



**Christ
Lutheran**
CHURCH

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February 25, 2024

We Welcome You to Christ Lutheran Church! We are a community of people sharing God's love through Christ and growing together in faith.

We celebrate all the ways we are made in the image of God, seeking to see God in everyone. We honor and respect each person's age, ethnicity, family composition, gender identity, gender expression, life history, mental well-being, physical ability, relationship status, sexual orientation, skin color, and socioeconomic standing. Together, we strive to love and serve our neighbor and all creation, including working toward racial and social justice. We would love to walk with you on this creative adventure* of faith, grace, and love.

** The first sermon ever preached at Christ Lutheran was titled "A Call to Creative Adventure."*

ABOUT WORSHIP

We gather to worship weekly to hear and remember our shared hope: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ makes all things new, even us.

You will find everything that happens in worship printed in this bulletin, with hymns found in the red hymnals ("ELW") in the seats in front on you.

If you have a prayer request, note it on a yellow card from the seatback holder and pass it to an usher; the other side is for any information you would like about Christ Lutheran. Please feel welcome to remain seated as necessary during the service.

CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN CHURCH!

God's people come in all shapes and sizes – it is a gift to the whole community when the smallest of us are present! Sitting with parents and learning to treasure times of worship is the foundation for helping build a growing faith in a child's life. There's some noise and movement that we expect from little ones - feel free to make use of the **activity bags, doodle pads, bookshelf in the overflow area and cry room at the back of the sanctuary** as needed. Whatever sacrifice of energy and effort you make to include your children in worship is multiplied as the good news of God's love takes root in their lives!

WHEN NURSERY CARE IS NEEDED DURING WORSHIP

A fully equipped and staffed Nursery is available for both infants and toddlers during all services. The Nursery is located west of our gathering area in **Room 110**.

RESTROOMS

Men's and women's restrooms off the Gathering Area and Church Hall have changing tables, as does the all-gender restroom near the nursery. A second all-gender restroom is through the Vestry off the East hallway, past the Welcome Center.

HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

Our services are on video, and occasional photographs are taken for our website and e-mail news. If you have concerns, please speak to a church staff member.

Hearing assistance devices are available to those who need help with listening to the service and are located at the entrance to the sanctuary, or please see an Usher for assistance.

A Reminder: Please turn off all cell phones during worship services.

The second covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the one made with Abraham and Sarah: God's promise to make them the ancestors of many, with whom God will remain in everlasting covenant. Paul says this promise comes to all who share Abraham's faith in the God who brings life into being where there was no life. We receive this baptismal promise of resurrection life in faith. Sarah and Abraham receive new names as a sign of the covenant, and we too get new identities in baptism, as we put on Christ.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Tarantella

Squire

WELCOME

If you are joining us for the first time, welcome! We'd love to meet you, or if there's anything you'd like to know about the ministry of Christ Lutheran Church, please consider [filling out a Connection Card online](#) (you can point your phone at the graphic to the right) or using a yellow Connection Card in the pew holders.



***Prayer requests** can be posted to the livechat or use a yellow Prayer Request (on the backside of the Connection Card) and give them to an usher.*

*If you are worshipping with us via livestream, consider **preparing your space for Communion**: light a candle (if appropriate and safe), and have a plate with bread/cracker/tortilla and a cup for wine or grape juice (or an empty cup as a sign Jesus is sufficient in one or both elements).*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who writes the law on our hearts,
who draws all people together through Jesus.
Amen.

Held in God's mercy, let us confess our sin
in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,
we confess that we are caught in snares of sin
and cannot break free.
We hoard resources while our neighbors
are hungry and cold.
We speak in ways that silence others.
We are silent when we should speak up.
We keep score in our hearts.
We let hurts grow into hatred.
For all these things and for sins only you know,
forgive us, Lord.
Amen.

Here is a flood of grace:
Out of love for the whole world,
God draws near to us,
breaks every snare of sin,
washes away our wrongs,
and restores the promise of life through † Jesus Christ.
Amen.

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.

Children: This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

KYRIE

☐ In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **☐** For the

☑ Lord, have mer - cy.

peace from a - bove, and for our sal - va - tion, let us pray to the Lord.

☐ For the peace of the whole

☑ Lord, have mer - cy.

world, for the well - be - ing of the church of God, and for the u - ni - ty of

all, let us pray to the Lord. **☐** For this ho - ly

☑ Lord, have mer - cy.

house, and for all who of - fer here their wor - ship and praise, let us

pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy. A - men

Help, save, com - fort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.

A - men

Help, save, com - fort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.

A - men

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

God of dispossession,
you rebuke our refusal
to give up our idols,
separate and safe:
send us with Jesus
on the way of the cross,
that we might lose our love of death
and take the risk of life,
through Jesus Christ, the new covenant.
Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

CHILDREN'S TIME

The assembly is seated as children are invited for a time together.

READING: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

As with Noah, God makes an everlasting covenant with Abraham and Sarah. God promises this old couple that they will be the ancestors of nations, though they have no child together. God will miraculously bring forth new life from Sarah's womb. The name changes emphasize the firmness of God's promise.

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. ²And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." ³Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, ⁴"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you."

¹⁵God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 22:23–31

The congregation is invited to sing the psalm refrain when indicated (R). Verses will be chanted alternately by the leader and the people.

Refrain



All the ends of the earth shall re - mem - ber and turn to the LORD.

Psalm Tone



²³You who fear the LORD, give praise! All you of Jacob's [|]line, give glory.

Stand in awe of the LORD, all you off- [|]spring of Israel.

²⁴**For the LORD does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty;**

neither is the LORD's face [|]hidden from them;

but when they cry out, [|]the LORD hears them.

²⁵From you comes my praise in the [|]great assembly;

I will perform my vows in the sight of those who [|]fear the LORD.

²⁶**The poor shall eat [|]and be satisfied,**

Let those who seek the LORD give praise!

May your hearts [|]live forever! R

²⁷All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn [|]to the LORD;

all the families of nations shall bow [|]before God.

²⁸**For dominion belongs [|]to the LORD,**

who rules o- [|]ver the nations.

²⁹Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow [|]down in worship;

all who go down to the dust, though they be dead,

shall kneel be- [|]fore the LORD.

³⁰**Their descendants shall [|]serve the LORD,**

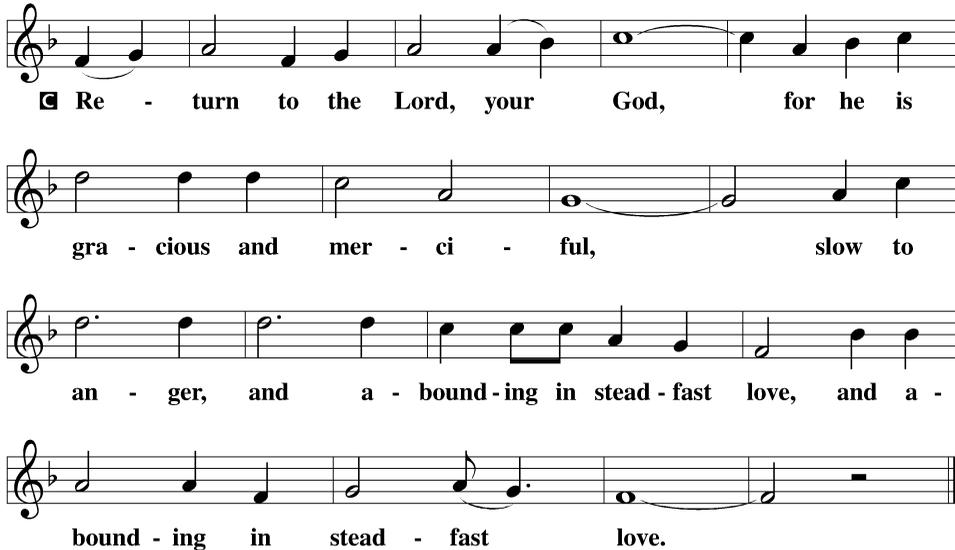
whom they shall proclaim to genera- [|]tions to come.

³¹They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people [|]yet unborn,

saying to them, "The [|]LORD has acted!" R

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the Gospel.



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is
gra - cious and mer - ci - ful, slow to
an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love, and a -
bound - ing in stead - fast love.

HOLY GOSPEL: Mark 8:31-38

After Peter confesses his belief that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus tells his disciples for the first time what is to come. Peter's response indicates that he does not yet understand the way of the cross that Jesus will travel.

The Holy Gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

³¹Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?

³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

The assembly is seated. Time for reflection follows the sermon.

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW #799 *Come, Follow Me, the Savior Spake*

The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.



1 "Come, fol - low me," the Sav - ior spake, "all in my way a -
2 "I am the light; I light the way, a god - ly life dis -
3 "I teach you how to shun and flee what harms your soul's sal -
4 Then let us fol - low Christ, our Lord, and take the cross ap -



bid - ing; de - ny your - selves, the world for - sake, o -
play - ing; I bid you walk as in the day; I
va - tion; from ev - 'ry guile your heart I free, from
point - ed, and, firm - ly cling - ing to his word, in



bey my call and guid - ing. Oh, bear the cross, what -
keep your feet from stray - ing. I am the way, and
sin and its temp - ta - tion. I am the ref - uge
suf - f'ring be un - daunt - ed. For those who bear the



e'er be - tide; take my ex - am - ple for your guide."
well I show how you should so - journ here be - low."
of the soul and lead you to your heav'n - ly goal."
bat - tle's strain the crown of heav'n - ly life ob - tain.

Text: Johann Scheffler, 1624–1677; tr. Charles W. Shaeffer, 1813–1896, alt.

Music: MACHS MIT MIR, GOTT, Bartholomäus Gesius, 1555–1613; adapt. Johann Herman Schein, 1586–1630

APOSTLES' 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.

**Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.*

PRAYERS

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

A brief silence.

We turn to you for meaning, holy God. Nurture in your children the gifts of the Spirit poured out in baptism and let the mind of Christ guide the church. Give wisdom and discernment to our bishops, pastors, deacons, teachers, and leaders. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We turn to you for renewal. Save lives and ecosystems threatened by pollution and a changing climate. Cleanse the earth's waters and restore the soil. Preserve rainforests, deserts, and wildlife, so that generations to come may cherish your creation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We turn to you for justice. Uphold the worth and dignity of every person, especially any who experience hatred and rejection because of gender, ability, sexual orientation, color, ethnicity, or religion. Guide the churches and bless the people and lands of Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We turn to you for healing. Send compassionate helpers to any who suffer because of war and violence. Shelter unhoused people, befriend those who are lonely, bring hope to any in despair, and console the bereaved. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We turn to you for purpose. Remind us of your faithfulness to this congregation. Increase our trust in your guidance and keep us near the cross. Grant that our acts of service will express Christ's sacrificial love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We turn to you for peace. We honor the saints who lived in service to others *especially Elizabeth Fedde, George Herbert, John and Charles Wesley*. Inspire us by their example until you gather us into your kingdom. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

STEWARDSHIP SHARING *“Who, me?”*

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We invite those worshipping by livestream to share a sign of peace in the chat, and for those in person we turn to offer them our greeting of peace before sharing a sign of peace with one another: **Peace be with you!***

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

OFFERING

*This congregation serves our neighbors, community, and the world through the participation and support of its members and guests. Because offerings are never just about us, this month we are sharing a portion of your gifts with **Hilltop House** www.hilltophouse.org.*

If you wish to give electronically, use the QR code or browse to our secure on-line portal at clcvalpo.org/give or use [our CLC app](#) (download at clcvalpo.org/app).



OFFERTORY (8:00 am): *The Glory of These Forty Days* Wold

OFFERTORY ANTHEM (10:30 am): *Behold the Lamb of God* Behnke

OFFERTORY PRAYER

The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

Jesus, you are the bread of life
and the host of this meal.
Bless these gifts that we have gathered
that all people may know your goodness.
Feed us not only with this holy food
but with hunger for justice and peace.
We pray this in your name.
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.

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS

(An ancient practice invites us to make the sign of the cross in honor of Jesus at the words "Blessed is he.")



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er 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.

TABLE PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

Children: The Spirit makes us one. We pray as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Bread for the journey.

A feast for hungry hearts. Come!

Thanks be to God!

The assembly is seated.

DISTRIBUTION

*The pastor invites those worshipping via **livestream** to commune:*

The body of Christ, given for you.

Amen (receive the bread)

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen (receive the cup)

In-person distribution: When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. **WINE** is lighter-colored and **GRAPE JUICE** is dark; they are received via individual cups in the trays. **USED GLASSES** are placed in the basket located near the ramp. **GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE**, please indicate to the server that you require this.

LAMB OF 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.

The musical score is written in a single system with five staves. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The melody is written on a treble clef. The lyrics are placed below the notes. There are three triplet markings (indicated by a bracket with a '3' above it) over the notes 'a - way' in the first, third, and fourth staves. The piece ends with a double bar line on the fifth staff.



1 O God, you search me and you know me.
 2 You know my rest - ing and my ris - ing.
 3 Be - fore a word is on my tongue, Lord,
 4 Al - though your Spir - it is up - on me,
 5 For you cre - at - ed me and shaped me,



All my thoughts lie o - pen to your gaze.
 You dis - cern my pur - pose from a - far,
 you have known its mean - ing through and through.
 still I search for shel - ter from your light.
 gave me life with - in my moth - er's womb.



When I walk or lie down you are be - fore me:
 and with love ev - er - last - ing you be - siege me:
 You are with me be - yond my un - der - stand - ing:
 There is no - where on earth I can es - cape you:
 For the won - der of who I am, I praise you:



ev - er the mak - er and keep - er of my days.
 in ev - 'ry mo - ment of life or death, you are.
 God of my pres - ent, my past, and fu - ture, too.
 e - ven the dark - ness is ra - dian in your sight.
 safe in your hands, all cre - a - tion is made new.

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957

Music: O GOD, YOU SEARCH ME, Bernadette Farrell

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ELW #468 *Around You, O Lord Jesus*



1 A - round you, O Lord Je - sus, your own you gath - er still
2 We hear your in - vi - ta - tion, and heed, O Lord, your call;
3 We are your own for - ev - er; un - til our fi - nal breath



to share the feast you give us with grace our lives to fill.
your word of con - so - la - tion is spo - ken here to all.
we will be true and nev - er— in joy, in grief, in death—



You say to us so lov - ing - ly, “Take, eat! This is my
It draws us to your lov - ing heart; it brings to us your
de - part from you, for you are still a - mong your peo - ple



bod - y! Take, drink! This is my blood!”
bless - ing, which nev - er will de - part.
dwell - ing, as you have said you will.

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. composite
Music: O JESU, ÅN DE DINA, H. Thomissön, *Den danske Psalmebog*, 1569
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

When all have returned to their places, the assembly stands.

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

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Generous God,

at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace.

As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread,

now make us one loaf to feed the world;

in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.

Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

INVITATIONS

Brief invitations are shared, especially those related to the assembly's participation in God's mission in the world.

BLESSING

Beloved,

we are God's own people,

holy, washed, renewed.

God bless you and keep you,

shower you with mercy,

fill you with courage,

and ✠ give you peace.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN ELW #802

Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus



1 Let us ev - er walk with Je - sus, fol - low his ex - am - ple pure,
 2 Let us suf - fer here with Je - sus, and with pa - tience bear our cross.
 3 Let us glad - ly die with Je - sus. Since by death he con - quered death,
 4 Let us al - so live with Je - sus. He has ris - en from the dead



through a world that would de - ceive us and to sin our spir - its lure.
 Joy will fol - low all our sad - ness; where he is there is no loss.
 he will free us from de - struc - tion, give to us im - mor - tal breath.
 that to life we may a - wak - en. Je - sus, you are now our head,



On - ward in his foot - steps tread - ing, trav - 'lers here, our home a - bove,
 Though to - day we sow no laugh - ter, we shall reap ce - les - tial joy:
 Let us mor - ti - fy all pas - sion that would lead us in - to sin;
 we are your own liv - ing mem - bers; where you live, there we shall be



full of faith and hope and love, let us do our Sav - ior's bid - ding.
 all dis - com - forts that an - noy shall give way to mirth here - af - ter.
 and the grave that shuts us in shall but prove the gate of heav - en.
 in your pres - ence con - stant - ly, liv - ing there with you for - ev - er.



Faith - ful Lord, with me a - bide; I shall fol - low where you guide.
 Je - sus, here I share your woe; help me there your joy to know.
 Je - sus, here with you I die, there to live with you on high.
 Je - sus, let me faith - ful be; life e - ter - nal grant to me.

Text: Sigismund von Birken, 1626–1681; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*, alt.
 Music: LASSET UNS MIT JESU ZIEHEN, Georg G. Boltze, 18th cent.
 Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Children join the pastors to send us in mission

DISMISSAL

Children: Go in peace. Share your bread.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Jesu, Priceless Treasure

J.S. Bach

Worship Leaders

	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte	Olivia Hernandez	Danelle Rivera
Lector	Bill Lieske	Crill Family
Prayer Assistant	Linda Mapes	Tim Malchow
Communion Assistants	Phyllis Schroeder Linda Mapes	Amy Knauff Erin Crill
Ushers	Chuck Schaefer Phil Hahn	
Sound/Light	Lance Nolting	Jeff Peiffer
Video/Livestream	-----	Adam Gibson-Even
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	
Worship Participants	Sanctuary Choir Mike and Lois Felten, cantors (10:30 am) Lena Gibson-Even, cello	
Communion Baker	Lois Felten	



RECONCILING IN CHRIST

For the past two years our congregation has been listening, learning, asking and wondering what we mean when we say “Everyone is welcome here.” We heard from our beloved youth as they shared their experiences in the LGBTQIA+ community at the high school and around town; our beloved siblings shared about their family, friends, neighbors and coworkers; we have explored and learned how our culture uses pronouns, talks about gender, and more. Together we crafted, revised, and ultimately approved [an official Welcome Statement](#) that proudly proclaims:

We are a community of people sharing God’s love through Christ and growing together in faith.

We are delighted to report that our good work has been recognized: we have been named a Partner Congregation in the [Reconciling in Christ](#) Program, a “holy ministry of welcome, inclusion, celebration, and advocacy.”

The purpose of the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Program is to ensure the welcome, inclusion, celebration, and advocacy for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions; work for racial equity and commit to anti-racist work and support the national program. Since 1983, the RIC program has been a public way for faith communities to see, name, celebrate, and advocate for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions in the Lutheran church.

As a result of this recognition our congregation is now listed in a searchable national map, which provides people in the LGBTQIA+ community and their allies the ability to search for a faith community in their area. This inclusion in the directory is an important way for us to extend welcome and invitation to the people we have specifically named in our Welcome Statement.

The RIC program notes [something we’ve already experienced](#) during the “Deepening our Welcome” process:

Many RIC partners report the demographic most often drawn in by the RIC status is young couples with children. These folks are seeking communities prepared to help them raise their children in ways consistent with their values. They want their children to grow up surrounded by diversity and to know their families will never have to question if their children will be welcome as they grow and learn more about who they are.

Thanks be to God for the plentiful gifts of hospitality and welcome so generously given to our beloved congregation!

COMMEMORATIONS

Week of February 25, 2024

February 25

Elizabeth Fedde, deaconess, died 1921

Fedde was born in Norway and trained as a deaconess. In 1882, at the age of thirty-two, she was asked to come to New York to minister to the poor and to Norwegian seafarers. Her influence was wide-ranging, and she established the Deaconess House in Brooklyn and the Deaconess House and Hospital of the Lutheran Free Church in Minneapolis. She returned home to Norway in 1895 and died there.

March 1

George Herbert, hymnwriter, died 1633

As a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, England, George Herbert excelled in languages and music. He went to college with the intention of becoming a priest, but his scholarship attracted the attention of King James I. Herbert served in parliament for two years. After the death of King James and at the urging of a friend, Herbert's interest in ordained ministry was renewed. He was ordained a priest in 1630 and served the little parish of St. Andrew Bremerton until his death. He was noted for unfailing care for his parishioners, bringing the sacraments to them when they were ill, and providing food and clothing for those in need. Herbert is best remembered, however, as a writer of poems and hymns such as "Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life" (ELW 816).

March 2

John Wesley, died 1791; Charles Wesley, died 1788; renewers of the church

The Wesleys were leaders of a revival in the Church of England. Their spiritual discipline (or method) of frequent communion, fasting, and advocacy for the poor earned them the name "Methodists." The Wesleys were missionaries in the American colony of Georgia for a time, but returned to England discouraged. Following a conversion experience while reading Luther's *Preface to the Epistle to the Romans*, John was perhaps the greatest force in eighteenth-century revival. The brothers' desire was that the Methodist Societies would be a movement for renewal in the Church of England, but after their deaths the societies developed a separate status.

Charles wrote more than six hundred hymns, including "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (ELW 270), "Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies" (ELW 553), and "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" (ELW 631).

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands**.

Give thanks for:

- the important roles political leaders here have played in European integration
- how people here have led in creative solutions to environmental, economic, and cultural challenges
- how churches here have overcome barriers and reached out to assure a good life for all the ecumenical contributions that have come from this area, and their continuing support

Pray for:

- overcoming cultural, linguistic and political barriers and suspicions that remain divisive
- the haunting legacies of colonization and quests for economic gain.
- immigrants who are alienated or marginalized in these societies
greater tolerance and solidarity with all in these societies and around the world

Stewardship Snippet

“For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.” – Mark 8:35

Jesus is pretty clear that we are not to spend our time on earth amassing stuff and seeking to extend our lives and capital but rather to give ourselves away in grateful response to the gospel. Saving one's life is about loving and giving instead of fortifying one's own status and economic condition.

Hope against Hope

Paul tells us that Abraham hoped “against hope” (Romans 4:18). Many of us know this feeling. The injustices in our world, the damage we see in the environment, and the wounds we bear in our own souls can all seem like too much. The promises of redemption poured out in baptism sometimes seem so far away.

Amid this reality, we hear Jesus teach that he “must” suffer, die, and rise again. To Peter this sounded like foolishness. If the Messiah were rejected, how could the salvation they longed for ever come? But Jesus insists that to deny this is to reject “the things of God.” Why must it be so?

Because of God’s great love. Jesus must suffer because he will do everything that needs to be done to rescue God’s world from sin and death. He will endure rejection, torture, and even death. He “must” do this because the world’s brokenness is that deep. We don’t need better teaching or stronger motivation. We need rescue from powers greater than ourselves. He will bear the burden of sin and death in his body to release us from their grasp. Love drives him to this full extent of mercy.

And in the mystery of God’s grace, Jesus will die. But he will be raised again. And his death and resurrection set us free from sin and death’s power. We can hope, even in the most hopeless of circumstances, because Jesus has passed through all the evils that threaten us and emerged triumphant. In Jesus, our sins are forgiven, the world’s injustices will not last forever, and everything broken will be made gloriously new. Until then, he gathers us around the life-giving word and gives himself to us in a holy meal. He leads us on our cross-shaped journeys of dying to sin to discover true life. And he sends us forth to share the good news of God’s mercy with a world longing for hope.

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Portions from *Prayers for an Inclusive Church* by Steven Shakespeare.