

# Service of Holy Communion

## 4th Sunday after Epiphany

### February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026



#### INTRODUCTION

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.

#### GATHERING

#### CONFSSION AND FORGIVENESS

*The congregation stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

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

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

*The congregation sits or kneels. Silence is kept for reflection.*

Mighty God, lover of justice, **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.**

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 <sup>†</sup> Jesus' name. May the Spirit give you strength to live for others, and bless you with the gift of peace. **Amen.**

*Congregation stands*

**GATHERING HYMN**

As We Gather at Your Table

ELW 522

**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**

1 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. 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.**

*Congregation is seated*

## WORD

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

<sup>1</sup> Hear what the LORD says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,  
and let the hills hear your voice.

<sup>2</sup> Hear, you mountains, the case of the LORD,  
and you enduring foundations of the earth,  
for the LORD has a case against his people,  
and he will contend with Israel.

<sup>3</sup> "O my people, what have I done to you?  
In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

<sup>4</sup> For I brought you up from the land of Egypt  
and redeemed you from the house of slavery,  
and I sent before you Moses,  
Aaron, and Miriam.

<sup>5</sup> O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,  
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,  
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,  
that you may know the saving acts of the LORD."

<sup>6</sup> "With what shall I come before the LORD  
and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,  
with calves a year old?

<sup>7</sup> Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,  
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,  
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

<sup>8</sup> He has told you, O mortal, what is good,  
and what does the LORD require of you  
but to do justice and to love kindness  
and to walk humbly with your God?

A. Word of God, word of life.

**C. Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM: Psalm 15 (read responsively)

<sup>1</sup> LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle?  
Who may abide upon your holy hill?  
<sup>2</sup> **Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right,  
who speak the truth from their heart;**  
<sup>3</sup> they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends;  
they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.  
<sup>4</sup> **In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those who fear  
the LORD.**

**They have sworn upon their health and do not take back their word.**

<sup>5</sup> They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes  
against the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.

## SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

<sup>18</sup> The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but  
to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup> For it is written,  
“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

<sup>20</sup> Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of  
this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup> For since, in  
the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God  
decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who  
believe. <sup>22</sup> For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, <sup>23</sup> but we proclaim  
Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to  
those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and  
the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup> For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and  
God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.

<sup>26</sup> Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise  
by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble  
birth. <sup>27</sup> But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God  
chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup> God chose what is low  
and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, <sup>29</sup> so  
that no one might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup> In contrast, God is why you  
are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness  
and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup> in order that, as it is written, “Let the one  
who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

A. Word of God, word of life.

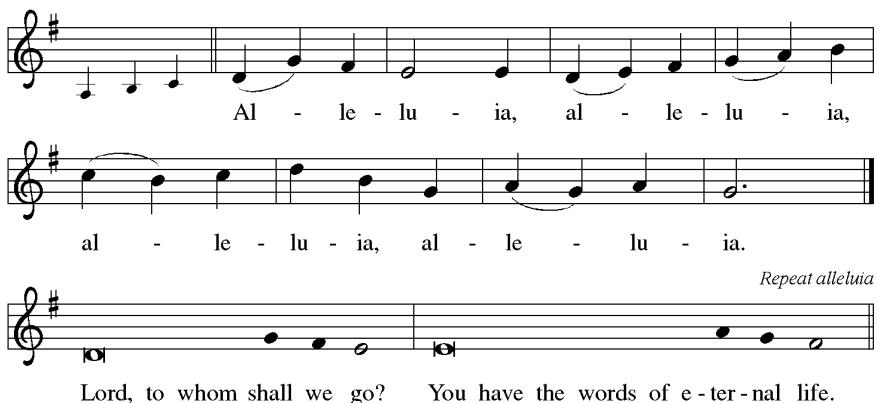
C. Thanks be to God.

## 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: Matthew 5:1-12

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

<sup>1</sup> When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup> And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup> "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

<sup>7</sup> "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

<sup>8</sup> "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup> "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

<sup>10</sup> "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

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

*Congregation is seated*

**SERMON**

Do Justice

*Congregation stands*

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

Build a Longer Table

*printed in bulletin*

**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. 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.*

A. 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, **receive our prayer.**

A. 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, **receive our prayer.**

A. 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, **receive our prayer.**

A. 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, we pray especially for... those we now say aloud... and those we hold in our hearts. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

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

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

Come Thirsty

*Jeff Ferguson & Regi Stone*

### **MEAL**

### **OFFERTORY INVITATION**

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***Thank you for your generous gifts!***

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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... God of majesty, 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.**

## 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 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, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of  
 power and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -  
 san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the  
 name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*The congregation sits or kneels.*

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P. 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, 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 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.**

#### **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.**

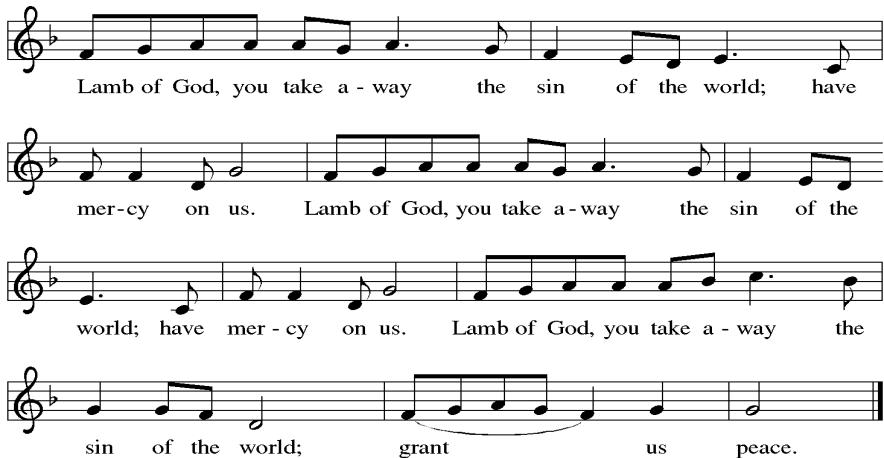
#### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

*Believing in the real presence of Christ, we practice Eucharistic hospitality. All baptized persons are welcome to Communion this morning. Children may come forward for a blessing.*

*Please come forward, guided by the Ushers, to receive the bread and wine. Gluten free wafers are available, please note this to Pastor Peggy when you come forward. 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. Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! Come to the table, taste and see.

## 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.

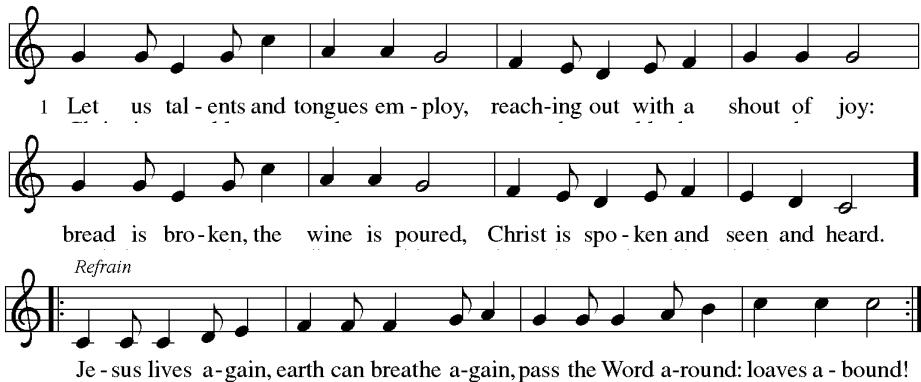
## DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

*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... Radiant God, 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 love, and bear witness to all we have seen and heard, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## SENDING

### **BENEDICTION**

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

### **SENDING HYMN**

The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve

ELW 551

### **DISMISSAL**

A. Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy. **C. Thanks be to God.**

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## **Announcements for February 1<sup>st</sup>, 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** worshiping 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.	Volunteer needed
Ushers	Volunteer needed
Comm. Asst.	Volunteer needed
Tech	Volunteer needed
Tellers	Volunteer needed
Refreshments	Volunteer needed

### Volunteers for Next Sunday, Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>

*\*All positions open\**

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

## THIS WEEK AT HOLY COUNSELOR

**Sunday, Feb 1:** Sunday School, 8:45-9:15am

Worship w/Communion, 9:30am

Annual Meeting/Potluck Luncheon following meeting

**Monday, Feb 2:** PRC Meeting, Zoom, 7pm

**Tuesday, Feb 3:** Pastor's Comm. Office Hours, LiBre Cafe, Hamburg, 12-2pm

**Wednesday, Feb 4:** Adult Ed, Zoom, 10am & 7pm

**Thursday, Feb 5:** Cluster-wide Grief Study, Zoom, 7-8pm

**Friday, Feb 6:** Soup Making Session, 7pm

**Saturday, Feb 7:** Sisters in Prayer, Zoom, 8:30am

    Soup Making Session, 3pm

**Sunday, Feb 8:** Sunday School, 8:45-9:15am

    Worship w/Communion, 9:30am

    Souper Bowl Sunday Soup Sale following worship

    Choir Practice following worship

**Annual Congregational Meeting:** Our annual meeting is **TODAY, February 1st following worship** with a makeup weather date of February 8<sup>th</sup>. 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.**

**Pastor's Community Office Hours:** Pastor Peggy will be at **LiBre Café, Hamburg, THIS Tuesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> from 12-2pm** for Community Hours. All are welcome to drop in for a visit as she is present in the community.

**Cluster-wide Grief Study:** For the month of February our ELCA cluster will be offering a **4-week series** on grief. Topics include: Identifying Grief Patterns; What is Normal?/Dealing with Thoughts & Feelings; Coping Strategies; and The Spiritual Dynamics of Grief. It will take place on **Zoom from 7-8pm on Thursdays** (2/5-2/26). It's okay if you can't make it every week. All are welcome!

**Souper Bowl Sunday Soup Sale:** Buy some delicious soup after worship next **Sunday, February 8th** to warm up before the big game! Mason jars of soup: **1 for \$8, 2 for \$15 or 3 for \$20.**

**Soup Making:** Join the soup making fun! Soup will be made on **Friday 2/6 at 7pm and on Saturday 2/7 at 3pm** at church! Please see the separate list in the narthex of **food items needed to make the soup**. Contact John Heeren regarding 'manly' soup making and fellowship Friday evening and Denise Urbaniak regarding Saturday if you'd like to help.

**Shrove Tuesday Dinner:** Mark your calendars for **our Shrove Tuesday Dinner on February 17<sup>th</sup> from 5-7 pm.** We will have pancakes and other delicious food! Invite your neighbors. All are welcome.

**Ash Wednesday—2 Opportunities for Ashes:** Lent begins with **Ash Wednesday on February 18th.** We will **worship at 7pm** that evening with the imposition of ashes. Pastor Peggy will also be imposing **ashes on the go at the Daily Bean from 12-2pm** that day.

**Boiler Replacement & Electric Hot Water Heater:** Due to a recent leak, damage and old age of the boiler at the parsonage immediate replacement was needed. Unfortunately, the hot water heater also has a leak and needs to be replaced. Good news is we will be putting in an electric one that will use our solar panels. Please **help support the boiler replacement and hot water heater fundraiser** in the Narthex to cover these costs. **The boiler is almost paid for because of your generosity!** Thank you to all who have given already!

**Women's Lenten Retreat:** We are hosting our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Woman's Retreat at HCLC on **Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup>.** See Kathy Heeren or Pam Kucks with any questions.

**Food Pantry: Food items to help restock:** canned chicken noodle soup, boxed cereal, canned stew, canned chili, rice, 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!

## Build a Longer Table



1 Build a long - er ta - ble, not a high - er wall,  
2 Build a saf - er ref - uge, not a larg - er jail;  
3 Build a broad - er door - way, not a long - er fence.  
4 When we lived as ex - iles, ref - u - gees a - broad,



feed - ing those who hun - ger, mak - ing room for all.  
where the weak find shel - ter, mer - cy will not fail.  
Love pro - tects all peo - ple, spar - ing no ex - pense.  
Christ be - came our door - way to the reign of God.



Feast - ing to - geth - er, strang - er turns to friend,  
For an - y place where jus - tice is de - nied,  
When we em - brace com - pas - sion more than fear,  
So must our ta - bles wel - come those who roam.



Christ breaks walls to piec - es; false di - vi - sions end.  
Christ will breach the jail wall, free - ing all in - side.  
Christ tears down our fenc - es: all are wel-come here.  
None can be ex - clud - ed; all must find a home.

Text: David Bjorlin, b. 1984

Music: NOËL NOUVELET, French carol

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Church Office (973) 827-5251  
[www.hc-lutheranchurch.org](http://www.hc-lutheranchurch.org)

The Reverend Peggy Ludlow: [pastorpeggy@hc-lutheranchurch.org](mailto:pastorpeggy@hc-lutheranchurch.org)  
Director of Music: June Tarantino: [music@hc-lutheranchurch.org](mailto:music@hc-lutheranchurch.org)  
Office Administrator: Cathy Nemecek: [office@hc-lutheranchurch.org](mailto:office@hc-lutheranchurch.org)  
Bookkeeper: Wynn White: [accounts@hc-lutheranchurch.org](mailto: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.*

