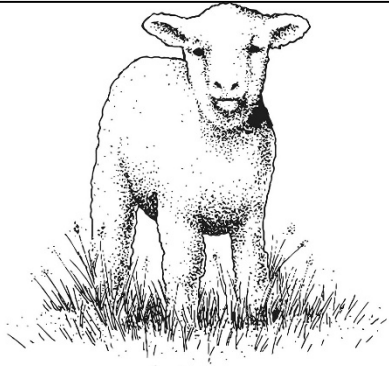


# Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE



*"Behold,*  
THE LAMB OF GOD,  
*who takes away*  
THE SIN  
OF THE WORLD!"

**JOHN 1:29, ESV**

✠ Holy Communion ✠

Second Sunday after Epiphany

January 18, 2026



## SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

*Today's gospel opens with further reflection on Jesus' baptism. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and the one anointed by the Spirit. In the liturgy we come and see Christ revealed among us in word and meal. We go forth to invite others to come and worship the Holy One and to receive the gifts of grace and peace made known among us.*

### GATHERING

#### PRELUDE

*Stand*

#### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

**C:** Amen.

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

*Kneel*

**P:** Mighty God, lover of justice,

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

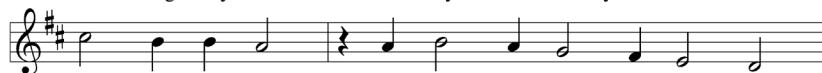
**P:** The former things have passed away,  
and new things God now declares:  
Like a spring of water that never fails,  
God covers you in the righteousness of Christ,  
and forgives your sin in † Jesus' name.  
May the Spirit give you strength to live for others,  
and bless you with the gift of peace.

**C:** Amen.

*Stand*

**GATHERING HYMN*****O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright! st. 1-3, 6 .....LBW 76***

1 O Morn - ing Star, how fair and bright! You shine with God's  
 2 Come, heav'n - ly Bride - groom, light di - vine, and deep with - in  
 3 Lord, when you look on us in love, at once there falls  
 4 Al - might - y Fa - ther, in your Son you loved us, when



own truth and light, a - glow with grace and mer - cy!  
 our hearts now shine; there light a flame un - dy - ing!  
 from God a - bove a ray of pur - est plea - sure.  
 not yet be - gun was this old earth's foun - da - tion!



Of Ja - cob's race, King Da - vid's Son, our Lord and mas -  
 In your one bod - y let us be as liv - ing branch -  
 Your word and Spir - it, flesh and blood re - fresh our souls  
 Your Son has ran - somed us in love to live in him



ter, you have won our hearts to serve you on - ly!  
 es of a tree, your life our lives sup - ply - ing.  
 with heav'n - ly food, You are our dear - est trea - sure!  
 here and a - bove: this is your great sal - va - tion.



Low - ly, ho - ly! Great and glo - rious, all vic - to - rious, rich in  
 Now, though dai - ly earth's deep sad - ness may per - plex us and dis -  
 Let your mer - cy warm and cheer us! Oh, draw near us! for you  
 Al - le - lu - ia! Christ the liv - ing, to us giv - ing life for -



bles - sing! Rule and might o'er all pos - sess - ing!  
 tress us, yet with heav'n - ly joy you bless us.  
 teach us God's own love through you has reached us.  
 ev - er, keeps us yours and fails us nev - er!

5 What joy to know, when life is past,  
 the Lord we love is first and last,  
 the end and the beginning!  
 He will one day, oh, glorious grace,  
 transport us to that happy place  
 beyond all tears and sinning!  
 Amen! Amen!  
 Come, Lord Jesus!  
 Crown of gladness!  
 We are yearning  
 for the day of your returning.

6 Oh, let the harps break forth in sound!  
 Our joy be all with music crowned,  
 our voices gaily blending!  
 For Christ goes with us all the way—  
 today, tomorrow, ev'ry day!  
 His love is never ending!  
 Sing out! Ring out!  
 Jubilation!  
 Exultation!  
 Tell the story!  
 Great is he, the King of glory!

**APOSTOLIC GREETING**

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

**G:** 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.

Holy God, our strength and our redeemer, by your Spirit hold us forever, that through your grace we may worship you and faithfully serve you, follow you and joyfully find you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C**: Amen

*Sit*

**WORD****FIRST READING: Isaiah 49:1-7**

*Here the servant, identified as Israel, speaks for herself and describes her honored mission. Called before her birth like Jeremiah and John the Baptist, the servant is not only to restore Israel. The servant's ultimate assignment is to bring news of God's victory to the ends of the earth. God in faithfulness has chosen Israel for this task.*

**A**: A Reading from Isaiah:

<sup>1</sup> Listen to me, O coastlands;  
pay attention, you peoples from far away!  
The LORD called me before I was born;  
while I was in my mother's womb he named me.

<sup>2</sup> He made my mouth like a sharp sword;  
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;  
he made me a polished arrow;  
in his quiver he hid me away.

<sup>3</sup> And he said to me, "You are my servant,  
Israel, in whom I will be glorified."

<sup>4</sup> But I said, "I have labored in vain;  
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;  
yet surely my cause is with the LORD  
and my reward with my God."

<sup>5</sup> And now the LORD says,  
who formed me in the womb to be his servant,  
to bring Jacob back to him,  
and that Israel might be gathered to him,  
for I am honored in the sight of the LORD,  
and my God has become my strength—

<sup>6</sup> he says,  
"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant  
to raise up the tribes of Jacob  
and to restore the survivors of Israel;  
I will give you as a light to the nations,  
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

<sup>7</sup> Thus says the LORD,  
 the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,  
 to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,  
 the slave of rulers,  
 "Kings shall see and stand up;  
 princes, and they shall prostrate themselves,  
 because of the LORD, who is faithful,  
 the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

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

**C:** Thanks be to God.

**PSALM: Psalm 40:1-11**

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



I love to do your will, O my God, O my God.

*Sung responsively between the cantor and congregation.*



- <sup>1</sup> I waited patiently up- | on the LORD,  
 who stooped to me and | heard my cry.
- <sup>2</sup> **The LORD lifted me out of the desolate pit, out of the | miry clay,  
 and set my feet upon a high cliff, making my | footing sure.**
- <sup>3</sup> The LORD put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise | to our God;  
 many shall see, and stand in awe, and put their trust | in the LORD.
- <sup>4</sup> **Happy are they who trust | in the LORD!  
 They do not turn to enemies or to those who | follow lies. R**
- <sup>5</sup> Great are the wonders you have done, O LORD my God! In your plans for  
 us, none can be com- | pared with you!  
 Oh, that I could make them known and tell them! But they are more  
 than | I can count.
- <sup>6</sup> **Sacrifice and offering you do | not desire;  
 you have opened my ears: burnt-offering and sin-offering you  
 have | not required. R**
- <sup>7</sup> And so I said, "Here I | am; I come.  
 In the scroll of the book it is writ- | ten of me:
- <sup>8</sup> **I love to do your will, | O my God;  
 your law is | deep within me.'"**
- <sup>9</sup> I proclaimed righteousness in the | great assembly;

I have not restrained my lips, O LORD, you know.

**<sup>10</sup> I have not hidden your righteousness in my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your deliverance;**

**I have not concealed your steadfast love and truth from the great assembly.**

**<sup>11</sup> You are the LORD; do not withhold your compassion from me; may your steadfast love and your truth continually keep me safe. R**

## **SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9**

*Though God's church in Corinth is a fractious congregation beset with many conflicts, Paul opens this letter by spotlighting the multiple ways God has enriched and sustained its life as part of the divine call into the fellowship of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**A:** A Reading from First Corinthians:

<sup>1</sup> Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

<sup>2</sup> To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

<sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

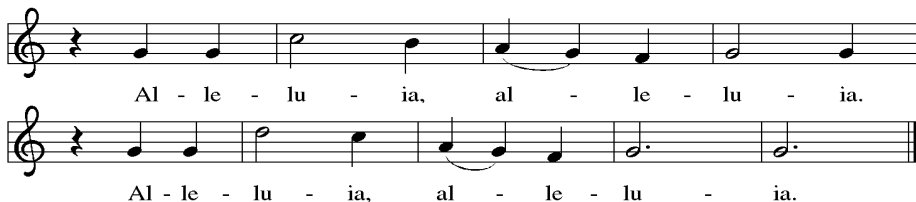
<sup>4</sup> I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup> for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind <sup>6</sup> just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you <sup>7</sup> so that you are not lacking in any gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup> He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> God is faithful, by whom you were called into the partnership of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

**C:** Thanks be to God.

*Stand*

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



**CANTOR:** In the Word was life, \* and the life was the light of all people.

**C:** Repeat the Alleluias

**GOSPEL: John 1:29-42**

*John the Baptist's witness to Jesus initiates a chain of testimony as his disciples begin to share with others what they have found.*

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

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

<sup>29</sup> John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"<sup>30</sup> This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'<sup>31</sup> I myself did not know him, but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel."<sup>32</sup> And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him."<sup>33</sup> I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'<sup>34</sup> And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Chosen One."

<sup>35</sup> The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples,<sup>36</sup> and as he watched Jesus walk by he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!"<sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.<sup>38</sup> When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?"<sup>39</sup> He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.<sup>40</sup> One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.<sup>41</sup> He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" which is translated Anointed.<sup>42</sup> He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" which is translated Peter.

**P:** The Gospel of the Lord

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

*Sit*

**SERMON** ..... Janet Stroble, ALWL





Stand

**HYMN OF THE DAY****By All Your Saints in Warfare St. 1,3, 5 ..... LBW 177**

1 By all your saints in war - fare, For all your saints at  
 2 (Insert the stanza appropriate to the day.)  $\sharp$  11  
 3 Then let us praise the Fa - ther And wor - ship God the

rest, Your ho - ly name, O Je - sus, For - ev - er - more be  
 Son And sing to God the Spir - it, E - ter - nal Three in

blest! For you have won the bat - tle That they might wear the  
 One. Till all the ran - somed num - ber Fall down be - fore the

crown; And now they shine in glo - ry Re - flect - ed from your throne.  
 throne, As - crib - ing pow'r and glo - ry And praise to God a - lone.

**St. Andrew, Apostle**

5 All praise, O Lord, for Andrew,  
 The first to welcome you,  
 Whose witness to his brother  
 Named you Messiah true.  
 May we, with hearts kept open  
 To you throughout the year,  
 Confess to friend and neighbor  
 Your advent ever near.

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

*After each petition:*

**[P]:** Merciful God,

**[C]: receive our prayer.**

*The prayers conclude:*

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

**[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**

***Blest Shall They Be* ..... Natalie Sleeth**

*Stand*

**OFFERTORY**

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

Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of  
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that  
we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of  
all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble  
with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

**OFFERING PRAYER**

**A:** Let us pray:

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

**GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The 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. By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations; in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son, and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory. 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:** Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth.

In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son,  
that all those who believe in him should not perish,  
but have eternal life.

We give thanks to you

for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ.

Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts,

that we may receive our Lord with a living faith  
as he comes to us in his holy supper.

**C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

**P** 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**

**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 the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Come to the table; taste and see.

**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**      *Jesus Come! For We Invite You*

1 Je - sus, come! for we in - vite you, guest and mas - ter,  
2 Je - sus, come! trans-form our plea - sures, guide us in - to  
3 Je - sus, come! in new cre - a - tion, heav'n brought near in  
4 Je - sus, come! sur - prise our dull - ness, make us will - ing

friend and Lord; now, as once at Ca - na's wed - ding,  
paths un - known; bring your gifts, com-mand your ser - vants,  
pow'r di - vine; give your un - ex - pect - ed glo - ry,  
to re - ceive more than we can yet im - ag - ine,

speak and let us hear your word: lead us through our need or  
let us trust in you a - lone: though your hand may work in  
chang-ing wa - ter in - to wine: rouse the faith of your dis -  
all the best you have to give: let us find your hid - den



doubt - ing, hope be born and joy re - stored.  
 se - cret, all shall see what you have done.  
 ci - ples— come, our first and great - est Sign!  
 rich - es, taste your love, be - lieve, and live!

Text: Christopher Idle, b. 1938

Music: UNION SEMINARY, Harold Friedell, 1905–1958

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Music © 1957, 1985 H. W. Grav, admin. CPP/Belwin.

**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.

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

**C:** Amen

### ***SENDING***

### **SENDING OF THE EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS**

**P:** Gracious God,

loving all your family with a mother's tender care:  
 As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread,  
 assist us in this ministry on which we are sent forth.  
 In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those to whom  
 we bring this sacrament, that through the body and blood of  
 your Son we may all know the comfort of your abiding  
 presence.

**C:** Amen

**BLESSING**

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

**C:** Amen

**SENDING HYMN**

*O Day Full of Grace*..... **LBW 161**

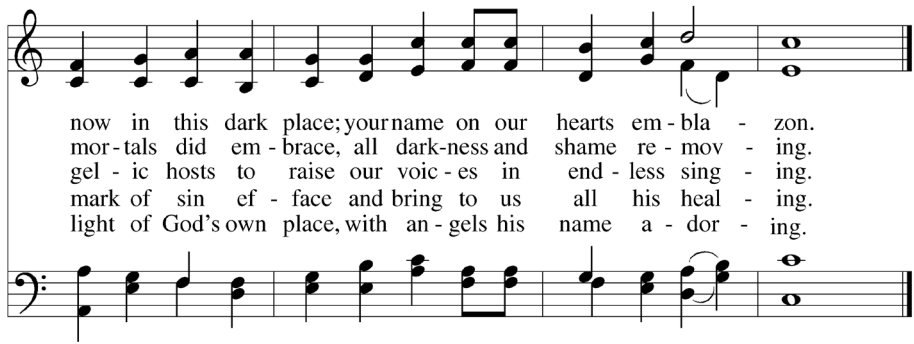
The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and includes piano accompaniment. It consists of two systems of music. The first system covers the first five lines of the lyrics, and the second system covers the remaining lines. The melody is primarily in the Soprano and Alto parts, with the piano accompaniment providing harmonic support. The lyrics are written below the vocal staves, with line numbers 1 through 5 corresponding to the first system.

1 O day full of grace that now we see ap - pear - ing on  
2 O day full of grace, O bless - ed time, our Lord on the  
3 For Christ bore our sins, and not his own, when he on the  
4 God came to us then at Pen - te - cost, his Spir - it new  
5 When we on that fi - nal jour - ney go that Christ is for

earth'sho - ri - zon, bring light from our God that we may  
earth ar - riv - ing; then came to the world that light sub -  
cross was hang - ing; and then he a - rose and moved the  
life re - veal - ing, that we might no more from him be  
us pre - par - ing, we'll gath - er in song, our hearts a -

be re - plete in his joy this sea - son. God, shine for us  
lime, great joy for us all re - triev - ing; for Je - sus all  
stone, that we, un - to him be - long - ing, might join with an -  
lost, all dark - ness for us dis - pel - ling. His flame will the  
glow, all joy of the heav - ens shar - ing, and walk in the





now in this dark place; your name on our hearts em - bla - zon.  
mor - tals did em - brace, all dark-ness and shame re - mov - ing.  
gel - ic hosts to raise our voic - es in end - less sing - ing.  
mark of sin ef - face and bring to us all his heal - ing.  
light of God's own place, with an - gels his name a - dor - ing.

Text: Danish folk hymn, c. 1450; tr. Gerald Thorson, 1921–2001  
Music: DEN SIGNEDE DAG, Christoph E. F. Weyse, 1774–1842

**DISMISSAL**

- A**: Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy.
- 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:** Fred Harbaugh

**Acolyte:** Dylan Sherman; **Altar Guild:** Alice Morrison, April Gardner

**Greeters/Communion Presenters:** Mike and April Gardner

**Cantor:** Carol Waltz; **Flower Delivery:** Jody Fullmer

### **IN BLESSED MEMORY**

**The Altar Flowers** are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Rodney O'Brien's heavenly birthday, January 19<sup>th</sup>. By his wife Gail, children and their families.

**The Basket of Flowers** is given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of George and Helen Stroup on their wedding anniversary, January 19<sup>th</sup>, with love from their children, Georgie, Kathy, Larry, David and families.

### **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

**Eucharistic Ministers** will be sent out this morning.

**Bible Study and Fellowship** has been canceled until further notice.

**Looking for something to do on these cold winter days.** Why not do a puzzle or two. The next few Sunday's there will be quality used puzzles in the Narthex offered for donations to help offset major expenses for the church.

**SEEKING:** Individuals willing to paint our Jensen lounge. Please notify Pam if you are able to join in this fellowship. The date will be established as we go forth.

**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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## **Then Knowing Begins**

There is a whole lot written about *knowing* in this gospel's pithy account of Jesus' debut. There is, for that matter, a lot written about knowing throughout John's gospel; it's part of this book of the Bible's particularity. But take note: Before any claims of knowing are dashed into this memoir, John the Baptizer bothers to reveal that there was, for him, a time before knowing—a time when he did not know Jesus. This little and perhaps overlooked detail, "I myself did not know him" (John 1:31), is like sugar water in a hummingbird feeder: a sweet invitation or coaxing to come, taste and see what is good.

That admission from John lures readers and hearers to pay attention not simply to events: the arrival of Jesus on the scene, his walking toward John, the act of baptizing with water, or even the flamboyant descent of a dove. These are descriptive details, but they are not the essence of what soon will overtake John and others—an invitation to know Jesus.

The difference between knowing *about* Jesus and knowing Jesus is tucked in and all around this gospel text that leads initially to the Baptizer and then moves onto a pathway beyond him. Yes, Jesus is introduced as "Lamb of God." Yes, like a dove, the Spirit was seen descending. Vivid, symbolic details, for sure, about one coming to take away sin. But it is afterward, in Andrew and Simon's curiosity and willingness to follow, when Jesus asks "What are you looking for?" and urges them to "come and see," when they begin to stay together—they with Jesus and he with them—that knowing Jesus overtakes them and they fall into the grace of what he comes to take away and what he comes to give.

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