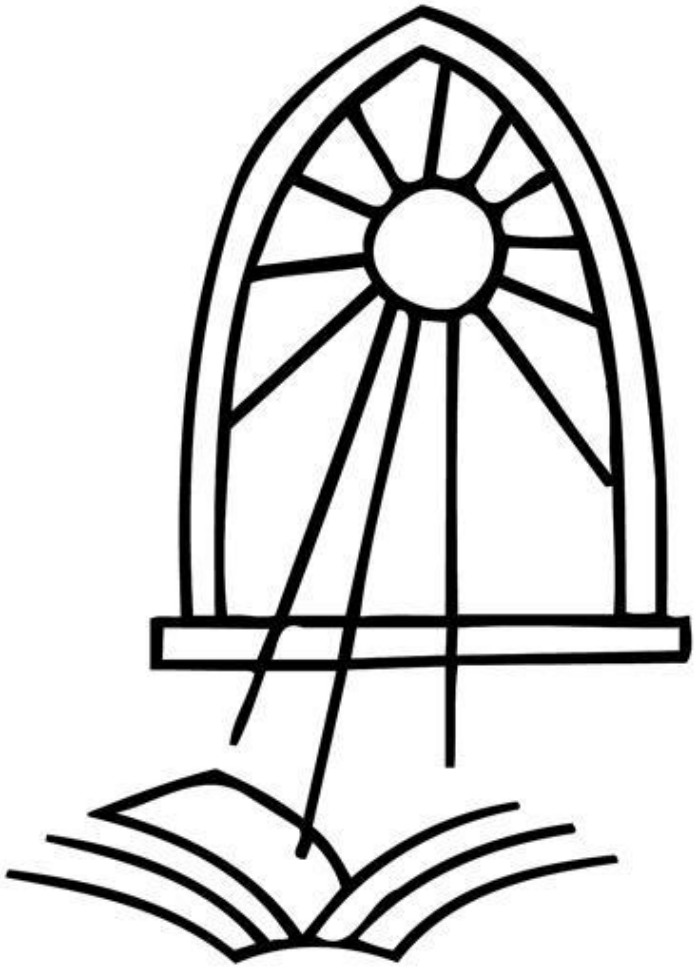


"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' [38] This is the greatest and first commandment. [39] And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' [40] On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 22:37-40

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Reformation Sunday – October 25, 2026
420 Beaver St., PO Box 411
Mars, PA 16046-0411
www.stjohnchurchmars.org
Phone: 724-625-1830 email: office@stjohnchurchmars.org
Rev. Katie McNeal, Presiding Minister
Maizy Fisher, Director of Music Ministries

We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning!
Know that you are welcome here just as you are.

If you are looking for a church to call home, why not consider making this one your own? If this is your first time worshiping at St. John, please fill out the visitor information card stapled to your bulletin.

*Everything you need to follow worship can be found in this bulletin. As you are comfortable, please rise when there is an * and join in the congregational responses, noted in* ***bold****.*
All songs are marked with numbers. The red book in the pew has all the songs. Look for the large number in the upper corner of the page to find the correct song.

During the time of ***Peace****, you are invited to turn to those around you and offer a word of peace. We suggest a handshake and saying, "Peace be with you." You are also welcomed to offer another gesture of peace (wave, fist-bump, smile, etc.). Hand sanitizer is available in each pew.*

At the time of ***Offering****, you are invited to share a gift. Envelopes are available in the pews if you prefer. Online gifts may be made using the QR code below:*

You may also offer updates to our ongoing prayer list using the yellow cards in the pews and placing them in the offering plates. ***Guest information cards*** *and member attendance cards (attached to the front of the bulletin) may also be placed in the offering plates.*

As Lutherans, we believe Christ is truly present in the elements of the Lord's Supper. At the time of ***Holy Communion****, all baptized individuals are welcome to come forward via the center aisle, receive the elements, and return via the side aisles. We begin at the front of the right side, commune all on the right side, then we will invite the left side forward. When you come forward, you may receive the bread from the pastor (gluten free wafers are available), then pre-filled cups with wine or grape juice from the assisting minister. You may consume the elements after receiving them then place the empty cup in the tray held by the acolyte. Those who do not receive Holy Communion are welcome to come forward for a blessing.*

If you need a ***restroom****, restrooms are located on the bottom floor at the far side of the building from the elevator. Restrooms may be accessed either via the stairs in the rear of the sanctuary, the stairs by the Greeting Area, or the elevator.*
A ***playroom*** *is available downstairs for children who need a break from the worship service. This room is by the elevator on the lower level. An adult must remain with the child. Children are also welcome to utilize the books and puzzles available in the Greeting Area on the top level by the elevator.*

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to fill out the blue prayer request forms located in each pew. The cards will be collected during our hymn of the day, and prayers will be offered during the prayers of intercession.

PRELUDE and ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. (*2 Corinthians 13:13*)

Today we celebrate reformation as we remember the work of Martin Luther in the church. One of the ways Luther wanted to see reform in the church was in the way in which worship happened. Luther wanted the people to understand the liturgy. He wanted them to be taught about the gospel through the worship service.

Worship is fundamental to our Christian identity. We are people gathered around Word and Sacrament and sent to live out God's own mission in the world. In worship, we encounter God's mission to the world, centered in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the living and abiding word of God proclaimed in the scriptures. Jesus is the bread of life present and given in holy communion for the forgiveness and life of the world. So today we will be slowing down our worship liturgy, remembering the way God moves through scripture in our liturgy. Martin Luther's reformation happened over five hundred years ago. But we are still learning, still growing, and still reforming as church, continuously reminding ourselves of God's good news for us in scripture and the ways in which we are called to respond.

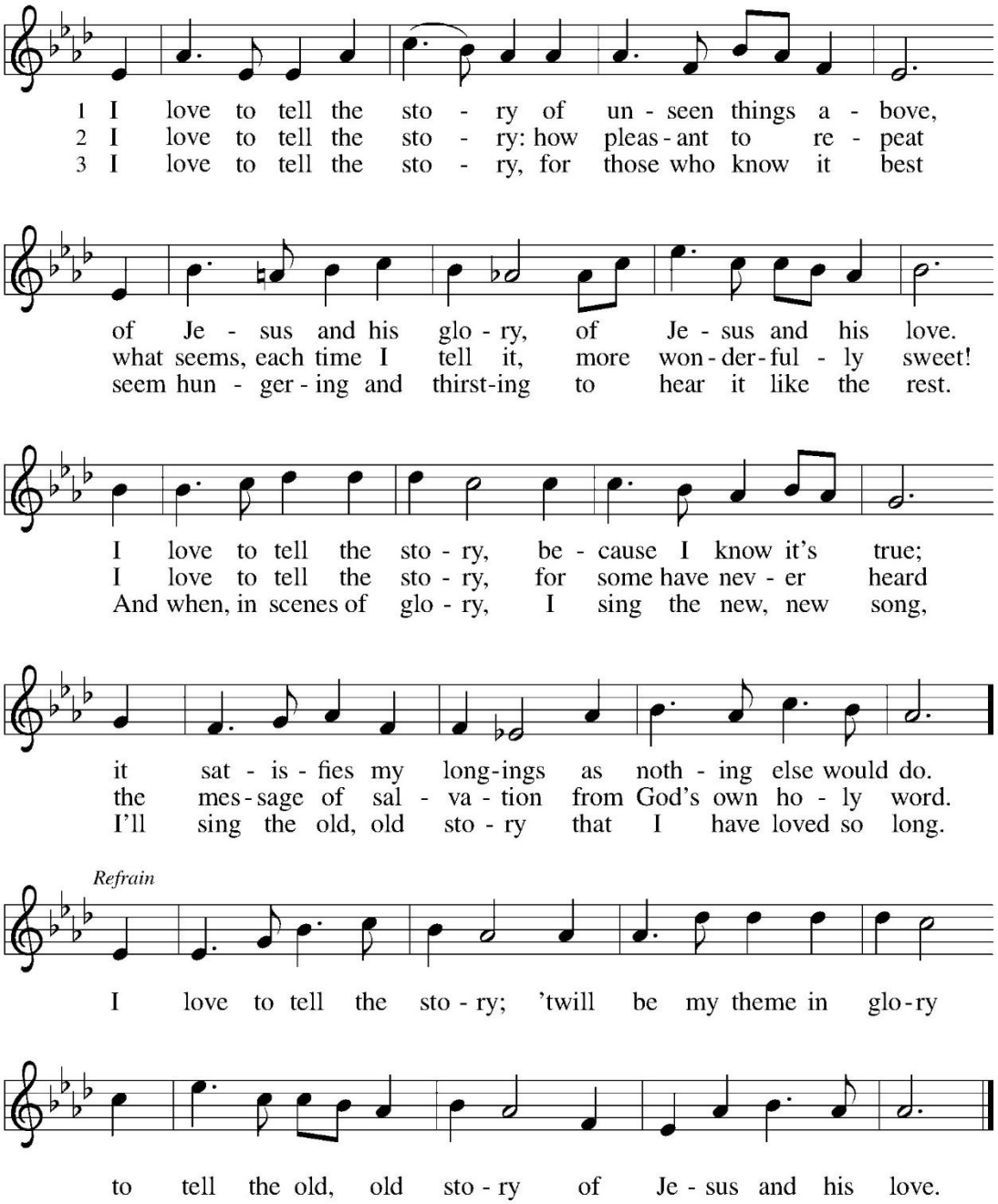
Let us now take a moment to quiet our hearts and minds for worship.

In the service of Holy Communion, the Holy Spirit gathers people around the means of grace— the Word of God and the sacraments. Gathering on Sunday, we remember first day of creation when God made darkness and light. This first day of a new week and a new life is the day that the crucified and risen Christ appeared to the disciples and was made known to them in word and in the breaking of bread. The heart of worship is what God does and what God gives. In the presence of all of us together, in baptism, in the word sung and preached and prayed, in the gift of the body and blood of Christ in Holy Communion, we receive the abundant gift of forgiveness and are fed and nourished for our participation in God's mission to the world.

As we gather, music gives us a common identity. A gathering song welcomes us to the mercy of God and moves us from our individual experiences into the communal activity of worship. Jeus said, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." (*Matthew 18:20*)

Let us "sing to the Lord a new song, God's praise in the assembly of the faithful" (*Psalm 149:1*)

***GATHERING SONG *I Love to Tell the Story* (ELW 661)**



We confess our sin and receive God's word of forgiveness, giving thanks that, even when we are dead in our sin, God makes us alive together with Christ (*Ephesians 2:5*). Together we are brought into the presence of God with an honest recognition of the reality of human sin and brokenness and our own sin and brokenness. Together we hear God's promise and declaration of forgiveness.

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.
Amen.

Let us pray: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,
and the truth is not in us.
But if we confess our sins,
God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (*1 John 1:8-10*)

Most merciful God,
we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.
We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us.
Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,
so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your holy name.
Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our sins, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved . . . I pray, that according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.
(*Ephesians 2:4-5; 3:16-17*)
Amen.

In response to God's promise of forgiveness, we sing a song of praise, giving thanks for God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ. After each verse, we return to the refrain, joining with the chorus of angels proclaiming, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors" (Luke 2:14).

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE Glory to God (ELW 163)**



***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. **Almighty God, gracious Lord, we thank you that your Holy Spirit renews the church in every age. Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your word, protect and comfort them in times of trial, defend them against all enemies of the gospel, and bestow on the church your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

The Prayer of the Day gives thanks to God through Jesus Christ, prayed in the power of the Holy Spirit. It gathers our praise into one, highlighting themes from the scripture we are about to hear. In scripture reading, preaching, and song, the church hears the good news of God acting in this and every time and place. The first reading is followed by a psalm sung in response to the reading. After the second reading and before proclaiming the Gospel, we join in another sung response. This pattern of "read, sing, read, sing" is a practice Christians inherited from the ancient synagogue worship of the Jewish people. Before the Gospel is read, we stand and acclaim the living Word among us. The Gospel then leads directly to preaching. Luther considered preaching to be the first of two peaks in the worship service. Preaching participates in the creating and transforming word of God, proclaims Jesus Christ crucified and risen, and brings God's word of law and gospel into our time and place to awaken and nourish faith. The Holy Spirit works through preaching, forming and empowering us to carry out the mission of God in our daily lives.

WORD

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

"Hear the Word of the Lord." (*Jeremiah 2:4*)

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34

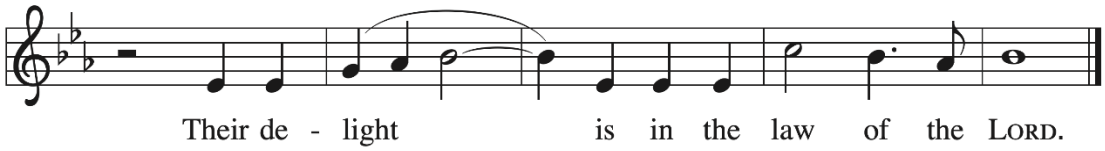
A reading from Jeremiah.

31 The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the
house of Israel and the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant that I made with their
ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that
they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. 33 But this is the covenant that I will
make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them,
and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 No
longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all
know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity,
and remember their sin no more.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 1

*The psalm is chanted. The refrain is sung once through by all who wish. Then the tone by which the verses are chanted is first played by the music director, who will sing the lightly printed verses. The congregation will chant the verses printed in bold following the same chanted tone as the music director. The vertical line indicates the change in tone. The refrain is sung again by all as indicated with "**R**".*



[1] Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel | of the wicked,
nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats | of the scornful!
[2] **Their delight is in the law | of the Lord,**
and they meditate on God's teaching | day and night. R
[3] They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that | do not wither;
everything they | do shall prosper.
[4] **It is not so | with the wicked;**
they are like chaff which the wind | blows away.
[5] Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when | judgment comes,
nor the sinner in the council | of the righteous.
[6] **For the Lord knows the way | of the righteous,**
but the way of the wicked shall | be destroyed. R

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

A reading from 1 Thessalonians.
You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, [2] but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. [3] For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, [4] but, just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals but to please God, who tests our hearts. [5] As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed, [6] nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, [7] though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. [8] So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



***GOSPEL READING: Matthew 22:34-46**
The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

When the Pharisees heard that [Jesus] had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, [35] and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. [36] "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" [37] He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' [38] This is the greatest and first commandment. [39] And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' [40] On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

[41] Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: [42] "What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." [43] He said to them, "How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying, [44] 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet" '?
[45] "If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?" [46] No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ**

"Let 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." (*Colossians 3:16*)

REFLECTION

God's word is proclaimed as we confess our faith. We confess the creed as a response to the word and proclamation of the word. A creed is a statement of the faith of the whole church. The Apostles' Creed is anchored in holy baptism and the declaration of faith we make as we each begin our baptismal journeys. The Nicene Creed explores the wonder of the incarnation, offering a deep and thoughtful approach to the wonder of the mystery of this activity of God the Holy Trinity. Each creed links us to the great cloud of witnesses who have spoken these words for centuries: the saints, our ancestors in faith, and is a confession of the faith we share that unites us with the church around the world and people of every nation (*Revelation 7:9*).

***HYMN OF THE DAY *The Church of Christ, in Every Age* (ELW 729)**

(Blue prayer cards are collected)



***APOSTLES' CREED**

Let us confess our faith in the words of the 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.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**
Seeking the Spirit of God who makes all things new, we pray for the church and the world.
A brief silence for reflection

As we celebrate Reformation Sunday, we remember the witness of Martin Luther and the reformers of the church in every generation. Empower us to continue the work of reform and renewal in our own day. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the healing of natural places despoiled by pollution and human greed. Give all living creatures access to safe land, water, and air. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for our criminal justice systems and all those whose lives are affected by them. Give wisdom and discernment to police, probation officers, judges, and attorneys; give courage and peace to prisoners and the formerly incarcerated. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We ask your blessing upon all people who have been harmed by the church and its leaders, that the truth may make them free. We pray for the relief of all those who are sick or suffering especially Geneva, Cherry, Henry, Harry, Sally, Debi, Karen, Nan, Beverly, Reed, Buzz, those on our prayer list, all whom we remember aloud or in our hearts and all who suffer in any way. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for those exploring or returning to a life of faith. Encourage and guide them, that they may find their hope in you. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

With gratitude, we remember those disciples who paved the way for us and all of our beloved dead. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all, we pray that you guide us in your will as we lift these prayers to you. We pray for the joys and concerns on the hearts of your people gathered together this morning, especially we pray for (*blue prayer cards are read*). God of mercy, trusting in your promise of life, we entrust those we have named, what we have forgotten in this time, and whatever else you see that we need into your keeping. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

IMPACT STORY

PEACE
The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**
Let us, greet one another and share the peace of Christ.

You are invited to turn to those around you and offer a word of peace as we prepare to receive God's grace in communion. We suggest a handshake and saying, "Peace be with you." You are also welcome to offer another gesture of peace (wave, fist-bump, smile, etc.).

MEAL

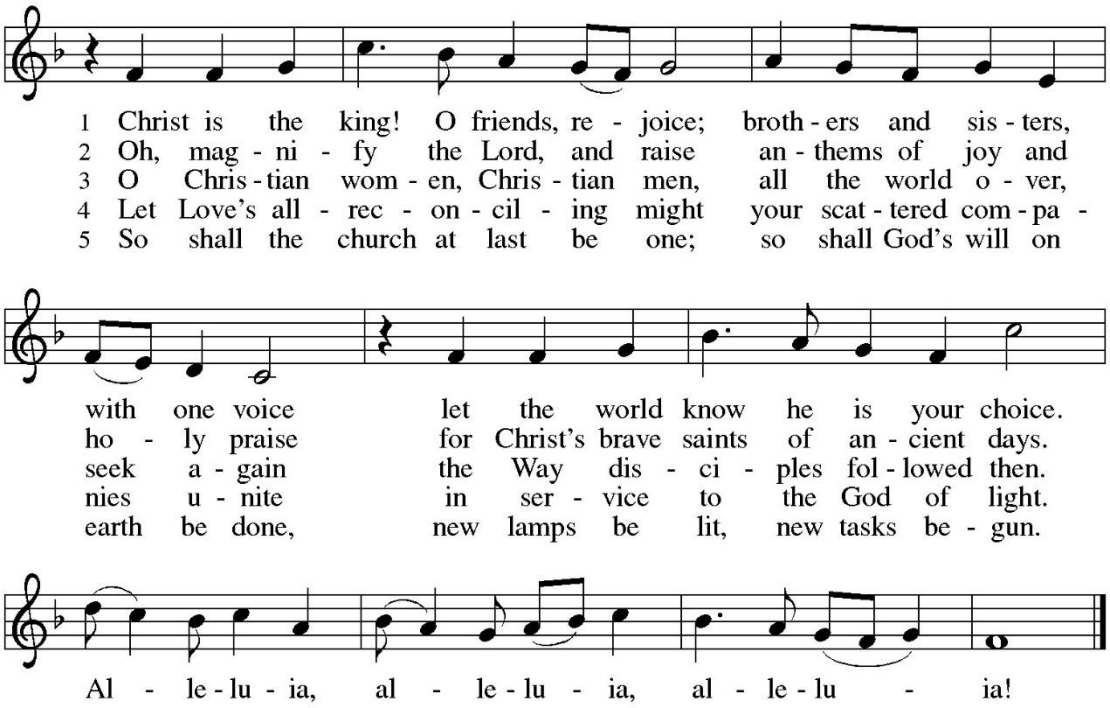
God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

COLLECTION OF THE OFFERING

You are invited to support the ministries of this congregation through gifts and prayers at this time. Ongoing prayer requests, connection cards, communion records, and financial gifts are collected in the plates as we remember that we offer all of ourselves to God.

OFFERTORY HYMN *Christ Is the King!* (ELW 662)

**rise on 5th verse*



*OFFERING PRAYER

Blessed are you,

O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us and called us your own. In your grace, we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

***GREAT THANKSGIVING**
The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Let us lift up our hearts to God in heaven (*Lamentations 3:41*)
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 to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resurrection
opened to us the way of everlasting life.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn (*Revelation 4:8*):


Du är he - lig, du är hel. Du är all - tid myck-et mer
You are ho - ly, you are whole. You are al - ways ev - er more
än vi nån - sin kan för - stå, du är nä - ra än - då.
than we ev - er un-der - stand. You are al - ways at hand.
Väl - sig - nad va - re du som kom - mer hit just nu,
Bless-ed are you com-ing near. Bless - ed are you com-ing here
väl - sig - na-de vår jord, blir till bröd på vår jord.
to your church in wine and bread, raised from soil, raised from dead.
2
Du är he - lig, du är hel - het,
You are ho - ly, you are whole - ness,
du är när - het he - la kos - mos lo - var dig!
you are pres - ent. Let the cos - mos praise you, Lord!
Ho - si - an - na, ho - si - an - na,
Sing ho - san - na in the high - est!
ho - si - an - na, ho - si - an - na vår Gud.
Sing ho - san - na! Sing ho - san - na to our God!

Holy, mighty, and gracious God:
Endless is your mercy and eternal your reign.
You have filled all creation with light and life;
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Through Abraham you promised to bless all nations.
You rescued Israel, your chosen people.
Through the prophets you renewed your promise;
and, at this end of all the ages, you sent your Son,
who in words and deeds proclaimed your kingdom
and was obedient to your will, even to giving his life.

"The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."
(*1 Corinthians 11:23-26*)

Remembering, then, his death and resurrection,
we lift this bread and cup before you,
giving you thanks that you have made us worthy
to stand before you and to serve you as your priestly people.

And we ask you:
Send your Spirit upon these gifts of your Church;
gather into one all who share this bread and wine;
fill us with your Holy Spirit to establish our faith in truth,
that we may praise and glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ.

Through him all glory and honor are yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church both now and forever.
Amen.

"[Jesus] was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." So he said to them, "When you pray, say: (*Luke 11:1-2a*)

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

In Holy Communion, we receive the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (*John 1:29*). We are forgiven and given new life. Like the disciples, we recognize the presence of the risen Christ who is made known in the breaking of the bread (*Luke 24:30*). Christ, who died and rose from the dead, is given to us and we are freed and united with one another in the body of Christ. God nourishes us for mission in the world. We receive the body of Christ in the sacrament of Holy Communion to live as the body of Christ in the world.

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**
Taste and see that the Lord is good, come, for all is now ready.
Thanks be to God.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION
Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life, and salvation as the blessings of God's sacramental grace. In response to Jesus' invitation, all baptized individuals are welcome to come forward and experience the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine. Those who do not receive the bread and wine are invited to come forward for a blessing.
Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available upon request. Communion may also be brought back to the pews for those who are unable to come forward.

COMMUNION SONG *Lamb of God* (ELW 198)



COMMUNION HYMN *As We Gather at Your Table* (ELW 522)



Communion Hymn *Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love* (ELW 708)



***POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**
May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and preserve you in grace. **Amen**

***POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**
We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The sending brings our worship full circle. We have been gathered, in all our diversity, and shaped into a community, one body in Christ. From the table of communion where Jesus Christ brings forgiveness, life, and salvation, God sends us out into daily baptismal living. We are blessed in the name of God, granting us God's favor and peace. With the blessing of God we go out to live as Christ's body in the world, proclaiming the good news that the kingdom of heaven has come near (*Matthew 10:7*), living in service to others, caring for all in need, and continuing our participation in God's mission— only to be gathered here again around the means of grace, God's Word and sacraments.

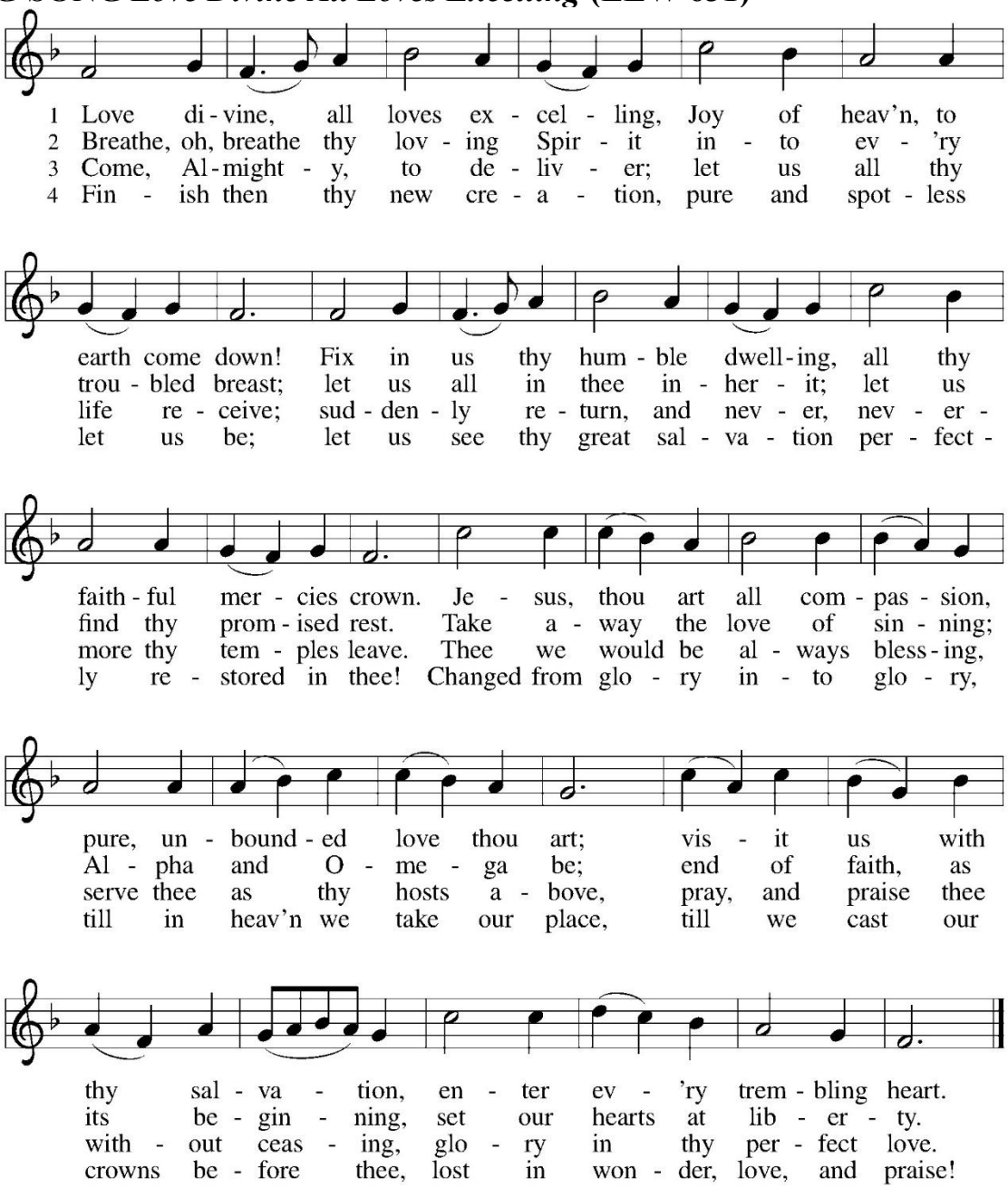
SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

***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.
(*Number 6:23-26*)

***SENDING SONG *Love Divine All Loves Excelling* (ELW 631)**



***DISMISSAL**

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord say, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?'
And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'"

Isaiah 6:8

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Assisting in worship today:

Assisting Minister: Volunteer
Lector: Volunteer
Acolyte: Ella N
Young Reader: Lydia M
Offering: Lydia M and Abby C

Notes for the day's texts:

Rooted in the past and growing into the future, the church must always be reforming in order to live out the love of Christ in an ever-changing world. We celebrate the good news of God's grace, that Jesus Christ sets us free every day to do this life-transforming work. Trusting in the freedom given to us in baptism, we pray for the church, that Christians will unite more fully in worship and mission centered on Jesus' summary of the law in today's gospel, echoing the summary of the law in the Torah. We are called not only to love God with heart, soul, and mind, but also to love our neighbor as ourselves. In the confession of sins, we acknowledge that we have not loved God, neighbor, and self; yet we gather to hear the word of forgiveness and be strengthened by word and meal to be signs of God's love in the world.

Today's Music

I Love to Tell the Story. Text: Katherine Hankey, 1834-1911, Music: William E. Fischer, 1849-1936. Public Domain.
The Church of Christ, in Every Age. Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903-2000, Music: William Knapp, 1698-1768. Hope Publishing Company (ASCAP) / Public Domain.
Christ Is the King! Text: George K. A. Bell, 1883-1958, alt., Music: Charles R. Anders, 1929-2020. Oxford University Press (New York). / Augsburg Fortress.
As We Gather at Your Table. Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944, Music: Oude en Nieuwe Hollantse Boerenlities en Contradansen, 1710; arr. Julius Röntgen, 1855–1932. Hope Publishing Company (ASCAP) / Public Domain.
Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love. Text: Tom Colvin, 1925-2000, alt., Music: Ghanaian folk tune, adapt. Tom Colvin. Hope Publishing Company (ASCAP).
Love Divine All Loves Excelling. Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, Music: Rowland H. Prichard, 1811-1887. Public Domain.
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Next Week's Readings

Revelation 7:9-17 *The multitudes of heaven worship the Lamb*
Psalm 34:1-10, 22 *Fear the Lord, you saints of the Lord; for those who fear the Lord lack nothing. (Ps. 34:9)*
1 John 3:1-3 *We are God's children*
Matthew 23:1-12 *All who humble themselves will be exalted*