

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, March 19, 2023

4th Sunday in Lent LBW Holy Communion Setting Two

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

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 to the Glory of God.
The Sanctuary Candle is given by Dot Kelleher.

PRELUDE

Overture in D

J.S. Bach



Introduction to the day

Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment. The gospel for this Sunday is the story of the man born blind healed by Christ. "I was blind, now I see," declares the man. In baptism God opens our eyes to see the truth of who we are: God's beloved children. As David was anointed king of Israel, in baptism God anoints our head with oil, and calls us to bear witness to the light of Christ in our daily lives.

BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS (LBW p. 77) The congregation responds with text in bold print.

In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Most merciful God, we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen

Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

ENTRANCE HYMN *God, Whose Almighty Word* (LBW 400)



1 God, whose al - might - y word cha - os and dark - ness heard
2 Lord, who once came to bring, on your re - deem - ing wing,
3 Spir - it of truth and love, life - giv - ing, ho - ly dove,
4 Ho - ly and bless - ed three, glo - ri - ous Trin - i - ty,



and took their flight: hear us, we hum - bly pray, and where the
heal - ing and sight, health to the sick in mind, sight to the
speed forth your flight; move on the wa - ter's face bear - ing the
wis - dom, love, might! Bound-less as o - cean's tide, roll - ing in



gos - pel day sheds not its glo - rious ray,
in - ly blind: oh, now to hu - man - kind let there be light!
lamp of grace, and in earth's dark - est place
full - est pride, through the earth, far and wide,

GREETING (LBW p. 78)

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 (LBW p. 78)

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

PRAYER OF THE DAY (LBW p. 82)

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us pray. . . . God of all mercy, **by your power to heal and to forgive, graciously cleanse us from all sin and make us strong; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen**

FIRST LESSON: 1 Samuel 16:1-13 The First Lesson is from the 16th chapter of 1st Samuel.

Samuel anointed David even though he was the eighth-oldest son of Jesse and did not match his brothers in height or other physical characteristics. With the anointing came endowment with the Spirit of the LORD, designating David as the LORD's chosen successor to Saul.

¹The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." ²Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'" ³Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." ⁴Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" ⁵He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is now before the LORD." ⁷But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." ⁸Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." ⁹Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." ¹⁰Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." ¹¹Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." ¹²He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." ¹³Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

Here ends the reading. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 23 (The Psalm is sung responsively by verse.)



Refrain: You | have anointed * my | head with oil. (*Ps.* 23:5)

Refrain: You | have anointed * my | head with oil.

¹The LORD¹ is my shepherd; * I shall not¹ be in want.

²**He makes me lie down¹ in green pastures * and leads me be-¹ side still waters.**

³He re-¹ lives my soul * and guides me along right pathways¹ for his name's sake.

⁴**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall¹ fear no evil; * for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they¹ comfort me.**

Refrain: You | have anointed * my | head with oil.

⁵You spread a table before me in the presence of those who¹ trouble me; * you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is¹ running over.

⁶**Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days¹ of my life, * and I will dwell in the house of the¹ LORD forever.**

Refrain: You | have anointed * my | head with oil.

SECOND LESSON: Ephesians 5:8-14 The Second Lesson is from the 5th chapter of Ephesians.

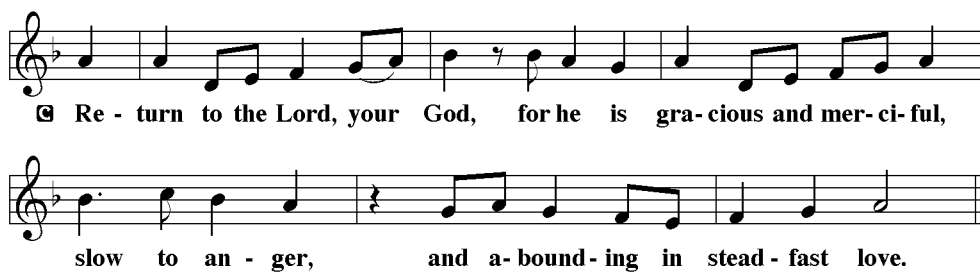
Because we now live in the divine light which is Jesus Christ, we conduct our lives in ways that reflect the light of Christ, so that our activity is truly pleasing to God.

⁸Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light—⁹for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; ¹³but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

Here ends the reading. **Thanks be to God.**

WE RISE TO GREET THE GOSPEL (LBW p. 83)



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra-cious and mer-ci-ful,
slow to an - ger, and a-bound-ing in stead-fast love.

GOSPEL: John 9:1-41 The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 9th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus heals a man born blind, provoking a hostile reaction that he regards as spiritual blindness to the things of God.

¹As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” ¹⁰But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. ¹⁷So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

¹⁸The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” ²⁰His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” ²⁵He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” ²⁶They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” ²⁷He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” ²⁸Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” ³⁰The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³²Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” ³⁴They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

³⁵Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” ³⁷Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” ³⁸He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. ³⁹Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” ⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” ⁴¹Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

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

SERMON (LBW p. 83) *Silence for reflection may follow.*

HYMN OF THE DAY *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light (WOV 649 v. 1-2)*



1 I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to
 2 I want to see . . . the bright-ness of God. I want to
 3 I'm look - ing for . . . the com - ing of Christ. I want to



fol - low Je - sus. God set the stars to give
 look at Je - sus. Clear Sun of righ - teous-ness,
 be with Je - sus. When we have run . . . with



light to the world. The star of my life is Je - sus.
 shine on my path, and show me the way to the Fa - ther.
 pa - tience the race, we shall know the joy of Je - sus.

Refrain



In him there is no dark-ness at all. The night and the



day are both a - like. The Lamb is the light of the



cit - y of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

APOSTLES' CREED (LBW p. 85)

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.*

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again 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

*Or, He descended to the dead.

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Joseph, Guardian of Jesus Sunday, March 19, 2023

Though the Bible tells us little about the husband of Jesus' mother Mary, we know that he was a carpenter or builder by trade. He is also shown as being devoted both to God and to Mary and Jesus. It is assumed that he died before Jesus became an adult.

Thomas Cranmer, Bishop of Canterbury, martyr, died 1556 Tuesday, March 21, 2023

Cranmer's lasting achievement is contributing to and overseeing the creation of the Book of Common Prayer, which remains (in revised form) the worship book of the Anglican Communion. He was burned at the stake under Queen Mary for his support of the Protestant Reformation.

Jonathan Edwards, teacher, missionary to American Indians, died 1758 Wednesday, March 22, 2023

A Puritan minister in Connecticut, Edwards is remembered as being a great preacher. Though his most famous sermon talks at length about hell, he was more concerned with God's love. He served both as missionary to the Housatonic people in Massachusetts, and as president of the future Princeton University.

Oscar Arnulfo Romero, Bishop of El Salvador, martyr, died 1980 Friday, March 24, 2023

Romero was deeply concerned with injustices evident toward the poor and powerless in El Salvador, and worked forthrightly against political repression. He was assassinated while presiding at the eucharist in a chapel near the cathedral in San Salvador.

Annunciation of Our Lord Saturday, March 25, 2023

Nine months before Christmas we celebrate the annunciation, in which the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would give birth to the Son of God. The ancient church believed that this was also the date of the world's creation and of Jesus' death on the cross.

PRAYER LIST

The family of Bill Bartleson as they mourn his death, Nicholas Baud, Cameron Bruder, Bert Denham, Denise DiRienzo, Scott Fey, Kathleen and Max (daughter and infant grandson of Doug Gifford), Mark Gismondi, Pat Gismondi, Chuck Gordon, Randi Gordon, Don Halterman, The family of Jennifer Jeffers as they mourn her death, Marilyn Kaiser, The family of Joseph Kelleher as they mourn his passing, The family of Cliff Kollmeier as they mourn his passing, Joseph Lewandowski, The family of George Lofmark as they mourn his death, Joseph Lonia, Jessie MacGregor, Jamie Lynn McCabe, Joseph and Janet Ostrowski, Harry Rees, Elaine, William, and Lindsey Reese, Eileen Simpson, Dot Stagg, Julia Stanz, Nathan Storhoff.

THE PRAYERS

Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation. *A brief silence.*

Eternal God, you seal us by the Holy Spirit and mark us with the cross of Christ forever in baptism. Inspire us by your love as together we strive for justice and peace in all the earth. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Creating God, by your word you have made all things, and you hate nothing you have made. Teach us to perceive the beauty of the breadth of your creation, from the grandest mountain range to the smallest springtime bud. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Powerful God, you anoint kings and establish rulers. Guide the work of heads of state and elected officials (*specific leaders may be named*). Encourage them to lead with justice and to remove barriers that impede the well-being of all. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Shepherding God, you lead us beside still waters and restore our souls. Keep watch over those who weep; tend all who are sick and comfort those who grieve (*especially*). Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God our host, you fill us at your table with more than we could ever ask. Feed us with hunger for justice. Equip the feeding ministries of this congregation and community (*especially*). Nourish us so we can nourish our neighbors. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of history, with thanksgiving we remember our ancestors in faith who cared for your people (*especially Joseph, Guardian of Jesus*). We praise you for the ways they formed the faith of others and continue to inspire us. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

PEACE (LBW p. 86)

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

Peace be with you. **Peace be with you.**

OFFERTORY & VERSE (LBW P.87) *What Wondrous Love is This?*

Arr. J. Carter

What shall I ren-der to the Lord for all his ben-e-fits to me?
I will of-fer the sac-ri-fice of thanks-giv-ing and will call on the
name of the Lord. I will take the cup of sal-va-tion and will
call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the
pres-ence of all his peo-ple, in the courts of the Lord's house,
in the midst of you, O Je-ru-sa-lem.

OFFERTORY PRAYER (LBW p. 87)

Let us pray. Merciful Father, **we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us—our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

DIALOGUE (LBW p. 87)

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 him thanks and praise.**

PREFACE AND SANCTUS (LBW p. 88-89)

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

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.

LENTEN THANKSGIVING AT THE ALTAR

Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.

Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.

Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.

Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey.

Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.

Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.

Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

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.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.

Come, Holy Spirit.

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

Come, Holy Spirit.

With your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (LBW p. 91) Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray ...
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.

LENT INVITATION TO COMMUNION
Come and receive Jesus, our strength in the wilderness.

COMMUNION HYMN (LBW p. 92)
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 (LBW p. 91) The body of Christ, given for you. **Amen.** The blood of Christ, shed for you. **Amen.**

COMMUNION BLESSING
The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace. **Amen**

LENT POST COMMUNION CANTICLE *You Satisfy the Hungry Heart* (WOV 711v. 5)

The image shows a musical score for a canticle. It consists of four staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff is labeled 'Refrain' and has the lyrics 'You sat - is - fy the hun - gry heart with gift of fin - est wheat.' The second staff has the lyrics 'Come give to us, O sav - ing Lord, the bread of life to eat.' The third staff has the lyrics '5 You give your - self to us, O Lord; then self - less let us be,'. The fourth staff is also labeled 'Refrain' and has the lyrics 'to serve each oth - er in your name in truth and char - i - ty.' The music is written in a simple, accessible style with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER DURING LENT
Embodied God, at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus. With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise, empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors and touch the world with your love. **Amen.**

BLESSING DURING LENT God, the giver of love, Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth (+) bless you in this Lenten journey. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Offerings needed each week to meet the church spending plan--\$2444. Offerings received March 11 & 12-\$3852.
- Lenten Lunch and Learn series @ 11:30 am: March 22nd—St. Paul’s United Methodist Church in West Deptford; and March 29th—Memorial Presbyterian in Wenonah.
- A Thrivent sponsored session “**Savvy Tax Strategies**” will be held at Holy Nativity on Monday, March 27 @ 6:30 pm. This workshop will help you avoid common mistakes when it comes to your investment portfolio, health care and estate strategies. It will also provide answers to critical tax questions you must answer before retirement. Explore how to help dodge the Social Security “tax trap” and more. Please call (856)596-6007 or email mindy.grant@thrivent.com to reserve a place for you and a guest. Refreshments will be served. No products will be sold.
- Upcoming events:
 - Holy Thursday Combined Choir Event (April 6)
 - Good Friday Service (April 7)
 - Children’s Vigil for Easter and Resurrection Egg Craft/Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday, April 8, 11:00 am)
 - Potluck Supper (April 29)
 - Wenonah Clean Communities Day (May 13)
- “Bring One; Take One”--We have started a lending library in the fellowship hall. You are welcome to bring in books and take any you wish to read. Adult and children’s book of all types are welcome. There is no formal sign-out procedure; just borrow what is of interest to you or your family.
- 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.
- Memorial Presbyterian Church in Wenonah continues to collect items for hygiene kits to be sent to Ukrainian refugees through Church World Service. We will be collecting needed items and giving them to Memorial Church. Items needed include: hand towels (16” x 28”), washcloths, wide tooth combs, nail clippers, bars of soap, toothbrushes, and Band Aids.
- Choir rehearsals are on Sunday mornings @ 9:40. Anyone is welcome to join us. We sing at the 10:30 service on a regular basis (usually monthly).
- Sunday School will be LIVE and church school resources are also available on our website.
- At this time, the food pantry is in need of boxed cereal, pancake mix, syrup, grape jelly, loaves of bread and toilet paper. Other needed items include: canned goods, non-perishable items, toiletries, laundry soap, etc.

SENDING HYMN *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light* (WOV 649 v. 3)

3 I’m looking for the coming of Christ.
I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race,
we shall know the joy of Jesus. *Refrain*

Refrain

In him there is no darkness at all.
The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

DISMISSAL (LBW p. 94)

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL MESSAGE (What? Or Why?)

What do we believe? Our Lutheran heritage is rooted in theological debate, and such conversations have always been a part of our tradition. Disagreements about theological propositions and biblical interpretations have led to split after split among Lutheran church bodies and congregations. At the same time, our theological and biblical commitments have led us to seek the unity of the church with mergers among Lutheran denominations and with common communion agreements with our ecumenical neighbors. In our broader culture it also seems that theology often leads the way in conversations about faith. Theological principles from various religious communities are used to argue for or against laws, corporate practices, and cultural expectations.

In today's gospel story we find something different leading the way: the blind man's experience of the healing power of Jesus. This experience is at odds with the theological thought of the religious leaders. The narrative reads like a trial, one in which the primary witness is hostile to the line of questioning from the prosecution. The conversations the leaders have with the man and his parents are a mess of misunderstanding that leads to insult and accusation. They are talking about theology; he and his parents are talking about experience. No one is there to translate between the two.

Why do you believe? Our understandings of God are certainly shaped by the communities of which we have been a part and theologies we have learned. Yet, God's grace is not something we logic our way through; it is something we experience. The early church debated all sorts of theological positions, but their witness was grounded in their experience of death and resurrection. *What* we believe is important, but as we step into each day as witnesses of God's love for the world, *why* we believe may be the most hope-filled message we have to share.

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HOLY NATIVITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

3 Lenape Trail

Wenonah, NJ 08090

856-468-5760

hnlc.secretary@hotmail.com

Pastor: Andy Gordon

Music Director: Chris Robinson

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

Denise DiRienzo—Council President/Property

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Joyce Bradbury—Council Person/Secretary

Diane Yandach—Council Person/Co-Treasurer/Finance

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