

St. Paul Lutheran Church
of Stillwater, Minnesota

February 1, 2026

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany



Your presence at worship is important to God and to us! Whether you are a first-time visitor, frequent participant, neighbor, member, or friend, please take a moment as you prepare for worship to share some information on the "Welcome to Worship" card included with your bulletin. Place it in the offering plate at the time the offering is received.

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.

Many of our worship materials are taken from the red Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW). Page numbers are located in the front half of the book, and hymn numbers are located in the back half of the book.

The assembly **speaks** or **sings** the bold responses.

GATHERING

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

Prelude

Invocation

We begin in the name we are born children of God,
in the name of the Father, and of the [☩] Son, and of the
Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Kyrie

A Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: C Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy:

A Chri - ste e - le - i - son: C Christ, have mer - cy.
Christ, have mer - cy:

A Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: C Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy:

Gloria

C Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God in the high - est;
glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

I Lord God, heav-en - ly king, al-might - y God and Fa - ther, we
wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.

C Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God in the high - est;
glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

I Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, 2

Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on us; you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther: re-ceive our prayer.

Glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God in the high-est; glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

For you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord, you a-lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho-ly Spir-it, in the glo-ry of God the Fa-ther, A-men.

Glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God in the high-est; glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

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.

Prayer of the Day

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.

WORD

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

First Reading

Pew Bible: Old Testament Page 866

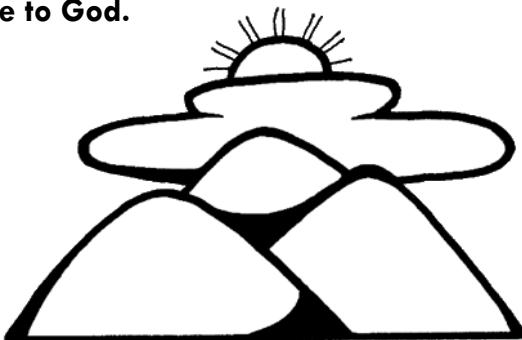
Micah 6:1-8

With the mountains and the foundations of the earth as the jury, God brings a lawsuit against Israel. God has "wearyed" 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.

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.



Psalm 15 (paraphrase)

"That's How We Walk"

Second Reading

Pew Bible: New Testament Page 166

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

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.

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.



Children's and Outreach Message

Jenny Brelje

Gospel Acclamation

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

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

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Matthew 5:1-12

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

The gospel is introduced:

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the conclusion:

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity

Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

Hymn of the Day

ELW hymn 714

"O God of Mercy, God of Light"

Prayers of Intercession

After each prayer:

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

At the conclusion:

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

Amen.

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

All are invited to greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offering

Our offering is a collection of money for the church's mission, including the care of those in need, as a sign of the giving of our whole selves in grateful response for all God's gifts. Your offering and "Welcome to Worship" card may be placed in the offering plate. The QR code on the right may be used if you wish to give electronically.



Offering Hymn

"Give Thanks"



Give thanks with a grate - ful heart, give thanks to the Ho - ly One,
give thanks be - cause he's giv - en Je - sus Christ, his Son.

Give thanks with a grate - ful heart, give thanks to the Ho - ly One,
give thanks be - cause he's giv - en Je - sus Christ, his Son.

And now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am
rich," be - cause of what the Lord has done for us. And
now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am

Last time

rich," be - cause of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks!

Offering Prayer

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

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 . . .

. . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

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 in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho- san - na in the
high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

(Continued on the next page.) 8

Blessed are you, O holy God: you are the Life and Light of all. By your powerful word you created all things. Through the prophets you called your people to be a light to the nations.

Blessed are you for Jesus, your Son. He is your Light, shining in our darkness and revealing to us your mercy and might.

In the night in which he was betrayed . . .

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks . . .

Remembering, therefore, his preaching and healing, his dying and rising, and his promise to come again, we await that day when all the universe will rejoice in your holy and life-giving light.

By your Spirit bless us and this meal, that, refreshed with this heavenly food, we may be light for the world, revealing the brilliance of your Son.

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

Amen.



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.**



C 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. 10

Communion

We celebrate at an open communion table. All who hear our Lord's invitation are welcome to participate. Receive the bread first with an open hand and eat immediately, followed by the juice (white) or wine (red). Gluten-free bread is available at the front end of the center aisle. Please indicate to an usher if you need to receive communion from your pew. Children who have received age-appropriate instruction are welcome to commune. If you prefer instead to receive a blessing, please indicate by crossing your arms over your shoulders.

When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say:

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

and each person may respond:

Amen.



Communion Song

"Blessed Be Your Name"

All are welcome to sing the chorus.

Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Blessed be Your name.

Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Blessed be Your glorious name.

Prayer After Communion

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.

SENDING

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

Announcements

Charge and Blessing

Go out into the world in peace;
have courage;
hold on to what is good;
return no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted;
support the weak, and help the suffering;
honor all people;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

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 \pm give you peace.

Amen.

Sending Song

ELW hymn 546

"To Be Your Presence"

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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DAILY PRAYER

Assurance of Forgiveness

Eternal God, walk with me this day, for the problems that I face are complex. The best course of action will not always be clear; the right thing to do is sometimes hard to determine; and the struggles I confront are difficult. Assure me of your forgiving love and your steadfast care, that I may face each day with confidence that you will never abandon me. Hear me now, I pray, through Jesus Christ my Savior.

Amen.

CONNECTIONS WITH THE LITURGY

The Prophet's Reproach

In the oracle from Micah, the Lord asks, "O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me!" These words are the inspiration for the Solemn Reproaches, an optional litany for Good Friday, in which Christ on the cross asks, "O my people, O my church, what have I done to you? How have I offended you? Answer me."

CATECHISM CONNECTION

True Riches

We sometimes get trapped into "zero-sum" thinking: "If someone has something more than me, they must be somehow be taking advantage of me!" Such thinking makes us anxious and jealous, tempting us to covet what they have. Luther's teaching on the 10th Commandment, "You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor" offers a clear antidote: We are to always direct our energies to the welfare of our neighbors, rich or poor, because their lives are far more rich and precious than their stuff. Just as they need us, we need them.

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Presentation of Our Lord

Monday, February 2, 2026

Forty days after the birth of Jesus we mark the day Mary and Joseph presented him in the temple in accordance with Jewish law. There they were greeted by Simeon, an aged priest who offered the song "Lord, now you let your servant depart in peace," as well as by the prophet Anna, who spoke of the redemption of Israel.

Ansgar, Bishop of Hamburg, missionary to Denmark and Sweden, died 865

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

A monk who helped bring Christianity to Scandinavia, Ansgar returned to Germany where he was named bishop of Hamburg. He is remembered for his love for poor people.

The Martyrs of Japan, died 1597

Thursday, February 5, 2026

Christianity was brought to Japan in the sixteenth century by Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries. The religion was suppressed, however, and in 1597 twenty-six missionaries and converts were crucified. Nevertheless, Christianity survived and later prospered.

GOSPEL MESSAGE

Something Bigger Than Us

The beatitudes could easily be read as a list of rewards and consequences, and the kind of behaviors that will merit one or the other. We are well accustomed to understanding the world in such terms. Children receive rewards for good behavior. Students earn awards or scholarships. Athletes win medals or trophies. Success is a ladder we climb and, if we've done our part, our job is rewarded in the end.

Jesus talks about a great reward, but it's not one we can earn. On a closer look, the nature of many of the so-called "blessings" in the beatitudes is as much about what is done to us as about anything we do for ourselves. Jesus begins his sermon by going up the mountain, but his words push us not to new heights but to greater depths. Poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, hunger, thirst, and persecution—these are not behaviors to strive toward for a reward. Instead, they are circumstances in which we can find ourselves when the ladder we've been climbing falls to the ground. Alternatively, to be merciful or pure in heart or a peacemaker is to choose to get off the ladder altogether for the sake of something bigger than our small selves.

The beatitudes as a whole suggest that Jesus wants more for us than simply collecting a heavenly prize in the end. His blessings assure us that all along the way, no matter our circumstances, we have an inherent, God-given dignity that no one and nothing can strip from us. At the table of Christ, all who hunger and thirst for righteousness are filled. This meal isn't awarded to us for a job well done. Rather, it feeds us for the work still to be done, that of sharing God's mercy and peace with others.