity, for those who reject Jesus’ identity and message. Historically, this gospel has been used to perpetuate anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic rhetoric, so we need to approach it with care and love.

The verses in our reading today reflect a concern with Jesus’ identity and the boundaries between those who do and those who do not accept him. Verses 10 and 11 refer to the ignorance and rejection Jesus faces on earth. The passage continues by lifting up the benefits of choosing to receive and follow Jesus: the power to become children of God (as Jesus himself is a child of God).

Because Jesus, the Word made flesh, has come to earth to reveal the grace, truth, and glory of God—a God who pours out an abundance: “grace upon grace”! (John 1:16)—we read today’s passage not as guidance about who gets cut out of God’s inheritance but, rather, as assurance of the wideness of God’s love.

Jesus will make God known to the world, despite conflicts and hostilities that might threaten this work. At many later places, the gospel also points to the expansiveness of this mission, whether the assurance in John 3 that “God so loved the [whole] world” or Jesus’ promise in John 10 that he has sheep from other folds.

We cling to a Jesus who crosses boundaries—even the final boundary of death. There are no conflicts, powers, divisions, disagreements, or hostilities that can turn Jesus away from his message of abundant life for all.

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