

## Stewardship 2026 Join the Journey

*"Trust in God from the bottom of your heart;  
don't try to figure out everything on your own.  
Listen for God's voice in everything you do,  
everywhere you go." Proverbs 3:4-6*



### WELCOME TO WORSHIP 8:00 AM Traditional Worship Fourth Sunday after Epiphany February 1, 2026

**Pastor:** Paula Geister-Jones **Lay Ministry Administrator:** Jenny Hoffman

**Organist/Pianist:** Linda Kunz

**Lector:** Diane Matson

**Acolyte:** Lauren Koch

**Ushers:** Todd Skavlen, Mark Wilberg, Eric Smedal & Roger Nitzsche

**Technical Support:** Thomas Lehr, Roger Slack

Who are the blessed ones of God? For Micah, they are those who do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. 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.

### CALL TO WORSHIP: "Let Streams of Living Justice" Holst/Stevens

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

**P:** Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, the Creator of heaven and earth,  
the Word who spoke life into being, the Wind stirring the waters.

**C: Amen**

**P.** Let us turn in confession to the one who knows us completely.

*Brief silence for reflection.*

**P:** Mighty God, lover of justice,

**C: you call us to life in community, but we have served our own interests**

**at the expense of our neighbors. We have sown deceit where honesty was needed. We say the right words, but our hearts are far from you. Turn us to seek your face. Knit us together and give us the mind of Christ, that we may do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

**P:** The former things have passed away, and new things God now declares: Like a spring of water that never fails, God covers you in the righteousness of Christ, and forgives your sin in  $\text{†}$  Jesus' name. May the Spirit give you strength to live for others, and bless you with the gift of peace.

**C: Amen.**

*Stand*

**HYMN: "As We Gather at Your Table" ELW #522**

**Vs. 1: As we gather at your table,  
as we listen to your word,  
help us know, O God, your presence;  
let our hearts and minds be stirred.  
Nourish us with sacred story  
till we claim it as our own;  
teach us through this holy banquet  
how to make Love's vict'ry known.**

**Vs. 2: Turn our worship into witness  
in the sacrament of life;  
send us forth to love and serve you,  
bringing peace where there is strife.  
Give us, Christ, your great compassion  
to forgive as you forgave;  
may we still behold your image  
in the world you died to save.**

**Vs. 3: Gracious Spirit, help us summon  
other guests to share that feast  
where triumphant Love will welcome  
those who had been last and least.  
There no more will envy blind us  
nor will pride our peace destroy,  
as we join with saints and angels**

**to repeat the sounding joy.**

### **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.

### **LITANY**

**P:** In the beginning was the Word,

**C:** and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

**P:** In the Word was life,

**C:** and the life was the light of all people.

**P:** The word became flesh and lived among us,

**C:** and we have seen his glory, full of grace and truth.

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "Arise, Your Light Has Come" ELW #314 Vss. 1,2 & 4**

**Vs. 1:** Arise, your light has come! The Spirit's call obey;  
show forth the glory of your God which shines on you today.

**Vs. 2:** Arise, your light has come! Fling wide the prison door;  
proclaim the captive's liberty, good tidings to the poor.

**Vs. 4:** Arise, your light has come! The mountains burst in song!  
Rise up like eagles on the wing, God's pow'r will make us strong.

### **SALUTATION**

**P:** The Lord be with you.

**C:** And also with you.

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**P:** Let us pray.

**C:** 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.

*Sit*

**FIRST READING: Micah 6:1-8**

<sup>1-2</sup> Listen now, listen to God: “Take your stand in court. If you have a complaint, tell the mountains; make your case to the hills. And now, Mountains, hear God’s case; listen, Jury Earth—For I am bringing charges against my people. I am building a case against Israel.<sup>3-5</sup> “Dear people, how have I done you wrong? Have I burdened you, worn you out? Answer! I delivered you from a bad life in Egypt; I paid a good price to get you out of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you— and Aaron and Miriam to boot! Remember what Balak king of Moab tried to pull, and how Balaam son of Beor turned the tables on him. Remember all those stories about Shittim and Gilgal. Keep all God’s salvation stories fresh and present.” <sup>6-7</sup> How can I stand up before God and show proper respect to the high God? Should I bring an armload of offerings topped off with yearling calves? Would God be impressed with thousands of rams, with buckets and barrels of olive oil? Would he be moved if I sacrificed my firstborn child, my precious baby, to cancel my sin? <sup>8</sup> But he’s already made it plain how to live, what to do, what God is looking for in men and women. It’s quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor, be compassionate and loyal in your love, and don’t take yourself too seriously—take God seriously.

**P:** The word of the Lord.

**C:** Thanks be to God.

*Stand*

**GOSPEL CANTICLE: “Open My Eyes, That I May See”**

Open my eyes, that I may see  
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;  
Place in my hands the wonderful key  
That shall unclasp, and set me free.  
Silently now I wait for Thee,  
Ready my God, Thy will to see;  
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine.

*The Gospel is announced...*

**P:** The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 5th Chapter.

**C:** Glory to you, O Lord.

**GOSPEL: Matthew 5:1-12**

<sup>1-2</sup> When Jesus saw his ministry drawing huge crowds, he climbed a hillside.

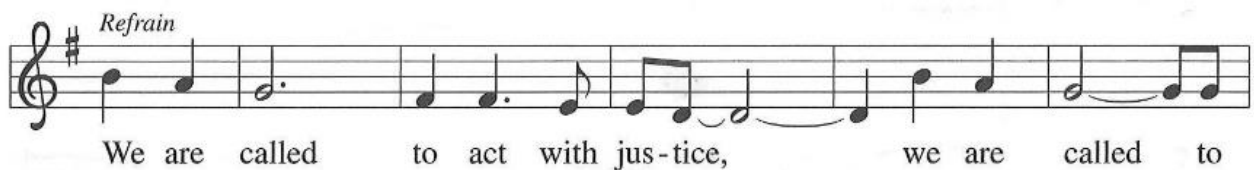
Those who were apprenticed to him, the committed, climbed with him. Arriving at a quiet place, he sat down and taught his climbing companions. This is what he said: <sup>3</sup> “You’re blessed when you’re at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule. <sup>4</sup> “You’re blessed when you feel you’ve lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you. <sup>5</sup> “You’re blessed when you’re content with just who you are—no more, no less. That’s the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can’t be bought. <sup>6</sup> “You’re blessed when you’ve worked up a good appetite for God. He’s food and drink in the best meal you’ll ever eat. <sup>7</sup> “You’re blessed when you care. At the moment of being ‘care-full,’ you find yourselves cared for. <sup>8</sup> “You’re blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world. <sup>9</sup> “You’re blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That’s when you discover who you really are, and your place in God’s family. <sup>10</sup> “You’re blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God’s kingdom. <sup>11-12</sup> “Not only that—count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even!—for though they don’t like it, / do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble.

**P:** The gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Sit*

**SERMON**

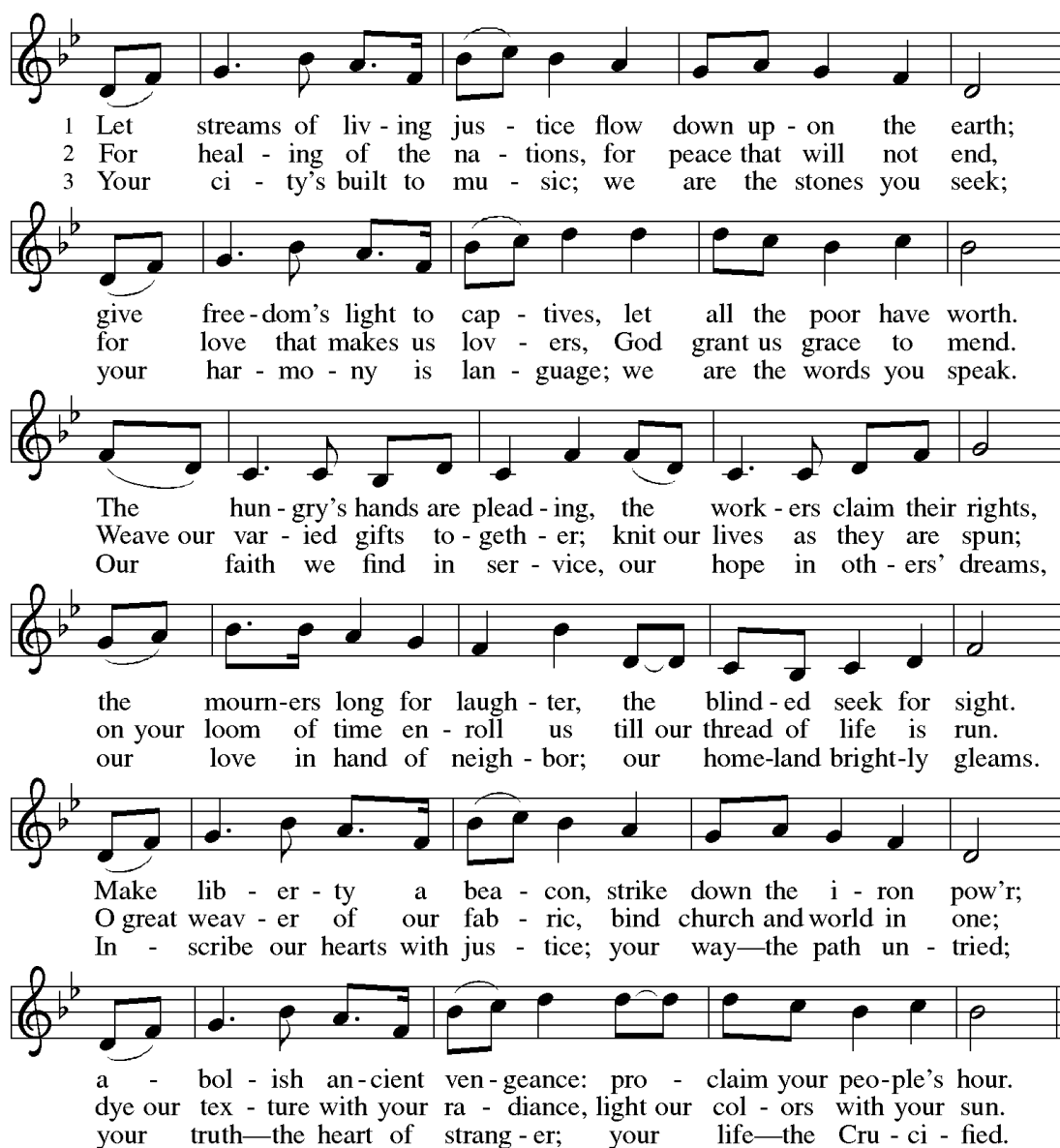




love ten - der - ly; we are called to serve one an -  
oth - er, to walk hum - bly with God.

Stand

# HYMN: "Let Streams of Living Justice" ELW #710



1 Let streams of liv - ing jus - tice flow down up - on the earth;  
2 For heal - ing of the na - tions, for peace that will not end,  
3 Your ci - ty's built to mu - sic; we are the stones you seek;  
give free-dom's light to cap - tives, let all the poor have worth.  
for love that makes us lov - ers, God grant us grace to mend.  
your har - mo - ny is lan - guage; we are the words you speak.  
The hun - gry's hands are plead - ing, the work - ers claim their rights,  
Weave our var - ied gifts to - geth - er; knit our lives as they are spun;  
Our faith we find in ser - vice, our hope in oth - ers' dreams,  
the mourn-ers long for laugh - ter, the blind - ed seek for sight.  
on your loom of time en - roll us till our thread of life is run.  
our love in hand of neigh - bor; our home-land bright-ly gleams.  
Make lib - er - ty a bea - con, strike down the i - ron pow'r;  
O great weav - er of our fab - ric, bind church and world in one;  
In - scribe our hearts with jus - tice; your way—the path un - tried;  
a - bol - ish an-cient ven - geance: pro - claim your peo-ple's hour.  
dye our tex - ture with your ra - diance, light our col - ors with your sun.  
your truth—the heart of strang - er; your life—the Cru - ci - fied.

## **APOSTLE'S 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**

**P:** As God's beloved children united in Christ, let us pray for the church, the whole human community, and the well-being of the earth, our home.

*A brief silence*

**P:** God our wisdom, renew the church in the power of the Spirit, that it may do justice, love kindness, live humbly, and boldly proclaim Christ crucified.

We pray for social justice and humanitarian aid ministries. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

**P:** God our source, we honor you by caring wisely for your creation. We pray for the health of old growth forests, ice caps, and ocean currents. Preserve the diversity of life on earth. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

**P:** God our righteousness, raise up visionary leaders who serve with integrity and respect human rights. Increase freedom in every nation. Protect educators, journalists, artists, and religious activists who are reviled for speaking truth. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

**P:** God our advocate, you give hope to all who suffer because of persecution, poverty, or war. Reunite separated families and bring orphaned children to safety. Comfort any who grieve or suffer in any way. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

**P:** God our blessing, we pray for the children and youth of this congregation, and for parents, grandparents, mentors, teachers, and youth ministers who model love for their neighbor and care for others. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

**P:** God our joy, we give thanks for the lives of those before us who journeyed humbly with you. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

**P:** 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

**C: Amen.**

### **THE SHARING OF THE PEACE**

**P:** The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C: And also with you.**

*Sit*

**OFFERTORY: "The Word Who Sang the Light into Creation" Taulé**

### **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

**P:** God of Majesty,

**C: no eye has seen, no ear has heard what you have prepared for those who love you, yet in this meal you reveal the wideness of your mercy. Use what we have gathered to feed us with the reign of God come near, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

### **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**



## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

**P:** Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!  
Come to the table; taste and see. The body of Christ given for you. The  
blood of Christ shed for you.

## **COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION**

*Music is played as those who wish to come forward for communion come forward and kneel at the communion rail. Others are invited to commune in your pew.*

## **COMMUNION BLESSING**

**P:** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you  
in his grace till life everlasting.  
**C: Amen.**

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**P:** Radiant God,  
**C:** we have seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. In the sacrament of  
his body and blood you have drawn us to your heart. Send us from this  
table with delight, that our lives may reflect the beauty of your love,  
and bear witness to all we have seen and heard, through Jesus Christ,  
our Savior and Lord. Amen.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Stand*

### **BLESSING**

**P:** The triune God, who has put a new song in your mouth and tuned your heart for praise ✠ bless you now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

### **DISMISSAL**

**P:** Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **SENDING HYMN: “The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve ” ELW #551**

**Vs. 1: The Spirit sends us forth to serve; we go in Jesus' name  
to bring glad tidings to the poor, God's favor to proclaim.**

**Vs. 2: We go to comfort those who mourn and set the burdened free;  
where hope is dim, to share a dream and help the blind to see.**

**Vs. 3: We go to be the hands of Christ, to scatter joy like seed  
and, all our days, to cherish life, to do the loving deed.**

**Vs. 4: Then let us go to serve in peace, the gospel to proclaim.  
God's Spirit has empowered us; we go in Jesus' name.**

### **POSTLUDE: “Rise Up, O Saints of God” Walter/Wold**