

# Holy Nativity Lutheran Church

3 Lenape Trail  
Wenonah, NJ 08090

## OUR MISSION

*Graced by a loving God to be a caring community of faith the fellowship of Holy Nativity is called to support one another, warmly welcoming others into our community, sharing in the mission of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed, and reaching out in witness and service to the communities to which we belong as one in the Body of Christ.*

### Worship Service for Sunday, February 23 2025

7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany LBW Holy Communion Setting Two

## WELCOME TO WORSHIP

In response to God's overwhelming love, we stand in awe of the wideness of God's mercy and by God's Spirit we welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace. In faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, mindful of our Lutheran emphasis on grace, and rejoicing in the celebration of our shared baptismal journey, we welcome all as members of our church family including any who have ever felt excluded by the Church for any of the reasons that too often divide us.

*We are so glad you have joined us today!*

**First-time guests:** *Please fill out a Communion Card and place it in the offering plate.* Newcomer orientations are held on various days several times a year for those who are interested in learning more about HNLC.

Restrooms are located in the hallway between the lobby and our fellowship hall.

Today's Altar Flowers are given by Tony and Denise DiRienzo in memory of their parents and grandparents.

The Sanctuary Candle is given to the Glory of God.

#### PRELUDE

*Aria*

Moore



#### **Introduction to the day**

Mercy. Mercy. Mercy. Joseph lives it in Egypt. Jesus preaches it in the gospel. The Spirit guides us into merciful lives with the power of forgiveness to reconcile what is fractured and divided. Such merciful living is the baptismal blessing of having put on Christ. It is the gift of the life-giving Spirit. It is a reflection of God's glory revealed in Christ.

**GATHERING** The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM (The congregation responds with text in bold print.)**

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation. **Amen.**

*The presiding minister addresses the assembly.*

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

*Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.*

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight.

Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

**We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.**

To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG** *Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling* (WOV 734 v. 1)



1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for  
2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for  
3 Oh, for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for



you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,  
you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,  
you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,

*Refrain*



watch - ing for you and for me.  
mer - cies for you and for me? "Come home, come home!"  
par - don for you and for me.



You who are wea - ry, come home." Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,



Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, "O sin - ner, come home!"

## GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

## KYRIE

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

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

**Lord, have mercy.**

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 mercy.**

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

**Lord, have mercy.**

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

**Amen.**

## CANTICLE OF PRAISE



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al-might-y God and Fa-ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo-ry.



Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther: re-ceive our prayer.



For you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,



you a-lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho-ly Spir-it,



in the glo-ry of God the Fa-ther. A-men.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Let us pray.

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

O Lord Jesus, **make us instruments of your peace, that where there is hatred, we may sow love, where there is injury, pardon, and where there is despair, hope. Grant, O divine master, that we may seek to console, to understand, and to love in your name, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**WORD** God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**FIRST READING: Genesis 45:3-11, 15** A reading from Genesis.

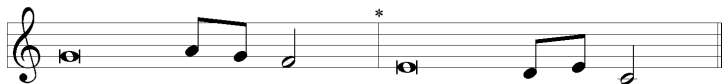
*Many years after being sold into slavery by his jealous brothers, Joseph reveals himself to them. Now the second-in-command in Egypt, Joseph reassures his brothers that God has used their evil intentions for good to preserve life during a devastating famine, and Joseph forgives them.*

<sup>3</sup> Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

<sup>4</sup> Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come closer to me.” And they came closer. He said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup> And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. <sup>6</sup> For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. <sup>7</sup> God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. <sup>8</sup> So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup> Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. <sup>10</sup> You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. <sup>11</sup> I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.’” <sup>15</sup> And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40** (The Psalm is sung responsively by verse.)



Refrain: The lowly shall pos- | sess the land; \* they will delight in abun- | dance of peace. (*Ps. 37:11*)

**Refrain: The lowly shall pos- | sess the land; \* they will delight in abun- | dance of peace.**

<sup>1</sup> Do not be provoked by | evildoers; \* do not be jealous of those | who do wrong.

<sup>2</sup> **For they shall soon wither | like the grass, \* and like the green grass | fade away.**

<sup>3</sup> Put your trust in the LORD | and do good; \* dwell in the land and | find safe pasture.

<sup>4</sup> **Take delight | in the LORD, \* who shall give you your | heart’s desire.**

**Refrain: The lowly shall pos- | sess the land; \* they will delight in abun- | dance of peace.**

<sup>5</sup> Commit your way to the LORD; put your trust | in the LORD, \* and see what | God will do.

<sup>6</sup> **The LORD will make your vindication as clear | as the light \* and the justice of your case like the | noonday sun.**

<sup>7</sup> Be still before the LORD and wait | patiently. \* Do not be provoked by the one who prospers, the one who

succeeds in | evil schemes.

<sup>8</sup> **Refrain from anger, leave | rage alone; \* do not be provoked; it leads on- | ly to evil.**

**Refrain: The lowly shall pos- | sess the land; \* they will delight in abun- | dance of peace.**

<sup>9</sup> For evildoers shall | be cut off, \* but those who hope in the LORD shall pos- | sess the land.

<sup>10</sup> **In a little while the wicked shall | be no more; \* even if you search out their place, they will | not be there.**

<sup>11</sup> But the lowly shall pos- | sess the land; \* they will delight in abun- | dance of peace.

<sup>39</sup> **But the deliverance of the righteous comes from | you, O LORD; \* you are their stronghold in | time of trouble.**

<sup>40</sup> You, O LORD, will help them and | rescue them; \* you will rescue them from the wicked and deliver them, because in you | they seek refuge.

**Refrain: The lowly shall pos- | sess the land; \* they will delight in abun- | dance of peace.**

**SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50** A reading from 1 Corinthians.

*In the Apostles' Creed, we speak of the "resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting." Using the metaphor of a planted seed and the story of Adam, Paul preaches passionately about the mystery of following Christ's perfect life into eternity.*

<sup>35</sup> But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" <sup>36</sup> Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. <sup>37</sup> And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. <sup>38</sup> But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

<sup>42</sup> So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. <sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. <sup>44</sup> It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. <sup>45</sup> Thus it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup> But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. <sup>48</sup> As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. <sup>49</sup> Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

<sup>50</sup> What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

## **WE RISE TO GREET THE GOSPEL**

Alleluia. Love your enemies, and you will be children of | the Most High; forgive, and you will | be forgiven. Alleluia. (Luke 6:35, 37)

**(Sung) Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.**

**GOSPEL: Luke 6:27-38** The holy gospel according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Jesus continues to address a crowd of his disciples. He invites his followers to shower radical love, blessing, forgiveness, generosity, and trust even on enemies and outsiders. Living in harmony with God's intent brings the reward of overflowing blessing.*

[Jesus said:] <sup>27</sup> "But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. <sup>29</sup> If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. <sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. <sup>31</sup> Do to others as you would have them do to you.

<sup>32</sup> “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup> If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. <sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

<sup>37</sup> “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; <sup>38</sup> give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

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

**HOMILY** *Silence for reflection follows the sermon.*

**HYMN OF THE DAY** *Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling* (WOV 734 v. 2 & 3)

watching for you and for me. *The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.*

2 Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,  
pleading for you and for me?  
Why should we linger and heed not his mercies,  
mercies for you and for me?

Refrain

"Come home, (Come home,)  
come home! (come home!)  
You who are weary, come home."  
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,  
calling, "O sinner, come home!"

3 Oh, for the wonderful love he has promised,  
promised for you and for me!  
Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon,  
pardon for you and for me. Refrain

## **APOSTLES' 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.**

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\*Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.

## **UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS**

**Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, martyr, died 156 Sunday, February 23, 2025**

Because he is said to have been known by John, the author of Revelation, as well as the important early church fathers Irenaeus and Ignatius, Polycarp serves as a vital link in church history. He was burned at the stake at age 86 for refusing to renounce his faith.

**Elizabeth Fedde, deaconess, died 1921 Tuesday, February 25, 2025**

Born in Norway and trained there as a deaconess, Fedde was asked to come and minister to the poor and to seamen in New York City. She established the Deaconess House in Brooklyn as well as Deaconess Hospital in Minneapolis.

**George Herbert, hymnwriter, died 1633 Saturday, March 1, 2025**

An excellent scholar, Herbert served briefly in the English parliament, then became a parish priest. He was known for devoted care of his parishioners, as well as for writing poetry and hymns, including "Come, my way, my truth, my life." He died at age 40.

**PRAYER LIST**

*The families and victims of the plane crash in Philadelphia and for all First Responders, The families and victims of the airplane/helicopter crash in Washington DC, The families and victims of the wildfires in Los Angeles, The families and victims of the recent violence in New Orleans and Las Vegas, Holly & Duane, Dawn Allen, Michael Appeld, The friends and family of John Austino as they mourn his passing, The family of Bill Bartleson as they mourn his death, Nicholas Baud, John Brecht, The family of Kaz Bielecki's son-in-law as they mourn his death, Madelene Budd, Emerson Bulk, Richard Burrough, Sal Castelli, Jenn Causey and family, Sherwood Cotton, Bob Counbs, Craig (diagnosed with cancer), Rocco Cristinzio, Leslie Criston, Milton Cuevas, Jr., Nicholas Damiani, The family of Tony DelMonte as they mourn his passing, Aja DelRio, The family of Jaunice Dilks as they mourn her passing, Alicia DiRienzo, Kathy Drew, The friends and family of Shirley Eikhof as they mourn her passing, The friends and family of Pastor Bruce Ewen as they mourn his passing, Barbara Facchine, Scott Fey, Bill Flynn, Francis, The family of John Forsman as they mourn his passing, Bobby G., Alma Garcia, Gavin Gigliotti, The family of Michael Gilletti as they mourn his death, Marie Giliberti, Mark Gismondi, Terry Gismondi, Wilma Gismondi, Jay Goheen, The family of Doris Gordon as they mourn her death, Randi Gordon, Ruth Gordon, The family of Don Halterman as they mourn his death, Steve Harris, Ron Herrmann, Jane Johnston, Marilyn Kaiser, The family of Robert Keen as they mourn his passing, The family of Joseph Kelleher as they mourn his passing, Grace Laphan, Joseph Lonia, The Lonia family rejoices in the birth of their great-Granddaughter, The Lyons family in the loss of their brother, Jessie MacGregor, The family of Doris Manogue as they mourn her passing, Joseph Mansfield, The McCall family in their time of grief and loss, Rob and Nona McDonough & family, Caroline Miles, Jim Montisano, The friends and family of Mary Alice Morrison as they mourn her passing, George Muth, The family and friends of Carol Nardi as they mourn her death, Sue Nevins (suffering with a brain tumor), The family of Robert O'Connor, Lazslo Orosze, Janet Ostrowski, The family of Joseph Ostrowski as they mourn his death, Otis, Danielle Peters, The Pressley family in the loss of their cousin, Jan Pressley (and all victims of the recent hurricanes), The family of Harry Rees as they mourn his death, Andrew Richardson, The family of Charles Rust as they mourn his passing, Dylan Sauer, The family and friends of Linda Sauerwein as they mourn her passing, Meleta Seher, Billy Shea, The family and friends of Glenn Shirley as they mourn his passing, Joyce and Arvin Skramsdad, The friends and family of William Snyder, Jr. as they mourn his passing, Joy Stagliano, Fay Stafford-Rambo, Samantha Sumner, Richard Sylvester, Eileen Simpson, The family of Dot Stagg as they mourn her passing, Julia Stanz, Nathan Storhoff, Corey Temean, Candy Tryson, Ed Tutka, Sharon Walker, The family and friends of Larry Wall as they mourn his passing, Rosie Ward, Winfield Watson, Dolores Whilleson, Sue Willard, The family of Madeline Williams as they mourn her death, Jill Wilt, Avery Wrigley, The family and friends of Lonny Yance as they mourn his passing, Jerry, Pat and Kelly who are battling cancer, The family and friends of Rev. Jeffrey Ziegler as they mourn his sudden passing.*

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

With the Spirit of Christ shining upon us, let us boldly pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

Surprising God, you call us to love our enemies and to show kindness in the face of cruelty. Let our actions be a shining witness of your overwhelming grace for all. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

As animals hibernate and fields lay dormant, let them be a reminder that life and faith are not static but always changing and growing. May we, with all creation, trust that the ending of one thing promises life in a new way. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for leaders and policymakers who work to reduce violence in our nations, cities, and towns. Give your wisdom and discernment amid heated arguments and differing viewpoints. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the victims of abuse and violence. Provide safe shelter and new beginnings to those experiencing domestic violence and dangerous situations. Enfold with love all who seek your healing care (*especially*). God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Empower our faith communities to be signs of your gracious love. Bless the local ministries of parish nursing and caregiving, that they will be a voice for those in need in our communities (*other ministries may be named*). God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.* God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the enduring witness of those who have died before us (*especially Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna*). May their lives in you provide a witness of your everlasting grace. God of grace, **hear our prayer.** We entrust our prayers to you, O God, in the sure and certain hope that your promise is revealed among the people. **Amen.**

#### **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**MEAL** God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

#### **OFFERTORY**

*Dearest Jesus, At Thy Word*

arr. Burkhardt (LBW 248)

#### **OFFERTORY VERSE (Sung)**

**Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of blessing. Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life. Gather the hopes and the dreams of all; unite them with the prayers we offer. Grace our table with your presence, and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.**

#### **OFFERING PRAYER FOR EPIPHANY**

God of grace, **your love reaches to the heavens, and your abundance to the depths of the seas. Bless what we offer to your service: our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts. Let us overflow with gratitude and generosity, now and always. Amen.**

#### **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

#### **DIALOGUE, PREFACE AND SANCTUS**

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.**

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. By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations; in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son; and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory. 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:

**(Sung) Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might:**

**Heav'n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

**THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

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**

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

**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.**

**EPIPHANY INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

The joy of the Lord is our strength. Come, eat this meal of gladness.

**COMMUNION SONG (Sung)**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.**

**COMMUNION**

*When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say*

The body of Christ, given for you. **Amen.**

The blood of Christ, shed for you. **Amen.**

**COMMUNION BLESSING**

May the body and blood of our risen savior Jesus Christ (+) strengthen you and keep you now and forever in God's Grace. **Amen.**

## THE SONG OF SIMEON

Lord, now you let your ser- vant go in peace; your word has been ful -  
filled. My own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which you have pre -  
pared in the sight of ev - 'ry peo - ple: A light to re - veal you to the  
na - tions and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.  
Glo - ry to the Fa - ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Spir - it,  
as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now,  
and will be for - ev - er. A - men

## EPIPHANY PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourishing God, at this table you have refreshed us with holy gifts of food and drink. Strengthen us for service, and send us out to embody your good news of liberation and healing for the sake of the world. In the name of Christ we pray, Amen.

**SENDING** God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

## SENDING OF COMMUNION

Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are *sick, homebound, and imprisoned*. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

## EPIPHANY BLESSING

The Spirit of the triune God (+) bless you with joy, anoint you with compassion, and send you in love. **Amen.**

## SENDING SONG *Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling* (WOV 734 v. 1)

1 Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,  
calling for you and for me.  
See, on the portals he's waiting and watching,  
watching for you and for me.

Refrain  
"Come home, (Come home,) come home!  
(come home!)  
You who are weary, come home."  
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,  
calling, "O sinner, come home!"

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Offering received February 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>- \$2574.00. Weekly amount needed to meet the spending plan (as approved at annual congregational meeting)--\$2498.00. Total received to date—\$18901.56 Amount needed to date--\$17486.00.
- Donations through Venmo and PayPal--Please note that, per council policy, if you make an electronic donation through Venmo or PayPal, it will not be recorded on your annual giving statement. It is the member's responsibility to track these donations for tax purposes.
- This year's NJ Synod Bishop's Challenge asks all NJ congregations to engage in the care of God's good creation by choosing one of the following action areas focusing on environmental sustainability, including Building, Grounds, Programs, Worship & Education, Community Action & Activism. Our congregation is already engaged in significant work with our church grounds. If you are interested in sponsoring one of the areas on our property, see the poster in the Narthex or speak to Pastor.
- Shop Rite shopping cards are available for purchase after the services.
- If you are interested in receiving a daily bible reading by email, visit the following website and click the subscribe button: [Daily Bible Reading - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America \(elca.org\)](https://www.elca.org).
- ST. PETER'S COMMUNITY PANTRY is here to help serve those facing food insecurity in Gloucester County. If you are having a difficult time buying food for yourself, or your family, please let us try to make a small difference for you. The Pantry is located behind St. Peter's Episcopal Church at 304 Kings Highway in Clarksboro. We are open every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the Month from 9 AM to 1 PM. Next distribution date: Saturday, February 15, 2025.
- Coffee hour between services is scheduled for the first Sunday of each month, hosted by the 8:30 service. Come and join us for coffee and fellowship Sunday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- The United Methodist Men of Mantua would like to invite the men/young men/boys of Holy Nativity to their annual chili cook-off on February 22 at 7 PM located at 201 Mantua Blvd. in Mantua. You can enter a chili or just come for food and fellowship. Prizes will be awarded for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place. You are welcome to bring chips or a side to share. It is not necessary to RSVP, but if you know you will be attending, it would be helpful for them to know either by email ([dougbaitinger@mantuaumc.org](mailto:dougbaitinger@mantuaumc.org)) or by phone (609-214-1161; call or text).
- Save the following dates:
  - \* Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>—Pancake Dinner (5:30-7:00 pm)
  - \* Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>—Red Cross Blood Drive (2:00-7:00 pm)
  - \* Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>—Ashes to Go at 9 am, Noon and 3 pm at Wenonah Memorial Park and our Ash Wednesday service at 7 pm.
  - \* Spring Cleanup—March date TBD
  - \* Fall Cleanup—November date TBD
- GROWING IN FAITH: THE DIAKONIA PROGRAM Growing in Faith is a ministry within the ELCA committed to fostering learning environments for followers of Jesus to grow in faith. Lay members of congregations are integral to healthy discipleship in the church and community. If you would be interested in this program, check out the website [www.njdiakonia.com](http://www.njdiakonia.com) for more information.
- There are two Planet Aid clothing bins in the parking lot. Clean items may be placed in the yellow bins: including clothing, shoes, bedding, towels, curtains, sleeping bags, socks, underwear, bras. They do not accept items that are tattered beyond repair, dirty, wet or moldy.
- If you have someone that you would like on the prayer list, please fill out a form in the narthex and place it in the offering plate or contact the church office email: [hnlc.secretary@hotmail.com](mailto:hnlc.secretary@hotmail.com).
- Out choir rehearses on Sunday mornings @ 9:40 from September to June. All are welcome to join us.
- Live Sunday School sessions are on Sunday mornings between services. Church school resources are also available on our website on a weekly basis.

## **EPIPHANY DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Encourage one another in Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

## **POSTLUDE**

*O Worship the King*

arr. Young

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## **GOSPEL MESSAGE (Countercultural Love)**

In today's gospel reading, Jesus offers us a vision of a different way of living, one rooted in God's endless mercy. People of God are to love others, do good, and share their possessions—in abundance, in extravagance, to the point that our generosity seems foolish by the world's standards.

This lavishness is possible only through the power of Jesus, who first heals us and invites us to taste and see God's mercy for ourselves. We witness this mercy in scripture through stories of God's profound love and compassion. We experience it as we join in song and prayer in worship, engaging in ancient practices that draw us beyond ourselves and closer to God and neighbor. We remember the mercy we've experienced in the waters of baptism and taste Christ's abundance in holy communion. We practice generosity in our offerings and share God's peace with our fellow worshipers with whom we are bound together, even though we might never have chosen them as neighbors.

With Christ in us, we are able to practice this abundant love today and tomorrow, in our worship and beyond, returning to the font and table again and again to be reminded of the love that dwells within us and surrounds us, making us bold in our love for others.

To try to practice this kind of countercultural love on our own would likely lead to discouragement. But we are given the gift of community—with one another, those who have come before us, and hope for the ones who will come after us. Together, we form one body in Christ, strengthened by God's Spirit. Together, we remind one another of God's promise of unending love and forgiveness and encourage each other to follow Jesus' example. And together, we focus our minds and hearts to catch glimpses of God's kingdom among us, even as we wait for the world Jesus envisions to be made complete on earth as it is in heaven.

## **HOLY NATIVITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

3 Lenape Trail

Wenonah, NJ 08090

856-468-5760

hnlc.secretary@hotmail.com

Pastor: Andy Gordon      Music Director: Chris Robinson

Guest Organist—Bill Mitchell

5:00—Harriet Vico; 8:30—Lori Kershaw; 10:30—Diane Yandach

## **CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

**(Council positions will be determined at February Council meeting)**

April Montana—Council Person

Vince Montana—Council Person

Joyce Bradbury—Council Person

Donna DeFrank—Council Person

Lori Kershaw—Council Person

Kim Theriault—Council Person

Juliet Genovese—Council Person

Stephen Genovese—Council Person/Co-Treasurer

Karen Cusack—Council Person/Co-Treasurer

Brett Montana—Council Person/Youth Representative