

Service of Holy Communion

5th Sunday after Epiphany

February 8th, 2026



INTRODUCTION

Light shines in the darkness for the upright, the psalmist sings. Isaiah declares that when we loose the bonds of injustice and share our bread with the hungry, the light breaks forth like the dawn. In another passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus, the light of the world, calls his followers to let the light of their good works shine before others. Through baptism we are sent into the world to shine with the light of Christ.

GATHERING

CONFESSiON 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 [†] 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 Make Me a Channel of Your Peace *printed in bulletin*

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. Lord God, with endless mercy you receive the prayers of all who call upon you. By your Spirit show us the things we ought to do, and give us the grace and power to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Congregation is seated

WORD

FIRST READING: **Isaiah 58:1-12**

¹ Shout out; do not hold back!

 Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion,
 to the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet day after day they seek me
 and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness
 and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments;
 they want God on their side.

³ “Why do we fast, but you do not see?

 Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day
 and oppress all your workers.

⁴ You fast only to quarrel and to fight
 and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today
 will not make your voice heard on high.

⁵ Is such the fast that I choose,
 a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush
 and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,
 a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶ Is not this the fast that I choose:
 to loose the bonds of injustice,
 to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
 and to break every yoke?

⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
 and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them
 and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you;
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

⁹ Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am."

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

¹⁰ if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.

¹¹ The LORD will guide you continually
and satisfy your needs in parched places
and make your bones strong,
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water
whose waters never fail.

¹² Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

A. Word of God, word of life. C. Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 112:1-10(*read responsively*)

¹ Hallelujah! Happy are they who fear the LORD
and have great delight in God's commandments!

² **Their descendants will be mighty in the land;**
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

³ Wealth and riches will be in their house,
and their righteousness will last forever.

⁴ **Light shines in the darkness for the upright;**
the righteous are merciful and full of compassion.

⁵ It is good for them to be generous in lending
and to manage their affairs with justice.

⁶ **For they will never be shaken;**
the righteous will be kept in everlasting remembrance.

⁷ They will not be afraid of any evil rumors;
their heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.

⁸ **Their heart is established and will not shrink,**
until they see their desire upon their enemies.

⁹ They have given freely to the poor, and their righteousness stands fast

forever;

they will hold up their head with honor.

¹⁰ The wicked will see it and be angry; they will gnash their teeth and pine away; the desires of the wicked will perish.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 2:1-12

¹ When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the testimony of God to you with superior speech or wisdom. ² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. ⁴ My speech and my proclamation were made not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

⁶ Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are being destroyed. ⁷ But we speak God's wisdom, a hidden mystery, which God decreed before the ages for our glory ⁸ and which none of the rulers of this age understood, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the human heart conceived,
what God has prepared for those who love him”—

¹⁰ God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For what human knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

A. Word of God, word of life.

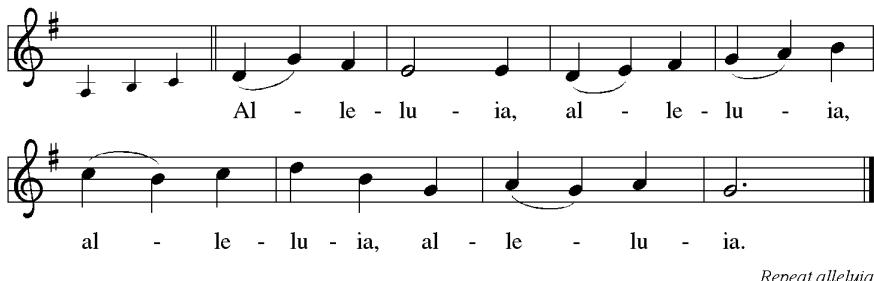
C. Thanks be to God.

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.

Repeat alleluia

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

GOSPEL: Matthew 5:13-20

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

[Jesus said:] ¹³ "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵ People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

¹⁷ "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

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

Congregation is seated

SERMON

Let Your Light Shine

Congregation stands

HYMN OF THE DAY

Christ, Be Our Light

ELW 715

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. Your church does ministry in many and various ways. Keep the baptized true to the mind of Christ, that our works and witness bring hope to a troubled world. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A. Your marvelous creation cries out to you. Restore polluted air, soil, and water sources to wholeness. Guard honeybees, elephants, great whales and songbirds from harm, and renew the face of the earth. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A. Your people in every nation suffer injustice, poverty, and the threat of violence. Guide those in authority to govern with compassion, and bring peace to war zones, especially Palestine and other countries at war. We pray for our enemies. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A. Your blessings are poured out for all in need. Help and heal any who experience trauma, discrimination, disease, hunger, abuse, or persecution. Comfort those who are sick or grieving. We pray especially for... those we now say aloud... and those we hold in our hearts. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A. Your wisdom guides this congregation and its ministries. Sustain our ordained leaders, staff, lay leaders, and volunteers. Form us to be salt and light for the neighbors we serve, following the example of Christ. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A. Your saints rejoice at your heavenly banquet. We give thanks for their lives of faith, trusting that we also will be embraced by your eternal love. 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 Arise and Shine for Your Light Has Come

Dan McGowen & Hal Wright

MEAL

OFFERTORY INVITATION

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via Venmo* 



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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 tray - 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.

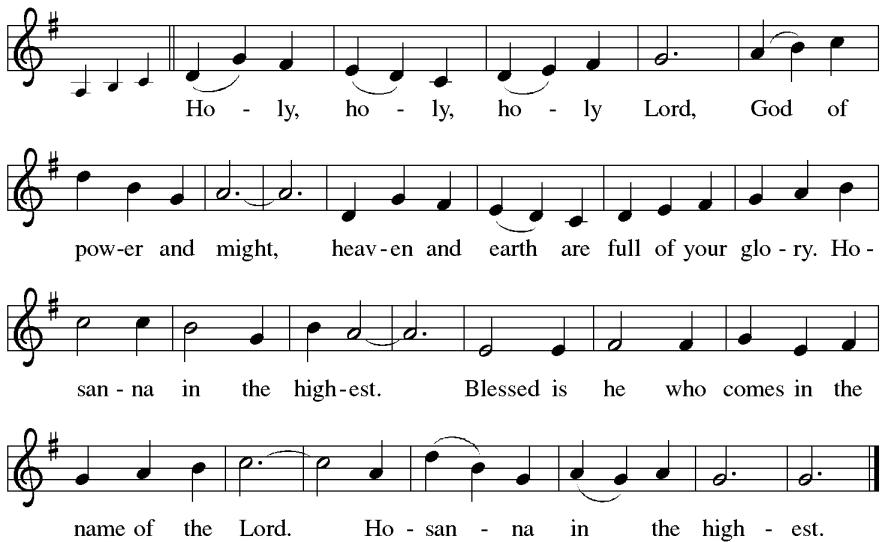
P. Lift up your hearts.

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
pow-er 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.

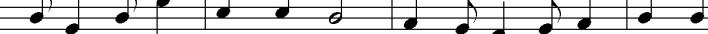
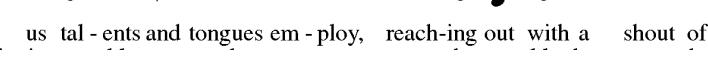
DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

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

This Little Light of Mine

ELW 677

DISMISSAL

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

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Announcements for February 8th, 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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**Thank you, Lori Schoenagel for this morning's refreshments!**

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Volunteers for Today's Worship

Lay Asst.	Debbie Lennon
Ushers	Volunteer needed
Comm. Asst.	Volunteer needed
Tech	Fred Schoenagel
Tellers	Volunteer needed
Refreshments	Lori Schoenagel

Volunteers for Next Sunday, Feb.15th

All positions open

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

THIS WEEK AT HOLY COUNSELOR

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

Tuesday, Feb 10: Pastor's Office Hours, Caffe a la Mode, Warwick 12-2pm

Wednesday, Feb 11: Adult Ed, Zoom, 10am & 7pm

Thursday, Feb 12: Cluster-wide Grief Study, Zoom, 7-8pm

Saturday, Feb 14: Sisters in Prayer, Zoom, 8:30am

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

Worship w/Communion, Transfiguration Sunday, 9:30am

Choir Practice following worship

Souper Bowl Sunday Soup Sale: Buy some delicious soup after worship

TODAY to warm up before the big game! Mason jars of soup: **1 for \$8, 2 for \$15 or 3 for \$20.**

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.

Pastor's Community Office Hours: Pastor Peggy will be at **Caffe a la Mode in Warwick, THIS Tuesday, February 10th 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!

Shrove Tuesday Dinner: Our Shrove Tuesday Dinner is **NEXT Tuesday, February 17th 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.

Lenten Bibe Study: Adult Ed will pause their current book study during Lent for a bible study titled ***Journey to the Resurrection***. This is a 6-week series inviting you into a deeper exploration of Lent and your faith. All are welcome to attend the **Wednesday Zoom sessions at 10am or at 7pm from February 25th to April 1st**. Please **let Pam Kucks know** you'd like to participate so she can get you a book. Books are \$12, grants available.

Lighten Your Load: Lent & Lament: Pastor Peggy will be offering a Lenten evening of releasing our laments and receiving hope through the remembrance of our baptism. Join her in the Sunday School classroom on **Tuesday, March 10th from 7-8pm**. Pastor Peggy is looking for **2 volunteers to bring soup**.

District Meeting-Church Delegates Needed: Our NJ Synod District meeting will gather from **10am-1pm on Saturday, February 28th** at **Redeemer Lutheran Church in Succasunna (about an hour drive)**, with coffee and registration beginning at 9:30am. Lunch is provided. We are looking for delegates from Holy Counselor to attend. **Our new Bishop will be in attendance to listen and meet you as well!** Please email Pastor Peggy for more information or with 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!



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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.

