

December 28th, 2025

1st Sunday of Christmas



Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church

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Pastor Kimberly Belken

December 28, 2025

1st Sunday of Christmas: Let Fear Fuel a Fire For Justice

Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church

Welcome & Announcements

Confession and Forgiveness

Family of faith, the invitation of our faith is simple. We are invited to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God. And yet, those acts have always been easier said than done.

That is why we need the prayer of confession. In confession we speak honestly with God. We tell the truth of our lives, and in response, God offers us grace. God picks us up, shakes the dust off our weary bones, and shows us how to keep walking toward God.

So let us go to God in prayer, not because we have to, but because God will always meet us there. Let us pray:

Immanuel, God with us, scripture tells us that you were a refugee, but we love to forget that information.

We love to forget every act of violence. We love to forget how many people go hungry, or how many students do not have access to good education. We love to forget the injustices in our world that feel too big for us to face.

But you are a God who refuses to forget. So today we pray: make it impossible for us to overlook the stories of those in need. Open our eyes along with our hearts, so that the anger we feel around injustice might fuel a fire for action. With hope for a better tomorrow, we pray. Amen.

Church family, even when we fail to do justice, even when we fail to love kindness, even when we allow fear to override action freezing us in place, God still loves us. So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:

On our best days and on our worst days, we belong to God. We are invited into community. We are held in God's grace. We are forgiven. And we are sent to serve. Amen.

Gathering Song: Love Has Come, ELW 292

Love Has Come



1 Love has come— a light in the dark - ness! Love shines forth in the
2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der. Love is God now a -
3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us! Love is life ev - er -



Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav - en has come to pro - claim it;
sleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his moth - er;
last - ing and free. Love is Je - sus with - in and a - mong us.



hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to
what is the name her heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the
Love is the peace our hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the



you, a Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.
name she whis - pers; Love! Love! Je - sus, Im - man - u - el.
gift of Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Text: Ken Bible, b. 1950

Music: UN FLAMBEAU, F. Seguin, *Recueil de Noël's composés en langue provençale*, 1856

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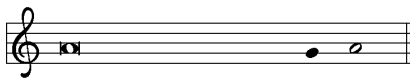
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Greeting

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



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



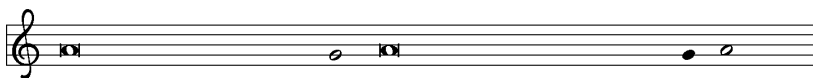
Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



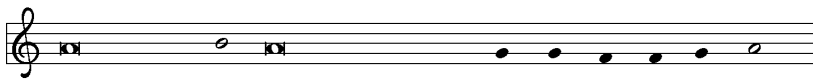
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de-fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - men.

Canticle of Praise

Refrain
Assisting minister



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.

All



1 Wor- thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and



strength, and hon - or and bless-ing and glo - ry are his.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.



2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless-ing and hon - or and glo - ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Final refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Thank you, God for the Word. To those who seek your truth, may they hear your Word clearly. To those who hear your Word clearly, may they speak of love fervently. Thank you, God, for your Word. Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 63:7-9

⁷I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD,
the praiseworthy acts of the LORD,
because of all that the LORD has done for us
and the great favor to the house of Israel
that he has shown them according to his mercy,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

⁸For he said, "Surely they are my people,
children who will not act deceitfully,"
and he became their savior
⁹in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel
but his presence that saved them;
in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm: Psalm 148

¹ Hallelujah! Praise the LORD | from the heavens;
praise God | in the heights.

² **Praise the LORD, | all you angels;
sing praise, all you | hosts of heaven.**

³ Praise the LORD, | sun and moon;
sing praise, all you | shining stars.

⁴ **Praise the LORD, heav- | en of heavens,
and you waters a- | bove the heavens.**

⁵ Let them praise the name | of the LORD,

who commanded, and they | were created,
⁶ **who made them stand fast forev- | er and ever,**
giving them a law that shall not | pass away.
⁷ Praise the LORD | from the earth,
 you sea monsters | and all deeps;
⁸ **fire and hail, | snow and fog,**
tempestuous wind, do- | ing God's will;
⁹ mountains | and all hills,
 fruit trees | and all cedars;
¹⁰ **wild beasts | and all cattle,**
creeping things and | flying birds;
¹¹ sovereigns of the earth | and all peoples,
 princes and all rulers | of the world;
¹² **young | men and maidens,**
old and | young together.
¹³ Let them praise the name | of the LORD,
 whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over | earth and
 heaven.
¹⁴ **The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for**
all | faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. | Hallelujah!

Second Reading: Hebrews 2:10-18

¹⁰ It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in
 bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation
 perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are
 sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call
 them brothers and sisters, ¹² saying,
 "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;
 in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."
¹³ And again,
 "I will put my trust in him."
 And again,
 "Here am I and the children whom God has given me."
¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself

likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Acclamation



Holy Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23

P *The holy gospel according to Matthew*

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

¹³ Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of

Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

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

Children's Sermon

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: What Child Is This, ELW 296

What Child Is This



- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?
- 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
- 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?
Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an - gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898

Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

Affirmation of Faith

We have seen the valley. We have seen a sky without stars. We have seen the longest night, and still we believe.

We believe in a with-us God. We believe in the hope of tomorrow. We believe that good news is louder than fear. We believe this good news is for all people.

So even when our knees shake, even when our voice trembles, even when fear is all around us, we will hold onto that good news.

We will reach for each other. We will look for God in our midst. We will sing songs of joy. We will proclaim: unto us, love is born.

We have seen the longest night, and we have seen unimaginable love. So still, we believe. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Holy and loving God,

You are the one who paints the sky with stars each night. You are the one who stirs our souls awake and invites us to dream. You are the one who was born in a manger, and you are the one who meets us now. So with gratitude and humility, we bring you our prayers.

Loving God, we have so much to be grateful for this season. As we move toward the end of the year, we look back on the last 12 months with gratitude for every joyful memory. Thank you for the winter snows and the summer sun. Thank you for moments of laughter and moments of growth. Thank you for the magic of Christmas and the joys of life in community.

Holy God, thank you for every beautiful and lovely thing.

However, in addition to our gratitude, God, we also look back over these last 12 months with painful awareness that life on earth is far from perfect.

God, we worry for those who are hungry. We worry for those who have been told all their life that there is no room in the inn for them. We worry for those who feel alone, and for those trapped in layers of grief. Immanuel, when we look back over the last 12 months, it is clear that there has been abundant beauty and abundant suffering. Where there is injustice—where there is violence and suffering, bigotry and hatred, fuel a fire in us.

Show us how to care for our neighbors, those like us but especially those different from us. Show us how to love as you loved. Show us how to make this next year a little more beautiful and a lot more loving than the last. With hope for tomorrow and the determination to make this world a safer place for us all we pray, **Amen.**

Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

Offering

Offering: *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful* (ELW 184)

Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of

bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that

we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of

all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble

with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

Offering Prayer

P God of glory,
C **great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior. 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.**

Friends, did you ever have a moment growing up when you walked into the school cafeteria, panned the faces in the crowd, and wondered if you were going to have a place to sit?

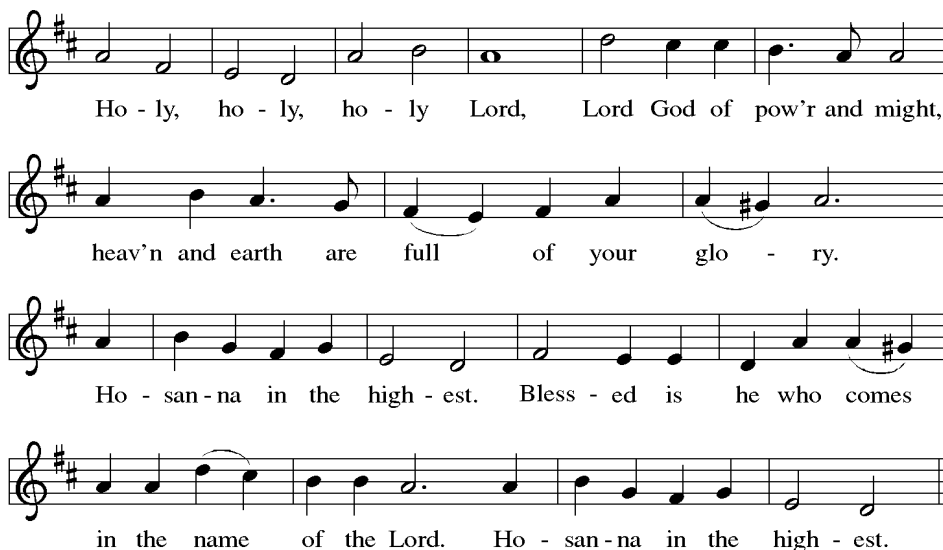
Did you ever have a moment, maybe as a new student or new employee, when fear nibbled at the back of your mind because you weren't sure where you belonged?

I imagine, at some point or another, most of us have experienced that kind of fear. But here at this table, you never have to wonder.

Here at this table, there is enough room, enough food, enough love for everyone.

Here at this table, Jesus is standing up on his chair, waving his hands over his head, saying to each of you "I saved you a seat!" Here at this table, you are wanted and welcomed. You are safe and loved. Here at this table, you belong. There is no need for fear here, for this is a joyful feast.

Holy, Holy, Holy



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n 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.

Thanksgiving at the Table

P 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.

Lord's Prayer

P Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us,

C 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 life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

Holy Communion

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, grant us peace.

Post Communion Blessing

P May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C Amen.

Prayer after Communion

P Loving God,

C **in a world racked with fear, you gather us together. You set the table. You meet us here. You nourish our bodies as you nourish our spirits. You remind us that this is a joyful feast, and that fear cannot win every time. So, with renewed courage, with renewed hope, with renewed conviction, send us out into the world. Help us to feed others as you have fed us. With gratitude we pray, Amen.**

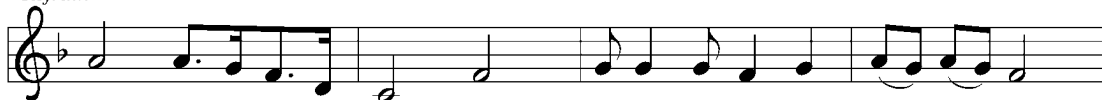
Blessing

P In a fearful world, may you look for God's spirit. May you reach for each other's hands. May you choose courage whenever you can. And in all things, may you remember that good news is louder than fear. In the name of the one who calls, the one who sends, and the one who journeys with—go in peace and be not afraid. **Amen.**

Sending Song: Go Tell It On the Mountain, ELW 290

Go Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born;

Refrain



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872–1925, stanzas, alt.

Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

Dismissal

P Glory to God in the highest!

C **And peace to God's people on earth!**

P Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace. Persist in hope.

C **Thanks be to God**

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Announcements

- **Offering Envelopes:** are available for pick up under the mailboxes in the entry way.
- **Library Lunches:** During this week of winter break, the Perry Public Library has sack lunches available for any Perry Public School student. Thank you to the Perry Ministerial Association and Perry Emergency Food Pantry for providing the items for these meals.
- **Annual Meeting:** The annual meeting of Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church will take place during worship on Sunday, Jan. 18. If we have to cancel church due to weather, we will hold the meeting the following Sunday, Jan. 25.
- **Light the Night of Remembrance:** You are invited to participate in a community wide remembrance event on Sunday, January 4. We will honor the strength and resilience of the Perry community and remember the lives lost in the tragedy that took place in our school on January 4, 2024. See back page of bulletin for more information on how to participate.
- **Office Hours:** Pastor Kimberly is in the office on Mondays and Wednesdays. Thursdays she will be splitting her time between Immanuel and Mt. Olivet, so if you would like to see her on that day, please call ahead so she can be sure to be in town. You can call the church number (515) 465- 5298 and it will ring to Pastor's cell phone if she is not in the office.



LIGHT THE NIGHT OF REMEMBRANCE

Together, we remember. Together, we honor. Together, we heal.

Please join us in honoring the Perry Community by displaying a luminary on January 4, 2026 from 5-7pm.

Luminary kits may be picked up at the Perry Elementary, Perry Middle School or Perry High School offices on Friday January 2, 2026 between 7:30am and 3pm or on Saturday January 3 at the Perry Rec Center or Perry Public Library while supplies last.

We encourage everyone to step outside at 6pm on January 4 for a moment of silence to honor our community including Dan Marburger and Ahmir Jolliff.

Share photos at #LightTheNightJan4