

Service of Holy Communion

2nd Sunday of Christmas

January 4th, 2026



INTRODUCTION

Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

P. Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace. **Amen.**

P. Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.

Congregation kneels or sits. Silence is kept for reflection.

P. Reconciling God, **we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain, and despair. We confess that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for your love; we have not always recognized your presence among us; we have not always embraced your message of peace. We cry out, weary with the burden of violence, oppression, and fear. We confess our failure to make room for those seeking refuge; our participation in violent systems harm your innocent ones; our reluctance to embody your good news. Be born in us today and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation. Amen.**

P. Hear the good news: God's grace upon grace flows over you. † Christ's presence redeems the whole creation. Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad! **Amen.**

Congregation stands

GATHERING HYMN

Let All Together Praise Our God

ELW 287

THE 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.**

KYRIE

A. In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

A. For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

A. For the peace of the whole world, for the well being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

A. For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

A. Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C. Amen

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

I Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, King of cre - a - tion,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Tru - ly I'd love thee, tru - ly I'd serve thee,
light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P. Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Congregation is seated

WORD

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:7-14

⁷ Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say,

“Save, O LORD, your people, the remnant of Israel.”

⁸ See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north

and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor together; a great company, they shall return here.⁹ With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back; I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path where they shall not stumble, for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him and will keep him as a shepherd does a flock.”¹¹ For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.¹² They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again.¹³ Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them and give them gladness for sorrow.¹⁴ I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,

A. Word of God, word of life.

C. Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 147:12-20 (*read responsively*)

¹² Worship the LORD, O Jerusalem;

praise your God, O Zion,

¹³ **who has strengthened the bars of your gates
and has blessed your children within you.**

¹⁴ God has established peace on your borders
and satisfies you with the finest wheat.

- ¹⁵ **God sends out a command to the earth,
a word that runs very swiftly.**
- ¹⁶ God gives snow like wool,
scattering frost like ashes.
- ¹⁷ **God scatters hail like bread crumbs.
Who can stand against God's cold?**
- ¹⁸ The LORD sends forth the word and melts them;
the wind blows, and the waters flow.
- ¹⁹ **God declares the word to Jacob,
statutes and judgments to Israel.**
- ²⁰ The LORD has not done so to any other nation;
they do not know God's judgments. Hallelujah!

SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:3-14

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵ He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹² so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴ this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

A. Word of God, word of life.

C. Thanks be to God.

A TIME FOR THE CHILD IN US ALL

Children & Youth are invited forward for a special sermon time with Pastor Peggy.

Congregation stands
GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.
Repeat alleluia
Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

GOSPEL: John 1:1-18

P. The holy gospel according to John **C. Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") ¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

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

Congregation is seated

SERMON

Grace Multiplied

Congregation stands

HYMN OF THE DAY

What Child Is This

ELW 296

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 THE CHURCH

A. Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.*

A. O God, you reveal yourself wherever two or three are gathered in your name. Be with us now, not only in the infant Jesus and resurrected Christ, but in the beloved people of this assembly. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. You reveal yourself in the waters of the womb; in brooks, ponds, and oceans; and in the waters of baptism. Grant us wisdom to tenderly care for the earth as a garden watered by your grace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. You reveal yourself in blessed diversity. Help us to look for you in people near and far, in bodies of all kinds, and in kindred young and old. Let us seek you in many places, praising you in many tongues. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. You reveal yourself in new life. Support those beginning a new job, a new relationship, or a new living situation, especially those displaced because of tragedy or loss. Be with all others who need your life-giving touch this day. We pray especially for... those we name aloud... and those we hold in our hearts... Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. You reveal yourself in holy communion. Sustain all who provide food and fellowship in this congregation and in the wider community. Make our tables signs of your welcoming presence among us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. You promise to turn mourning into joy and to comfort those who weep. We remember those who have died and look to being united with them in your glory. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P. With the joy of Christ’s birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P. The Peace of Christ be with you always.
C. And also with you.
P. Let us share with each other a sign of Christ’s peace.

Congregation is seated

CHOIR ANTHEM Emmanuel Dennis Allen & Nan Allen

MEAL

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Scan to give
via Venmo



Offering can be given by putting it in the offering plate when it is passed, online directly via the QR codes for Tithely or Venmo, or by requesting your bank to send a check to the church. Find more details on our website.
Thank you for your generous gifts!

Scan to give
via Tithely



Congregation stands

OFFERTORY SONG



1 Let all things now liv - ing a song of thanks - giv - ing to
God the cre - a - tor tri - um - phant - ly raise,
who fash - ioned and made us, pro - tect - ed and stayed us, who
still guides us on to the end of our days.
God's ban - ners are o'er us, God's light goes be -
fore us, a pil - lar of fire shin - ing forth in the night,
till shad - ows have van - ished and dark - ness is ban - ished, as
for - ward we trav - el from light in - to light.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A. Let us pray... Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. **Amen.**

DIALOGUE & PREFACE OF THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

P. The Lord be with you.

C. And also with you.

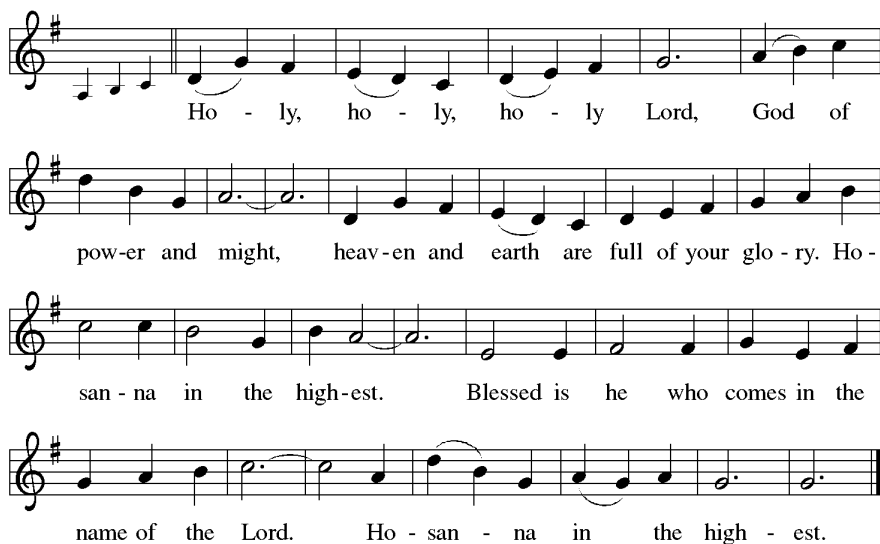
P. Lift up your hearts.

C. We lift them to the Lord.

P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C. It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P. It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so with all the choirs of angels, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Congregation kneels or sits

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P. Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your word brought light into the world.

In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our darkness and to make us your daughters and sons.

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. 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. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him.

By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Son.

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

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

Believing in the real presence of Christ, we practice Eucharistic hospitality. All baptized persons are welcome to Communion this morning. Please come forward, guided by the Ushers, to receive the bread and wine. Children are invited to the table for a blessing.

Gluten free and traditional wafers are available, please note this to Pastor Peggy when you come up. The bread is dairy and egg free. Grape juice is available in the second communion plate. As you return to your seat via the side aisles you can place your empty cup in the baskets on either side.

P. God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!

COMMUNION SONG

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.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

After all have received Communion the congregation stands.

TABLE BLESSING

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

SONG AFTER COMMUNION



1 Let us tal - ents and tongues em - ploy, reach - ing out with a shout of joy:



bread is bro - ken, the wine is poured, Christ is spo - ken and seen and heard.

Refrain



Je - sus lives a - gain, earth can breathe a - gain, pass the Word a - round: loaves a - bound!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A. Let us pray... Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us. **Amen.**

SENDING

BENEDICTION

P. The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter, ✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

He Came Down

ELW 253

DISMISSAL

A. Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace. **C. Thanks be to God.**

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Announcements for January 4th, 2026

***Welcome** to Holy Counselor Lutheran Church. May you experience the joy of God’s presence in our worship!*

*If today is your **first time** worshipping at Holy Counselor, please be sure to fill out the “Guest Book” on the table in the narthex and take a welcome bag.*

*Please ask our ushers any questions you may have regarding worship this morning. **Large print bulletins are available.***

***Worship is live streamed** to our church Facebook page, but the camera is pointed away during Communion and is not on the children when they come forward during A Time for the Child in Us All.*

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Volunteers for Today’s Worship

Lay Asst.	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Ushers	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Comm. Asst.	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Tech	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Tellers	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Refreshments	<i>Volunteer needed</i>

Volunteers for Next Sunday, Jan. 11th

Lay Asst.	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Ushers	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Comm. Asst.	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Tech	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Tellers	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Refreshments	Luedtke Family

******* Join us for refreshments after worship*******

THIS WEEK AT HOLY COUNSELOR

- Sunday, Jan 4:** No Sunday School
Worship w/Communion, 9:30am
Choir Practice following worship
White Elephant Gift Exchange, 11am
- Tuesday, Jan 6:** Pastor’s Community Office Hours, Daily Bean, 12-2pm
- Wednesday, Jan 7:** Adult Ed, Zoom, 10am
- Saturday, Jan 10:** Sisters in Prayer, Zoom, 8:30am
- Sunday, Jan 11:** Sunday School, 8:45-9:15am
Worship w/Communion, Epiphany & Baptism of our Lord, 9:30am
Choir Practice following worship

White Elephant Gift Exchange: TODAY is our white elephant gift exchange!

Bring your wrapped present to the backroom for fun and fellowship and go home with a new gift!

Pastor's Community Office Hours: Pastor Peggy will be at **Daily Bean, THIS Tuesday, Jan. 6th from 12-2pm** for Community Hours. All are welcome to drop in for a visit as she is present in the community.

2026 Calendars for Sale: Happy New Year! Get a new calendar for your home. They are **\$20 each**. All calendar sales go directly to support the church.

Boiler Replacement: Due to a recent leak, damage and old age of the boiler at the parsonage immediate replacement was needed. A generous family of the church has put the cost on their credit card. Please **help support the boiler replacement fundraiser** in the Narthex to cover these costs, about \$12,000.

Paper Drive: We are running low on toilet paper and paper towels. **Please contribute** to our "Paper Drive" in the months of December and January. All **donations can be placed** in the fellowship room against the left wall by the chairs.

Youth Council Representative: For 2026 we will **need a new youth representative on church council**. If you are a youth interested in this service position, please contact Pastor Peggy or Diane Rossi. Thank you to Kevin, who has been our youth rep and will be heading off to college next year.

Annual Congregational Meeting: Our annual meeting is **Sunday, January 25th following worship** with a makeup weather date of February 8th. Please plan to attend to celebrate the 2025 year, hear updates about the church, and approve the 2026 spending plan. **A potluck luncheon will follow, please bring a dish to pass.**

Women's Lenten Retreat: We are hosting our 2nd Annual Woman's Retreat at HCLC on **Saturday, March 7th from 9 am-3 pm**. All women are invited to come explore a Lenten journey this winter about self-care. The day includes Pastor Peggy as our keynote speaker, worship, music, workshops and meditation. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. There is a recommended **donation of \$15** for building use. Please **RSVP** to the office (office@hc-lutheranchurch.org) **by Monday, February 9th**. See Kathy Heeren or Pam Kucks with any questions.

Your legacy gift to the church: In your will or trust you can make a difference in the life of the people in this congregation. The new year is always a great time to review your will. Also, as a reminder if you give electronically via tithe.ly please update it to reflect your new intent for 2026. Thank you! If you have any questions, please contact John Heeren or Pastor Peggy.

Food Pantry: Thank you for the recent generous food drives, we are still in **need of:** canned chicken noodle soup, canned stew, instant pudding, jello, children's juice boxes or pouches, 4-pack toilet paper & toothpaste. You can always bring donations of canned goods, paper goods, and hygiene products. All donations can be **placed in the blue bin** by the sanctuary doors. Thank you!



For God's Children of all ages!

Worship Notes

Sunday's Date: _____



My Favorite
Song:



This week, I'm praying for:




I'm curious or have a
question about:



Today's Focus Scripture: _____

I would draw it like:



Word Count

How many times did you hear each
of these words today? Make a tally.

grace: _____

joy: _____

peace: _____

love: _____

||



Contact Information

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Office Administrator: Cathy Nemecek: office@hc-lutheranchurch.org

Bookkeeper: Wynn White: accounts@hc-lutheranchurch.org

MISSION STATEMENT

*As Children of God,
we are called to share and serve
Christ's love and bring God's word to all.*

CHURCH COUNCIL

Pastor Rev. Peggy Ludlow

President Nancy Knecht

Vice President Frank Urbaniak

Treasurer Claire Speroni

Recording Secretary Dawn McCormick

Financial Secretary John Heeren

Outreach Coordinator Francine Vince

Nurture Coordinator Fred Schoenagel

Administration Coordinator Diane Rossi

Youth Representative Kevin Drache

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Kristina Heeren

Pam Kucks

Matt Moller

Aileen Donovan

Holy Counselor is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Munsee people, and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.

