

Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE



✝ Holy Communion ✝

Second Sunday of Christmas

January 4, 2026

SECOND SUNDAY OF 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,
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty Savior,
Prince of Peace.

C: Amen

P: Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.

Kneel

P: Reconciling God,

**C: we yearn for your presence to transform
our grief, pain, and despair.
We confess that we have not always prepared
room in our hearts for your love;
we have not always recognized
your presence among us;
we have not always embraced your message of peace.
We cry out, weary with the burden of violence,
oppression, and fear.
We confess our failure to make room
for those seeking refuge;
our participation in violent systems
that harm your innocent ones;
our reluctance to embody your good news.
Be born in us today
and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation.
Amen**

P: God's grace upon grace flows over you.
† Christ's presence redeems the whole creation.
Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!

C: Amen

Stand

GATHERING HYMN*Angels, from the Realms of Glory*

1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
 2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,
 3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;
 4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,

once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
 God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.
 seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.
 ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.

Refrain

Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt., sts. 1–3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4
 Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813–1879

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.

All

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:

⁷ 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."

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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."

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

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.



- ¹² Worship the LORD, | O Jerusalem;
praise your | God, O Zion,
¹³ **who has strengthened the bars | of your gates**
and has blessed your chil- | dren within you.
¹⁴ God has established peace | on your borders
and satisfies you with the | finest wheat.
¹⁵ **God sends out a command | to the earth,**
a word that runs | very swiftly. R
¹⁶ God gives | snow like wool,
scattering | frost like ashes.
¹⁷ **God scatters | hail like bread crumbs.**
Who can stand a- | gainst God's cold?
¹⁸ The LORD sends forth the | word and melts them;
the wind blows, and the | waters flow.
¹⁹ **God declares the | word to Jacob,**
statutes and judg- | ments to Israel.
²⁰ 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:

³ 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, ⁴ just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵ He destined us for adoption as his

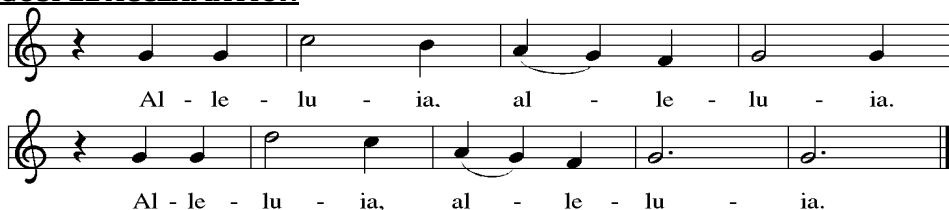
children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ 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, ¹² so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³ 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; ¹⁴ 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



CANTOR: All the ends ¹ of the earth have seen the victory ¹ 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.

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

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

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

¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ (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.’”) ¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ 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.....**Pastor John McNassor**

Stand
HYMN OF THE DAY
Let Our Gladness, Have No End **LBW 57**



1 Let our glad-ness have no end, Hal - le - lu - jah! For to earth did
2 See, the love - liest bloom-ing rose, Hal - le - lu - jah! From the branch of
3 In - to flesh is made the Word. Hal - le - lu - jah! He, our ref - uge

Refrain

Christ de-scend. Hal-le-lu-jah!
 Jes-se grows. Hal-le-lu-jah! On this day God gave us
 and our Lord. Hal-le-lu-jah!

Christ, his Son, to save us; Christ, his Son, to save us.

*Text: Bohemian carol, 15th cent.; tr. unknown
 Tune: Bohemian carol, 15th cent.*

NARODIL SE KRISTUS PÁN
 74 74 666

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: Empowered by the news of Christ’s birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

After each petition:

P: Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

The prayers conclude:

P: With the joy of Christ’s birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

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

***Breath of Heaven* Eaton, Grant, Larson**

Stand

OFFERTORY

As the gifts are presented, the Offertory is sung

**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 glory,
great are your wonders among us
and many are the blessings you bestow.
Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world,
that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace,
through Christ our Savior.
Amen

GREAT THANKSGIVING

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

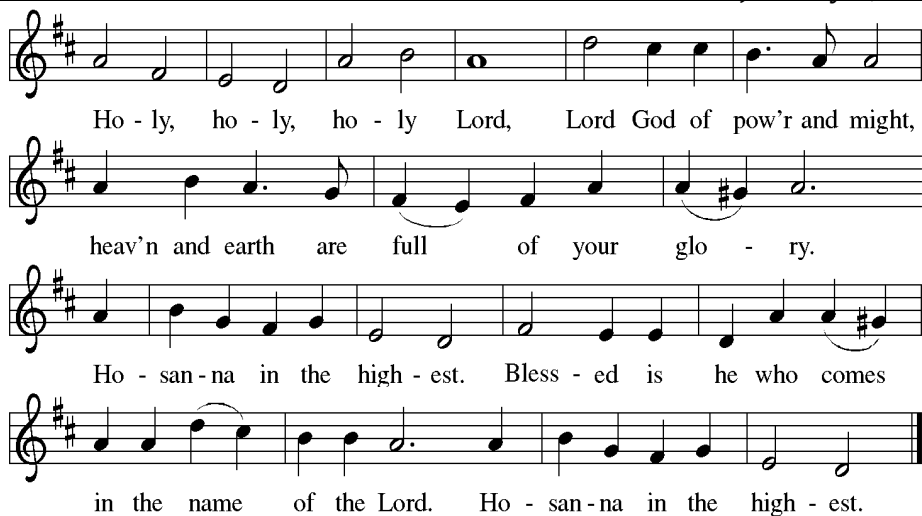
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody for 'The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.' is written on the first two staves. The third staff continues the melody for 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.' and the fourth staff continues for 'It is right to give our thanks and praise.' The lyrics are written below the notes.

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.

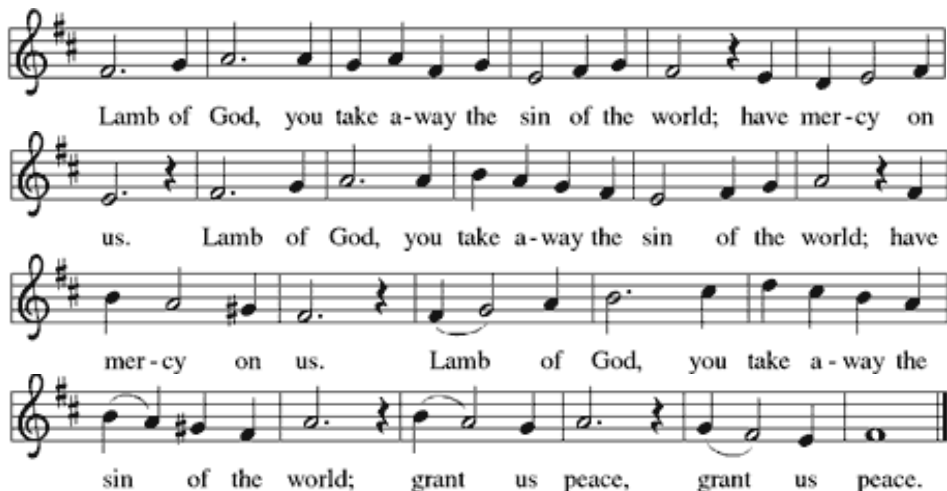
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: God is now in flesh appearing.
Come to the feast of joy!

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.

Sit

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

Lo, How a Rose Is Growing.....LBW 58

1 Lo, how a rose is grow - ing, a bloom of fin - est grace;
2 The rose of which I'm sing - ing, I - sa - iah had fore - told.
3 The shep - herds heard the sto - ry the an - gels sang that night:
4 This flow'r, so small and ten - der, with fra - grance fills the air;
5 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt all hu - man woe;

the proph - ets had fore - told it: a branch of Jes - se's race
He came to us through Mar - y who shel - tered him from cold.
how Christ was born of Mar - y; he was the Son of light.
his bright - ness ends the dark - ness that kept the earth in fear.
O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who tri - umphed o'er our foe:

would bear one per - fect flow'r here in the cold of
Through God's e - ter - nal will this child to us was
To Beth - le - hem they ran to find him in the
True God and yet true man, he came to save his
bring us at length, we pray, to the bright courts of



win - ter and dark - est mid - night hour.
 giv - en at mid - night calm and still.
 man - ger as an - gel her - alds sang.
 peo - ple from earth's dark night of sin.
 heav - en and in - to end - less day.

Text: German, 15th cent.; tr. Gracia Grindal, b. 1943

Music: ES IST EIN ROS, *Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengesäng*, Köln, 1599

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.

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table.

May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts
 the mystery of your presence.

Move us to discover the wonders of your love
 in the everyday moments of our lives,
 through Christ born in us.

C: Amen

SENDING

BLESSING

P: The triune God, glorious Mystery,
 holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter,
 ☩ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.

C: Amen

SENDING HYMN**Let All Together Praise Our God - St. 1,3,6,7..... LBW 47**

1 Let all to - geth - er praise our God be - fore his glo - rious
 2 The Fa - ther sends him from his throne to be an in - fant
 3 With - in an earth-born form he hides his all - cre - at - ing
 4 He un - der - takes a great ex - change, puts on our hu - man



throne; to - day he o - pens heav'n a - gain to
 small and lie here poor - ly man - gered now in
 light; to serve us all he hum - bly cloaks the
 frame, and in re - turn gives us his realm, his



give us his own Son, to give us his own Son.
 this cold, dis - mal stall, in this cold, dis - mal stall.
 splen - dor of his might, the splen - dor of his might.
 glo - ry, and his name, his glo - ry, and his name.

5 He is a servant, I a lord:
 how great a mystery!
 How strong the tender Christchild's love!
 No truer friend than he,
 no truer friend than he.

6 He is the key, and he the door
 to blessed paradise;
 the angel bars the way no more.
 To God our praises rise,
 to God our praises rise.

7 Your grace in lowliness revealed,
 Lord Jesus, we adore,
 and praise to God the Father yield
 and Spirit evermore;
 we praise you evermore.

Text: Nikolaus Herman, c. 1480–1561; tr. F. Samuel Janzow, b. 1913
 Music: LOBT GOTT, IHR CHRISTEN, Nikolaus Herman, c. 1480–1561

DISMISSAL**A:** Glory to God in the highest!**C:** And peace to God's people on earth!**A:** Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.**C:** Thanks be to God.**POSTLUDE**

SERVICE ASSISTANTS

Ushers: Mike Larson, Brian Bair, Al Cole, Sally Congdon, Kim Brofee

Lay Assistant: Dave Bausinger; **Communion. Assistant.:** Mandy Feinberg

Acolyte: Weston Sherman; **Altar Guild:** Vicki Bair, Doris Butt

Greeters/Communion Presenters: Doris Butt, Kim Brofee

Cantor: David Bausinger; **Flower Delivery:** Charles Luppert

IN BLESSED MEMORY

The Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of loved ones.

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 Pastor John McNassor, retired Pastor 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 7 at 6:30 pm. *All are welcome!*

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

JARED GIST, ORGANIST

324 South Howard Street | South Williamsport, PA 17702

(570) 326-9171 | www.messiahsouth.org

A Glimpse of God-Made-Flesh

This gospel text is wordy to the point of feeling almost otherworldly. There's no real story here; there's no narrative to follow. To illustrate this text for children, for example, seems nearly impossible.

"The Word became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:14). How is this gospel text—this gospel truth—made manifest, here and now? Where do you see God, in the flesh, walking the earth? How do you experience God-made-flesh speaking to you, caring for you, guiding you?

Surely God is present, in the flesh, even in the unlikelyst of places—as unlikely as a baby lying in a manger. Surely God is still here today in some form or fashion. The Word is no longer flesh and living among us, at least not in the same way as when Jesus himself was walking the earth. But *we* are flesh, and *we* are here. Surely *you* are God made manifest for someone; surely *your* presence here on earth is a glorious display of the presence of God for a neighbor or friend or colleague or family member—maybe even for someone you'd never expect to name you in this way.

In baptism, God commissions us to "proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace" (*ELW*, p. 228). This is the work of the Word made flesh; this is the work of providing a glimpse of God to a world in need of grace, hope, and new life.

How blessed we are to live in the promise of God-made-flesh. How blessed we are to live in response to that promise!

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