



Community of Christ Lutheran Church
First Sunday of Christmas
December 29, 2024, 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.
Pastor Stephen C. Bond



THE GATHERING

Welcome

Pastor Steve Bond

Musical Prelude

“Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling” by Michael Burkhardt

Eric Dickey

WE REMEMBER OUR BAPTISM

“Confession and Forgiveness”

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon. **Amen.**

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

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

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

Gathering Hymn

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

ELW 288

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.**

Refrain

Assisting minister

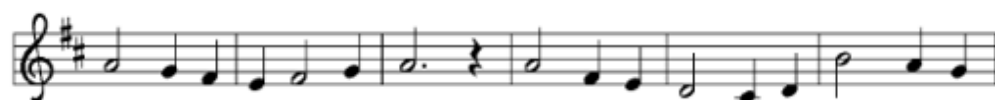


This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.

All



1 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow-er and rich-es and wis-dom and



strength, and hon-or and bless-ing and glo-ry are his.

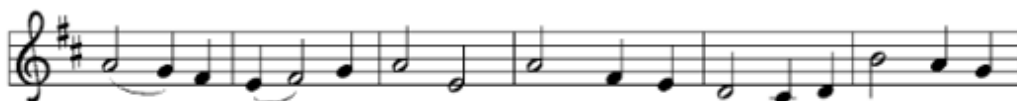
Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.



2 Sing with all the peo-ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing and hon-or and glo-ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men.

Final refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain
has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Prayer of the Day

Shine into our hearts the light of your wisdom, O God, and open our minds to the knowledge of your word, that in all things we may think and act according to your good will and may live continually in the light of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **P Amen.**

Childrens Sermon

THE READINGS

The First Reading: 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26

¹⁸Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy wearing a linen ephod. ¹⁹His mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year, when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. ²⁰Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, “May the LORD repay you with children by this woman for the gift that she made to the LORD”; and then they would return to their home.

²⁶Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and with the people.

L The Word of the Lord C Thanks be to God!

Psalm: Psalm 148 (Spoken Responsively)

¹Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise God in the heights.

²**Praise the LORD, all you angels;
sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**

³Praise the LORD, sun and moon;
sing praise, all you shining stars.

⁴**Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens,**

and you waters above the heavens.

⁵Let them praise the name of the LORD,
who commanded, and they were created,

⁶**who made them stand fast forever and ever,
giving them a law that shall not pass away.**

⁷Praise the LORD from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps;

⁸**fire and hail, snow and fog,
tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**

⁹mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars;

¹⁰**wild beasts and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds;**

¹¹sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the world;

¹²**young men and maidens,
old and young together.**

¹³Let them praise the name of the LORD,
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

¹⁴**The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful
servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!**

The Second Reading: Colossians 3:12-17

¹²As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.

¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

L The Word of the Lord C Thanks be to God!



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

The Holy Gospel: Luke 2:41-52

P The Holy Gospel according to....C Glory to you, O Lord!

⁴¹Now every year [Jesus'] parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover.

⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³When

the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Assuming that he was in the group of

travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to

search for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him

were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like

this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." ⁴⁹He

said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹Then he

went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother

treasured all these things in her heart.

⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

P The Gospel of the Lord! C Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon

"The Last Place You Look"

Pastor Stephen Bond

Hymn

"Once in Royal David's City"

ELW 269

Nicene Creed (8:00 a.m. service)

Rite of Affirmation of Baptism--Reception of New Member, see. p.234, front of ELW (10:00 a.m. service).

Nicene Creed

C We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him, all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven; was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day, he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

WE DEDICATE OUR HEARTS IN PRAYER

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

A brief silence.

AM For those who teach and those who learn, we pray. Bless the education ministries of your church. Guide Sunday school teachers, college and seminary professors, and Bible study leaders in our ongoing faith formation and curiosity. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

AM For the thriving of creation, we pray. Protect the habitats of pangolins and porcupines, penguins and parrots, and all wild animals and creeping things. Increase our knowledge of the natural world and the care of its inhabitants. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

AM For the nations of the world, we pray. Raise up rulers who lead with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Let your peace rule in their hearts and in all lands. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

AM For the well-being of your people, we pray. Keep watch over all who travel this holiday season. Accompany those who are alone or ill; **Tom Jennings, Sue & Jim Enk, Christal & Chad Pritchard, Frank O’Konski, Larry Geer, Luke Holtz, Susie Donnal, Ron Hetherwick, Martina Benton, Janet Dellinger, Jake Cope, Debbie Carman, Eric Lewis, Phillip Hart, Harold Shoupe Jr., Jacki Sutter, Jacquelyn Krohn, Jeff Baden, Natalie Ditillo, Lauren Bradford, Jerry Reed, Nancy Meyer, Luann Alleman, Jim Ayres, Paula Gruhler....** and all those we remember in silence. Console parents and children whose relationships are strained or severed. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

AM For the ministry of this place, we pray. Let the word of Christ dwell among us. In times of conflict, clothe us in love and move us to forgiveness. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

AM For your holy, beloved, and chosen ones, especially Charles Ewing, of every time and place, we give thanks. Draw us all into everlasting praise and joy. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

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

THE MEAL

All Christians are welcome to commune at our Altar. You do not have to be a member of this congregation to receive Communion. Grape juice is available in the inner ring of glasses for those desiring it. A “gluten-free” host option is available upon request as well.

Sharing of the Peace

P The Peace of the Lord be with you all! **C** **And also with you!**
Share an expression of peace with your neighbor, please.

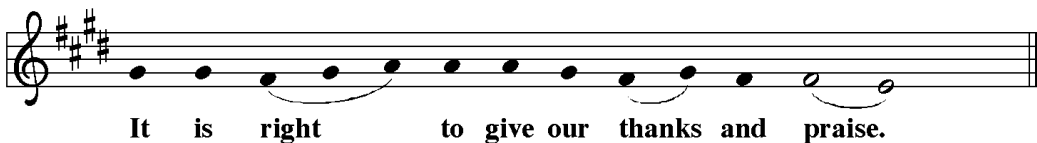
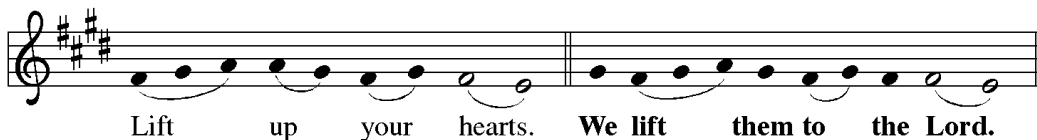
The congregation continues to stand during Tithes and Offerings if you are able.

Our Tithes and Offerings *Bring your gifts to the Altar or you may offer gifts in the tray located at the rear of the sanctuary. Thank you.*

Offering Prayer

AM Lord Jesus, our portion and our cup, you offered yourself in love for the world, and in this meal you nourish us with your life. Fill us with your abundance, that we may feed the hungry and welcome the stranger, trusting in your name. **Amen.**

The Great Thanksgiving



**The Eucharistic Prayer Continues.....





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.

The Words of Institution

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. Jesus said, 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. Jesus said, Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray... **C** **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.**

Communion Hymns

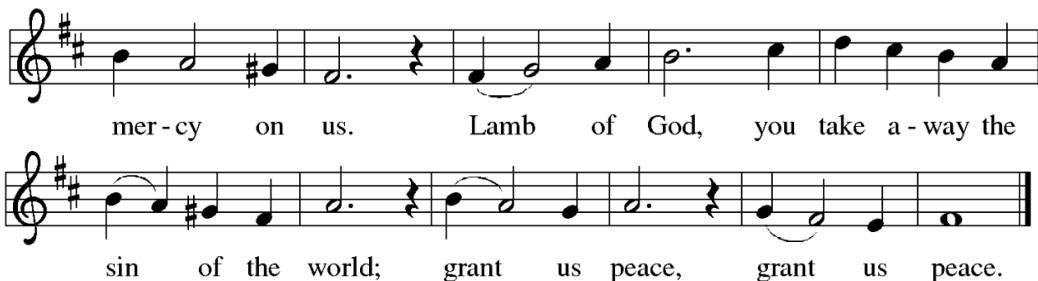
“Lamb of God”



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.

Hymn

“The First Noel”

ELW 300

“Beloved, God’s Chosen”

ELW 648

Post Communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

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

THE SENDING

Milestones & Announcements:

The Blessing

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

Sending Hymn

“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

ELW 290

Dismissal

AM Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel. **Thanks be to God.**

AM And next week, **C Bring a friend!**

“Making Jesus Known”

Welcome to Community of Christ! Our family welcomes you to the house of the Lord today! We ask God to bless His Holy Word and Sacrament today so that his people might receive strength for living out our days! If you are looking for a church home, we hope you will consider Community of Christ!

We WELCOME YOU to worship with us at one of our TWO worship services. Join us at 8:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. in person or on Facebook Live. We look forward to seeing you and as always **BRING A FRIEND!!!!**

Thursday Bible Study Series Resumes January 2: “Things Seen and Unseen”
This December we began a new series in our Thursday Afternoon Bible Study, co-led between Pastor Steve and Vicar Natalie, exploring angels and other spiritual beings in the Bible, what we do (and don’t!) know about them, and what difference their existence makes in our lives. Have you ever been curious about what angels look like, or where some people get the idea of “guardian” angels from? Don’t know your “cherubim” from your “seraphim”? Wonder why the first words out of the angels’ mouths in the Bible are so often, “Do not be afraid!”? Well, as we begin a new calendar year, we’ll resume with the second half of our series on angels, picking up again on Jan. 2 and running through January 16 as we explore Things Seen and Unseen: An Introduction to Angels in our Thursday Afternoon Bible Study, at 1:00 p.m. in the Council Room. If you need handouts from past sessions, see Pastor Steve or Vicar Natalie, and you can always check out our video summaries for each session on the church’s Facebook page! We’d love to have you around the table as we explore *things seen and unseen!*

Advent Adult Sunday School Series: “Jesus—The Wonder Years”

What would it have been like to raise the child Jesus? Have you ever wondered what Jesus’ childhood was like, or why there are so few stories from that part of his life? And with the handful of stories we do have from the Bible, what do they mean and why do they matter for our lives? This January, we’ll be starting a new series in our Sunday morning Adult Class, looking at important episodes from the early life of Jesus across the gospels, in what we do—and don’t—know. Join us for these conversations from 9:15-9:45 a.m. (between services) on Sunday mornings:

- Jan. 5—“What’s In A Name?”—An Overview of Names and Titles for Jesus with Vicar Natalie

What's In a Name? Exploring the Names of Jesus: Jesus' name was given by God and had significant meaning to the people who heard it. Jesus is also known by other names throughout the biblical text that related to his redemptive work among the people and on the cross, along with his divine identity. We will explore through scripture the names of Jesus that he called himself and also those declared by other people.

- Jan. 12—The Visitation of the Magi and Epiphany
- Jan. 19—Jesus the Refugee and the Flight into Egypt
- Jan. 26—The Presentation in the Temple, Part 1
- Feb. 2—The Presentation, Part 2 (Simeon and Anna)
- Feb. 9—No Class—Congregational Breakfast in the fellowship hall
- Feb. 16—the Child Jesus in the Temple

Join us for any or all of these studies on Sunday mornings here at Community of Christ this January and February!

The 2025 offering envelopes are now available on the table in the hallway! These envelopes cover weekly offerings as well as special services like Lenten Wednesdays, Holy Week, Easter, Thanksgiving, Advent, and more. If you have any questions about how to complete your weekly offering or are unable to locate your envelopes, please feel free to reach out to the church office. For those who prefer to give electronically, we offer the Simply Giving option, which allows for automatic withdrawals from your account. For more details, please contact Michelle at secretary@commofchrist.org. **Thank you for your generous support of the Lord's work at Community of Christ and beyond!**

A Warm Welcome to Our New Member! We're thrilled to welcome Rev. Holli Burkard to our Community of Christ family!

Monthly Singing Visit to Blue Creek Nursing Home—January 14 at 10:00 a.m. Every month, volunteers from Community of Christ gather at Blue Creek Nursing Home (11239 Waterville Street here in Whitehouse) on the *second Tuesday* at 10:00 a.m. to share a brief (30 min) time of singing, prayer, and fellowship. We can use singers every month, whenever you are able, but we would love to have your help and voice coming up this January when it can be so easy for folks to feel down after the hoopla and festivity of Christmas has passed for another year. Join us on January 14th to help brighten the day of residents at Blue Creek! If you want to join us, you can just meet us at Blue Creek on January 14 at 10:00 a.m., or if you have questions, see Cinda Pontsler, Cheryl Fischer, or Pastor Steve!

Scam Alert!!!! Please be aware that text, email phishing, and Facebook scams are circulating again. If you receive a message claiming to be from Pastor Steve or any of the staff, especially asking, "Can you do me a favor?"—it's a scam. After receiving a response, the scammer often asks for money or gift cards.

****Do not respond**** to these messages and be sure to report or block the number or email address. Remember, Pastor Steve or any church staff will never solicit requests for money or gifts via text, email, or Facebook. Please contact the church office directly if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for helping to keep our community safe!



New Year's Eve Blessing

As the year draws to a close, may you reflect on the blessings that have graced your life, the lessons learned, and the love shared. May the new year bring you fresh hope, boundless joy, and the courage to chase your dreams.

May you find peace in moments of stillness, strength in times of challenge, and inspiration in every new dawn. May your heart be open to new beginnings and your spirit be free to embrace the adventures ahead.

May 2025 be a year of growth, laughter, and deep connection, filled with light that shines brighter with each passing day.

Happy New Year!



Worship Services
Available on the net
at www.commofchrist.org

OR you can use your cell phone camera to access our website with our QR code!

What's Happening This Week?



Church Office Closed
December 31 and January 1
Music & Worship
Thursday, January 2, 10:00 a.m.
Pastor's Bible Study
Thursday, January 2, 1:00 p.m.
Visitation Ministry
Monday, January 6, 10:30 a.m.
Choir Practice
Wednesday, January 8, 7:00 p.m.
Pastor's Bible Study
Thursday, January 9, 1:00 p.m.
Bell Choir
Thursday, January 9, 7:00 p.m.
Blood Drive
Friday, January 10, 12 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Confirmation Field Trip to the Synagogue
Time to be announced



Did one of our Bible readings capture your attention today? Was there a story you could picture in your mind? Did a phrase from a hymn or a thought from the sermon start some new ideas or inspire some reflection? Did a Scripture passage spark a question for you to think about? Use this space here as an open canvas for your faithful imagination: you can draw a picture of something you pictured, write a question, take

notes from the message or scriptures, or doodle your faith into a visible form here. Then, either take it with you or leave your thoughts and images here to be shared in an ongoing collection here at Community of Christ!