

SOLOMON'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
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"Solomon's Evangelical Lutheran Church, following the example of Jesus Christ, seeks to live in the confidence and fullness of God's grace; to preach the Good News boldly and truthfully; to support and serve others in faith; to work in harmony with all creation."

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
JANUARY 29, 2023

January 29, 2023
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Who are the blessed ones of God? For Micah, they are those who do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. For Paul, they are the ones who find wisdom in the weakness of the cross. For Jesus, they are the poor, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who mourn, and those who hunger for righteousness. In baptism we find our blessed identity and calling in this countercultural way of living and serving.

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

For now, the offering plate will continue to be placed in the back of the church in front of the Baptismal Font. Thank you for your continuing support of the ministries of Solomon's as we join God in the work of sharing Christ's love.

LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,
who makes all things new,
whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin.

Holy One, source of our renewal,
**we confess that we are wrapped up in sin,
and cannot free ourselves.**

We have not practiced your righteousness.

Our hearts have turned away from you.

For the sake of the world you so love,

forgive us,

that we may be reconciled to one another

for the glory of your holy name.

Amen.

Thus says our God:

“The former things have come to pass
and new things I now declare.”

God's mercy makes us new.

We are forgiven in the name of ✠ Christ our Savior.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG *Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart!* (ELW 873)

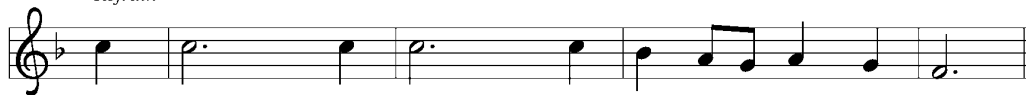


- 1 Re - joice, ye pure in heart! Re - joice, give thanks, and sing;
2 With voice as full and strong as o - cean's surg - ing praise,
3 With all the an - gel choirs, with all the saints on earth
4 Still lift your stan - dard high, still march in firm ar - ray,



- your fes - tal ban - ner wave on high, the cross of Christ your king.
send forth the stur - dy hymns of old, the psalms of an - cient days.
pour out the strains of joy and bliss, true rap - ture, no - blest mirth.
as pil - grims through the dark - ness wend till dawns the gol - den day.

Refrain



- Re - joice! Re - joice! Re - joice, give thanks, and sing!

- 5 At last the march shall end;
the wearied ones shall rest;
the pilgrims find their home at last,
Jerusalem the blest. *Refrain*
- 6 Praise God who reigns on high,
the Lord whom we adore:
the Father, Son, and Spirit blest,
one God forevermore. *Refrain*

Text: Edward H. Plumptre, 1821–1891, alt.

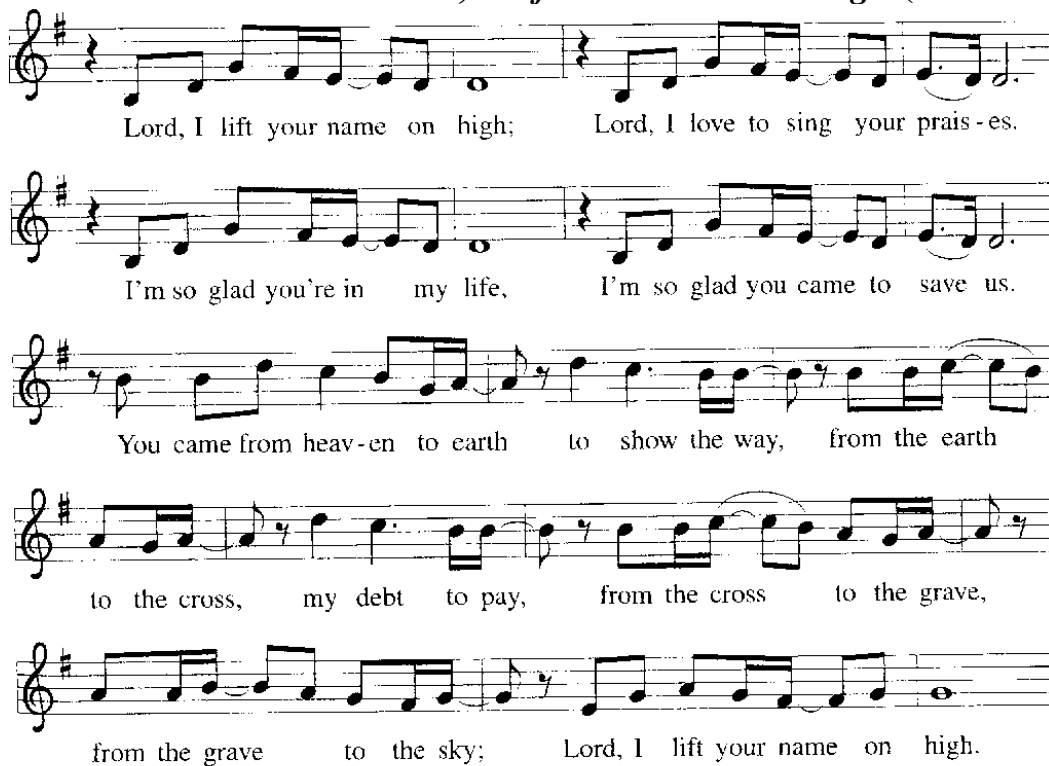
Music: MARION, Arthur H. Messiter, 1834–1916

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GREETING

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

CANTICLE OF PRAISE *Lord, I Lift Your Name On High* (ELW 857)



Lord, I lift your name on high; Lord, I love to sing your prais-es.
I'm so glad you're in my life, I'm so glad you came to save us.
You came from heav-en to earth to show the way, from the earth
to the cross, my debt to pay, from the cross to the grave,
from the grave to the sky; Lord, I lift your name on high.

Text: Rick Founds, b. 1954

Music: Rick Founds

Text and music © 1989 Maranatha Praise, Inc., admin. Music Services

LORD · LIFT YOUR NAME

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PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

CHOIR ANTHEM *OFFERTORY*

FIRST READING: Micah 6:1-8

A reading from Micah.

With the mountains and the foundations of the earth as the jury, God brings a lawsuit against Israel. God has "wearied" Israel with a long history of saving acts. God does not want or expect lavish sacrifices to attempt to earn divine favor. Rather God empowers the people to do justice, to love loyalty to God, and to walk shrewdly in God's service.

¹Hear what the LORD says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

²Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the LORD,
and you enduring foundations of the earth;
for the LORD has a controversy with his people,
and he will contend with Israel.

³“O my people, what have I done to you?
In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

⁴For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,
and redeemed you from the house of slavery;
and I sent before you Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam.

⁵O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the LORD.”

⁶“With what shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?

⁷Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

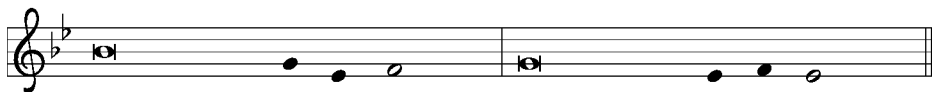
⁸He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 15

(sung responsively between choir and congregation, beginning with the choir)



Psalm tone reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year C* © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.
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¹LORD, who may dwell in your ¹ tabernacle?

Who may abide upon your ¹ holy hill?

²**Those who lead a blameless life and do ¹ what is right,
who speak the truth ¹ from their heart;**

³they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil ¹ to their friends;
they do not cast discredit up- ¹ on a neighbor.

⁴**In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those who ¹ fear the LORD.
They have sworn upon their health and do not take ¹ back their word.**

⁵They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes a- ¹ gainst the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be ¹ overthrown.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

According to the world's standards of power and might, the message of the cross seems stupid and offensive. Yet this word reveals the paradoxical way God has chosen to work power and salvation through weakness, rejection, and suffering. Hence the message of the cross becomes true wisdom and power for believers.

¹⁸The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

²⁶Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no one might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 142)

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.

GOSPEL: Matthew 5:1-12

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus opens the Sermon on the Mount by naming those who are blessed in the reign of God.

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

PASTOR BARB

HYMN OF THE DAY *Rise Up, O Saints of God!* (ELW 669)

Rise Up, O Saints of God!



- 1 Rise up, O saints of God! From vain am - bi - tions turn;
- 2 Speak out, O saints of God! De - spair en - gulfs earth's frame;
- 3 Rise up, O saints of God! The king - dom's task em - brace;
- 4 Give heed, O saints of God! Cre - a - tion cries in pain;
- 5 Com - mit your hearts to seek the paths which Christ has trod;



Christ rose tri - um - phant that your hearts with no - bler zeal might burn.
as heirs of God's bap - tis - mal grace, the word of hope pro - claim.
re - dress sin's cru - el con - se - quence; give jus - tice larg - er place.
stretch forth your hand of heal - ing now, with love the weak sus - tain.
and, quick - ened by the Spir - it's pow'r, rise up, O saints of God!

Text: Norman O. Forness, b. 1936

Music: FESTAL SONG, William H. Walter, 1825–1893

Text © Norman O. Forness, admin. Augsburg Fortress

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Please join me as we confirm our faith together in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

CREED

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH *(Please respond.)*

P: Merciful God, C: receive our prayer.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERTORY *We Are an Offering* (ELW 692)

We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you: we are an
of-fer-ing. Lord, use our voices, Lord, use our hands, Lord, use our
lives, they are yours: we are an of-fer-ing. All that we have, all that we are,
all that we hope to be, we give to you, we give to you.
We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you:
we are an of-fer-ing, we are an of-fer-ing.

Text: Dwight Liles, b. 1957
Music: Dwight Liles
Text and music © 1984 Word Music, LLC

OFFERING
PM

OFFERING PRAYER

Liberating God,
you break the bonds of injustice
and let the oppressed go free.
Receive these offerings in thanksgiving
for all your works of merciful power,
and shape us as people of your justice and freedom.
You we magnify and adore, through Jesus our Savior,
Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also 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.

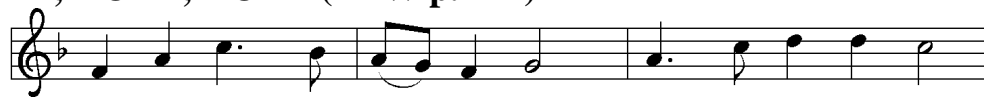
PREFACE

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:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 144)



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.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

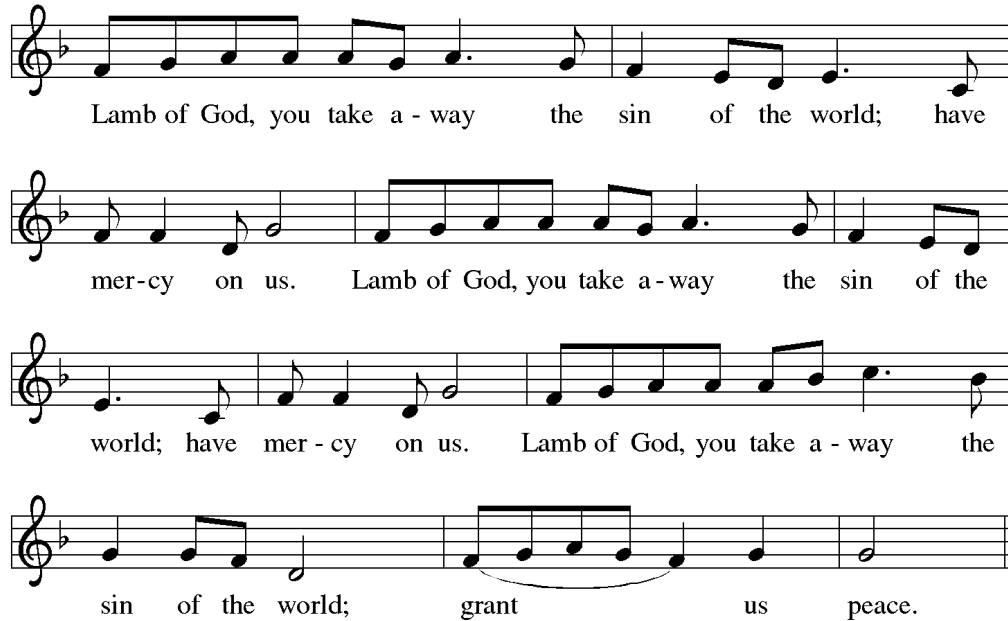
INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come and taste the joy of God!

COMMUNION

Continuous - Please continue down center aisle at the direction of the usher. After you receive the bread, you may take a cup of red wine or white grape juice from the tray. Please place your empty communion cup in the basket. Gluten free wafers are available, ask the Pastor when you come forward. Notify the Head Usher if you would appreciate receiving Communion at your seat rather than walking up to the altar, the Pastor and Communion Assistant will be happy to bring Communion to you.

COMMUNION SONG (ELW p. 146)

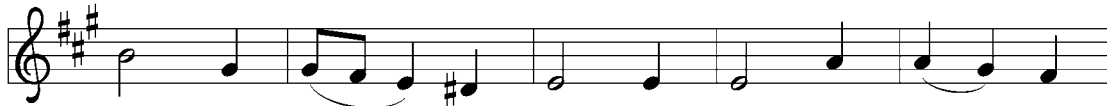


Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

HYMN DURING COMMUNION *Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life* (ELW 719)



1 Where cross the crowd - ed ways of life, where sound the
2 In haunts of wretch - ed - ness and need, on shad - owed
3 From ten - der child - hood's help - less - ness, from hu - man
4 The cup of wa - ter giv'n for you still holds the



cries of race and clan, a - bove the noise of
thresh - olds dark with fears, from paths where hide the
grief and bur - dened toil, from fam - ished souls, from
fresh - ness of your grace; yet long these mul - ti -



self - ish strife, we hear your voice, O Son of Man.
lures of greed, we catch the vi - sion of your tears.
sor - row's stress, your heart has nev - er known re - coil.
tudes to view the strong com - pas - sion in your face.

- 5 O Master, from the mountainside
make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
among these restless throngs abide;
oh, tread the city's streets again;
- 6 Till all the world shall learn your love,
and follow where your feet have trod;
till glorious from your heav'n above
shall come the city of our God.

Text: Frank M. North, 1850-1935, alt.

Music: WALTON, W. Gardiner, Sacred Melodies, 1815

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COMMUNION BLESSING

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

POST COMMUNION *Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise (Hillert)* (ELW 204)



Thank-ful hearts and voic - es raise; tell ev-'ry-one what God has done.



Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and bear Christ's ho - ly name.



Send us with your prom - is - es and lead your peo - ple forth in joy with



shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980
Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923
Text and music © 1978, 1995 Augsburg Fortress.

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PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy One,
we thank you for the healing
that springs forth abundantly from this table.
Renew our strength to do justice,
love kindness,
and journey humbly with you.
Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.
Amen.

SENDING SONG *O Master, Let Me Walk with You* (ELW 818)



1 O Mas - ter, let me walk with you in low - ly
2 Help me the slow of heart to move by some clear,
3 Teach me your pa - tience; share with me a clos - er,
4 In hope that sends a shin - ing ray far down the



paths of ser - vice true; tell me your se - cret;
win - ning word of love; teach me the way - ward
dear - er com - pa - ny, in work that keeps faith
fu - ture's broad - 'ning way, in peace that on - ly



help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care.
feet to stay, and guide them in the home - ward way.
sweet and strong, in trust that tri - umphs o - ver wrong,
you can give; with you, O Mas - ter, let me live.

Text: Washington Gladden, 1836–1918, alt.
Music: MARYTON, H. Percy Smith, 1825–1898

SENDING IN SERVICE

Go in peace. Follow the way of Jesus.
Thanks be to God.

EXTINGUISHING THE CANDLE/SILENT PRAYER

POSTLUDE

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SERVING TODAY

Pastor	Rev. Barb Barry
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Organist	Doug Mummert
Head Usher	Wayne Norman
Acolyte	Norm Kuykendall
Lector.....	Bonney Coldsmith
Securing Offering	Edna Harris & Doug Mummert
Communion Set-Up.....	Jerry & Ilona Laney
Communion Clean-Up	Jerry & Ilona Laney
Communion Bread	Marjorie Dale
Communion Assist	Marjorie Dale & Ilona Laney
Attendance last Sunday	50

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome Visitors! We welcome you to our worship service. We hope your visit with us will be a time of blessing. If you have any concerns, please talk to the Head Usher. We invite you to worship with us again!

Prayer requests for the following: *Bernie Harris, Matthew, Lexi and Brooke Bowen, Doc Ensinger, Jim & Carole Darr, Beth Floyd, Sarge and Barb Weaver, Tina Smith, Patricia Yetter, Nancy Marshall, Darrell Veilleux, Linda Wepking, Jere and Phyllis Brehm, Bill and Jane Brindle, Esther Gift, Jean Jackson, Marjorie McMullin, Joe Mock, Ina Shreiner, Genny Grant, Frances Kramer, Clayton Schwartz, Linda Russ, Carol Locke, Betty Amt, Ukrainian Nation, Peace for the World.* If anyone has a prayer request, please call Janice McEntire.
Please Be Aware: *If you would like to remain listed on the next month's list, or if you would like to have your name removed from the list before the end of the month, please call the office.*

Office Hours for Pastor Barb are Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. until 12 noon or call for an appointment.

Weekly Calendar Reminders:

Feb 1 - Psalms Bible Study 10AM

Feb 2 - Choir 7PM

Feb 5 - Communion Set-Up Training (after worship)

Power Pack Meals - the Power Pack Ministry is now packing meals for 25 students at New Franklin School. The program covers three meals a day for the weekend, that's 150 meals that are being packed each week. The need is GREAT. Please consider doing what you can to help. Food can be placed in the gray tote in the Sunday school room. Monetary donations can be put in the offering, clearly mark your check "Power Pack". Your response in the past has been great. THANK YOU!!!

Souperbowl time is here - The Super Bowl is February 12. We don't know who will be playing yet. As soon as we know who is playing, we will have two boxes in the Sunday school room identified with the teams. Place a can of soup or a Power Pack item in the box of your choice. Based on the number of items in each box, we will determine Solomon's Souperbowl winner.

The Lutheran Church camps are currently hiring for summer camp positions including counselors, lifeguards, summer kitchen staff, summer maintenance staff, summer leadership staff, summer craft director at Nawakwa, summer camp craft instructors, summer head cook at Kirchenwald, a year-round maintenance and facilities manager at Kirchenwald, and a year-round camp director at Nawakwa. **The Kirchenwald summer head cook, the Kirchenwald maintenance and facility manager, and especially the Nawakwa camp director positions are of special concern!**

Don't forget to send in your updated contact information if you have not already done so. There is a box in the Sunday School Room, or you can email or snail mail to the office.

Help is needed to serve a brunch on Monday, February 6. Signup sheets are on the table in the Sunday School Room.

Solomon's Relay for Life Team Fund Raiser Luncheon, Sunday February 26, 2023 - Please join us. Menu: Hot Turkey Sandwiches, Mashed Potatoes & Gravy, Peas & Carrots, Cranberry Salad and Dessert. *Donations accepted.* We appreciate your support of our Solomon's Relay for life Team.

Choir Practice - Thursdays at 7:00PM.

The Worship and Music Committee will be holding two training / refresher sessions for Communion assistants and Communion set-up and clean-up volunteers in February. This will be for existing AND new volunteers. If this is a ministry that you've wanted to volunteer for, but were afraid that you didn't know enough about, now's your chance! The first session will be for Communion assistants, on Sunday, February 5, after worship. The second will be on Sunday, February 12, after worship, for Communion set-up and clean-up volunteers. Both sessions should be about a half hour long. If you have any questions, contact Peggi Norman.

Spiritrust Lutheran Chambersburg Auxiliary has Discount Cards available for \$3.00 each. The cards are good through June 30, 2023. If interested see Becky Pecha.

Cancellation Notification: In the event of inclement weather, Solomon's will announce worship services are cancelled on the following platforms: Solomon's Facebook page, Solomon's Website, and on the church voicemail **BY 7:30 AM**. A prerecorded worship service and bulletin will be available on the website. Remember for events like Mid-Week Bible Study, if the schools are closed for weather, then the event is cancelled. Please always use your own judgement about whether you feel safe driving given the road conditions in your neighborhood. One part of the county may be cleared while another is not!

Sunday School is in Session - Adult Sunday School classes begin at 9:00 a.m. in the Sunday School room. Children's Church will be held during morning worship and will meet downstairs at 10:20 a.m. Confirmation Class will be held at 9:00 a.m. in the Conference Room in the Fellowship Center.

2023 Altar Flower Chart is posted in the cloakroom off the church entryway. The cost of the two vases will be \$50.00 per week. You will continue to provide Kimberly with the information for the bulletin prior to the week before the Sunday you choose. Include the cost of \$50.00 with the bulletin information. If you would like to save money by asking someone else to share the cost, you are welcome to do so. When you sign-up for a Sunday, you will be responsible to obtain the bulletin information for you and your friend and forward it to Kimberly.

Sign-up Sheets for worship assistants for 2023 are on the side table in the Sunday School room. Communion: bread, set-up, clean-up, and assistant will be on a monthly basis. If you can't commit to the entire month, please see if you can share the month with someone else. Acolytes and Lectors are on a weekly basis. If you find you can't fulfill a chosen date, please call someone to take your place. Let Kimberly in the office know so the bulletin and newsletter info stays up to date. Thank you for your commitment to help provide opportunities for meaningful worship at Solomons. Kimberly will publish the schedule for each month in the newsletter.

Bulletin Announcement Forms are in both pamphlet racks. Please submit all bulletin announcements to the office by the Wednesday prior to the Sunday for inclusion in the bulletin.

Council Minutes, Monthly Financial Statement and Committee Minutes are available in the library for anyone to read.

JANUARY 29, 2023
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

God is wisdom, power, and joy.



DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 5:1-12	Sermon on the Mount
Monday	Micah 6:1-8	True obedience
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 1:18-31	Message of the cross
Wednesday	Luke 6:17-26	Sermon on the Plain
Thursday	1 Samuel 17:31-49	David and Goliath
Friday	Exodus 4:1-17	Moses' miraculous power
Saturday	Psalms 15	Life of the blameless
Sunday	Matthew 5:13-20	Salt and light

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

*For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. **1 Corinthians 1:22-24 (NRSV)***

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

God of wisdom, power, and joy, help us to see and believe that in Christ and his crucifixion you have established an eternal kingdom that will bless us now and always. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, with this gift of food strengthen us to show fairness to all, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you through Christ our crucified and risen Lord. Amen. (Micah 6:8)

A Blessing to Give:

May Christ the crucified one free you to live in peace and joy.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- How would you describe someone who is wise and powerful?
- Where we see weakness and foolishness, God can see strength and wisdom. How is this good news for us?

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Goodness is Stronger than Evil



DEVOTIONS

Read: Matthew 5:1-12.

This passage is called the Beatitudes, a description of true bliss, holiness, and joy. It begins the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). These words open Jesus' first public preaching and set the stage for Jesus' God-giving and life-saving work. It is a startling opening statement. Jesus reverses standard understandings of who is blessed in life. When things go well it is easy for us to say, "I am blessed." However, Jesus extends blessings not to the well-off, but to those who are poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, and others. Jesus says they are blessed and experiencing some form of God-given bliss now and will also experience a reward in heaven. In society we often struggle for power, recognition, and wealth. Jesus knows that God's standards are not the same. True glory, true wisdom, true joy in life is to experience daily life with a deep-seated compassion based on justice, kindness, and humbleness (Micah 6:8).

Discuss: Where in your life have you seen or experienced compassion based on God's standards?

Pray: **God of justice and mercy, open our eyes and our hearts to see the true joy of a life lived in relationship to you and in care of others through Christ Jesus, the crucified one. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how might you bless someone by doing an act of kindness?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Micah was a great prophet in Israel who lived long before Jesus was born. A prophet is a teacher and one who proclaims God's will. The people asked him what God required of them. Micah told them the Lord requires them to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8). Each day this week take time to sit in silence and consider your actions towards others. Ask yourself, "Where did I show justice, kindness, and mercy?" Then light a candle and pray: **Dear God, give me the desire to seek justice, kindness, and walk humbly each day with you and with all people. In Jesus' name, amen.**