

**The Lutheran Church of the Covenant**  
“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing Lives”



*Third Sunday after Epiphany*  
*January 22, 2022*



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.



We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! Here are a few notes to make you feel more at home as we praise this God of new life together!

- Bulletins and Communion (wheat or gluten-free wafers, wine or grape juice options) are available to be picked up at the back of the sanctuary.
- Portions marked with \* are when we invite you to stand as you are able to do so.
- We encourage you to participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print and singing along with the hymns!
- There will not be a separate time for an offering, so a basket is placed in the back for those who wish to support our local ministry as well as the wider church.
- We will commune from our respective seats, where the presiding minister will invite you to open your respective cups with the Communion elements. We believe this meal is for everyone who wishes to partake, regardless of church affiliation or lack thereof. This tangible gift of God's love is meant for the world to enjoy!
- Following the recommendation of the Cuyahoga County Board of Health regarding COVID-19, we ask that you wear a mask for the duration of your time in the building.

### *Our Worship Leaders & Staff*

Ministers  
Presiding Minister  
Organist  
Lector  
Parish Administrator  
Custodian

All People  
The Rev. Bradley Ross  
Robin Crawford  
Nel Lanese  
Jennifer Lasher-Dobush  
Vince Besednjak

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## Third Sunday after Epiphany

*God's glory is revealed in the reading of scripture. People stand at attention. People weep. People prostrate themselves in prayer. The unity of the church is another reflection of God's glory. Most gloriously, the promises of God are fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. Gather round. Listen up. Glimpse the glory of God.*

Prelude *Let Streams of Living Justice* (ROBINS)

Welcome & Announcements

\*Confession and Forgiveness

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as we take time to remember God's everlasting mercy and grace.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who creates us, redeems us,  
and calls us by name. **Amen!**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Most merciful God,  
**we confess that we have sinned against you  
and your beloved children.  
We have turned our faces away from your glory  
when it did not appear as we expected.  
We have rejected your word  
when it made us confront ourselves.  
We have failed to show hospitality  
to those you called us to welcome.  
Accept our repentance for the things we have done  
and the things we have left undone.  
Forgive us and lead us, that we may bathe  
in the glory of your Son born among us,  
and reflect your love for all creation. Amen.**

Rejoice in this good news:

In † Christ Jesus, your sins are forgiven.

You are descendants of the Most High,  
adopted into the household of Christ,  
and inheritors of eternal life.

Live as freed and forgiven children of God.

**Amen!**

\*Gathering Hymn    *Oh, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*

ELW #886

\*Greeting

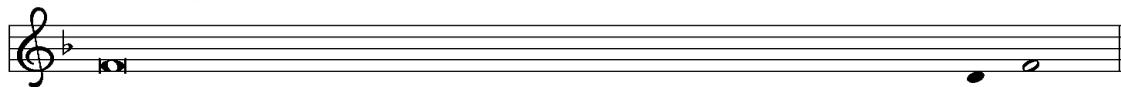
The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all!

**And also with you.**

\*Kyrie



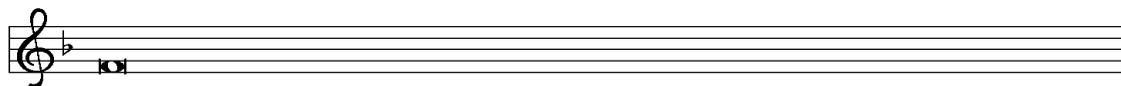
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



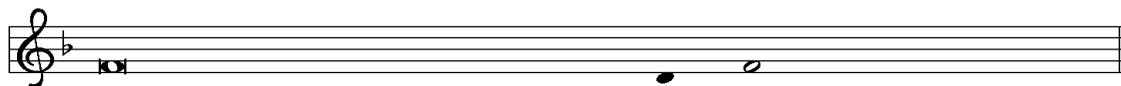
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



**Lord, have mer - cy.**



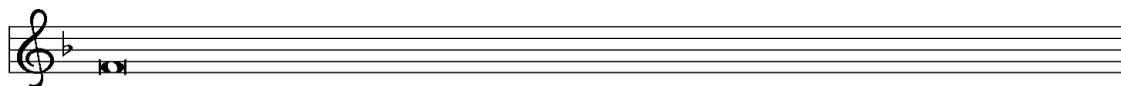
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



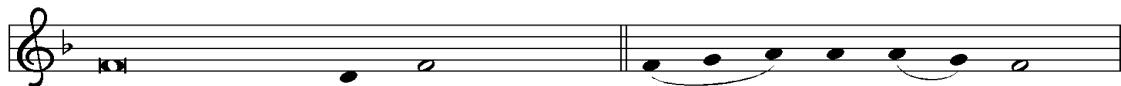
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



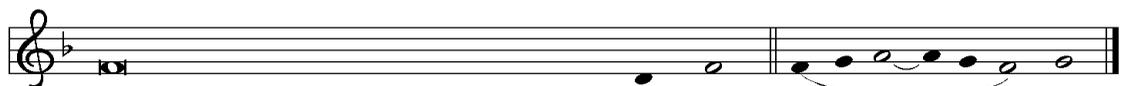
**Lord, have mer - cy.**



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



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



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **A - men.**

\*Hymn of Praise

*Refrain*



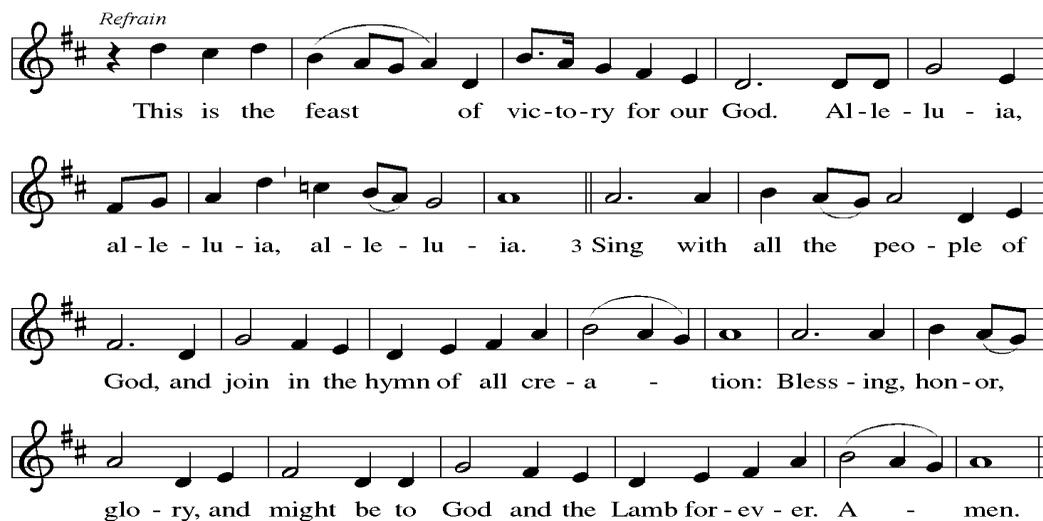
This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,  
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb  
who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

*Refrain*



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,  
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and  
strength, and hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.

*Refrain*



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,  
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of  
God, and join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or,  
glo - ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

*Refrain*

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,  
 al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 4 For the Lamb who was  
 slain has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

*Final refrain*

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

\*Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, we give you thanks for your precious body of Christ: what nourishes us from our Communion table of new life, and we as your church, set free to serve you in the world you still love. As the Holy Spirit, continue to empower us as your disciples, that we may proclaim your hope and grace now and forevermore. **Amen!**

First Lesson

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

*The exiles have returned and rebuilt Jerusalem. Now Ezra, the priest, reads the law of Moses to them in the public square. When they hear it, they weep for their sins and for the long years in exile, but Ezra reminds them that “the joy of the LORD is your strength.”*

<sup>1</sup>All the people [of Israel] gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel. <sup>2</sup>Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. <sup>3</sup>He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. <sup>5</sup>And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people;

and when he opened it, all the people stood up. <sup>6</sup>Then Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. <sup>8</sup>So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

<sup>9</sup>And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.” For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law.

<sup>10</sup>Then he said to them, “Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

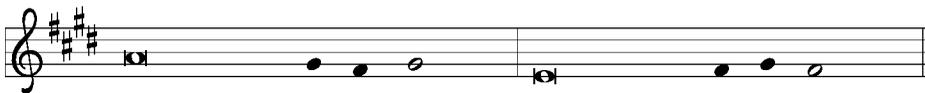
Word of God, word of life!

**Thanks be to God!**

Psalm

Psalm 19

*(The bold verses are sung by the congregation using the tone below)*



*Antiphon: The teaching of the LORD revives the soul. (Ps. 19:7)*

<sup>1</sup>The heavens declare the glo- | ry of God,  
and the sky proclaims its | maker’s handiwork.

<sup>2</sup>**One day tells its tale | to another,  
and one night imparts knowledge | to another.**

<sup>3</sup>Although they have no | words or language,  
and their voices | are not heard,

<sup>4</sup>**their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends | of the  
world,  
where God has pitched a tent | for the sun.**

<sup>5</sup>It comes forth like a bridegroom out | of his chamber;  
it rejoices like a champion to | run its course.

<sup>6</sup>**It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of  
| it again;  
nothing is hidden from its | burning heat. Antiphon**

<sup>7</sup>The teaching of the LORD is perfect and re- | vives the soul;  
the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom | to the simple.

<sup>8</sup>**The statutes of the LORD are just and re- | jice the heart;  
the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light | to the eyes.**

<sup>9</sup>The fear of the LORD is clean and en- | dures forever;  
the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous | altogether.

<sup>10</sup>**More to be desired are they than gold, more than | much fine gold,  
sweeter far than honey, than honey | in the comb. Antiphon**

<sup>11</sup>By them also is your ser- | vant enlightened,  
and in keeping them there is | great reward.

<sup>12</sup>**Who can detect one's | own offenses?  
Cleanse me from my | secret faults.**

<sup>13</sup>Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion |  
over me;  
then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a | great offense.

<sup>14</sup>**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable | in  
your sight,**

**O LORD, my strength and | my redeemer. Antiphon**

## Second Lesson

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

*The apostle and pastor Paul uses the metaphor of the human body to describe how intimately connected we are in the church. For this struggling congregation in Corinth, Paul delivers a vital message of unity that is a mark of the church today.*

<sup>12</sup>For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup>For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

<sup>14</sup>Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup>If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup>And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup>If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? <sup>18</sup>But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup>If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup>As it is, there are many members, yet one body. <sup>21</sup>The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no



Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

<sup>18</sup>“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,

<sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

<sup>20</sup>And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all  
in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup>Then he began to say to them, “Today this  
scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord!

**Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *Jesus Light of the World*

ACS #914



1 Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, Je-sus, the Light of the world;  
2 Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; Je-sus, the Light of the world;  
3 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Je-sus, the Light of the world;  
4 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace! Je-sus, the Light of the world;



“Glo - ry to the new-born king,” Je-sus, the Light of the world.  
join the tri - umph of the skies; Je-sus, the Light of the world.  
Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord! Je-sus, the Light of the world.  
Hail the Sun of righ-teous-ness! Je-sus, the Light of the world.

*Refrain*



We'll walk in the light, beau-ti-ful light, come where the dew-drops of mer-cy are bright.



Shine all a-round us by day and by night, Je-sus, the Light of the world.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, stanzas; George D. Elderkin, 1845–1928, refrain  
Music: WE'LL WALK IN THE LIGHT, Traditional; arr. George D. Elderkin

\*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.**

\* Prayers of Intercession

The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance; so, we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made.

*A brief silence.*

You reveal yourself to us in scripture and the ultimate Word made flesh. Fulfill your word through the faithful witness of your whole church. As your Covenant family, send us out to bring your liberating good news to people near and far away. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

All creation proclaims your handiwork. Teach us to love the intricate and beautiful bodies that you have created. Bless tiny insects, enormous whales, and every creature in between. Sustain species at risk of extinction. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You desire that there be no dissension among us. Where we are divided in our society, nation, or world, come quickly to reunite us into one body. Ease conflict, dispel violence, and bring an end to war. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

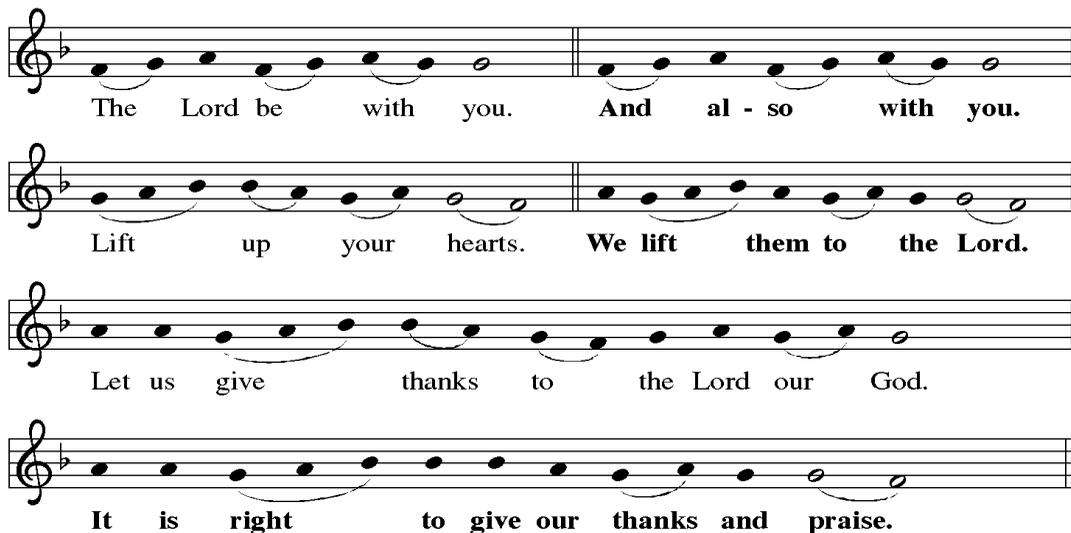
Holy Spirit, continue to anoint all of us with hope and new life. Grant provision and justice for people living in poverty, people living with disability, those living with pain, or those living under oppression. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Build up the body of Christ here in Covenant and beyond. Bless the variety of ministries in this place and in our lives beyond these walls. Empower us to freely welcome and deeply value each person who comes among us. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

In thanksgiving we lift before you the saints for whom the promise of salvation has now been fulfilled. Tend to those who mourn. Bring us together in your everlasting glory.. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior **Amen!**

\* Great Thanksgiving



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

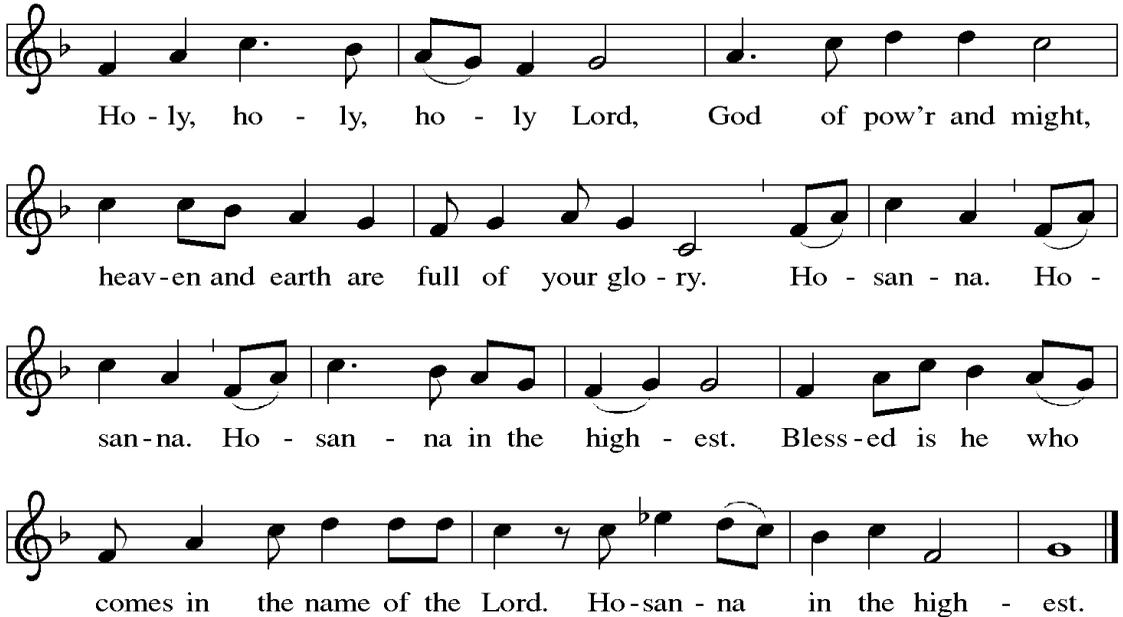
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

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:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
san-na. 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

Almighty Lord,  
we praise your shining light, your glowing grace.  
From before the earth's foundation,  
you loved us and promised us life forever.  
Within the earth's deep struggle,  
we laud your great and glorious might.  
Despite our tears and shortcomings,  
we sing of the gladness of your mercy.

We praise your Son, our Morning Star.  
our treasure dear.  
He is our living Savior who has redeemed us in love.  
He keeps us yours and fails us never—  
today, tomorrow, and every day.

On the night 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.

Holy Spirit, refresh our souls with this heavenly food.  
Nourish us as branches of your tree,  
and enlighten us with your undying flame.

We sing out to the Father, we ring out to the Son,  
we exult in the Holy Spirit.  
Empower us in our yearning,  
and be for us the end and the beginning,  
our purest pleasure, our victorious crown,  
our never-ending love.  
And so, we pray and praise: **Amen!**

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

Communion

Music Interlude *There is a Balm in Gilead* (MARTIN)

Prayer after Communion

We give you thanks, gracious God,  
for we have feasted on the abundance of your house.  
Send us to bring good news  
and to proclaim your favor to all,  
strengthened with the richness of your grace  
in your Son, Jesus Christ.  
**Amen!**

\*Blessing

God, who leads you in pathways of righteousness,  
who rejoices over you,  
and who calls you by name,  
✠ bless your going out and your coming in,  
today and forever.

**Amen!**

\*Sending Hymn *The Spirit Send us Forth to Serve*

ELW #551

\*Dismissal

Go in peace, guided by the light of Christ!

**Thanks be to God!**

Postlude *O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing* (HAYES)

Praying Together

**... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating:** Gayle Agg, Vince Besednjak, Bob Buettner, Joan Clarke, John Crawford, Nicole Crawford, Barbara Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Donna Franz, Nealie Gage, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Alex Hohenstein, Judy Jones, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Sara Mendes, Phyllis Nemeth, Don Rusher Jr, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, Tom Susanek, Phyllis Treichel, Phyllis Welker, Linda Wright, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Kim (Novak) Leonhardt, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family, the Peypo family.

### LAST WEEK

General Fund receipts for week ending 1/16/2022: \$1024

FREE  
community  
MEAL

Our next FREE community meal will be this Thursday, January 27, from 4:30-6. Again, we continue this ministry in a drive-thru format from the back of the church. So, if you need a night off from cooking dinner or you know of someone else who needs it, help us spread the word. It is FREE for anyone and everyone!

## *Lectionary Blog: One Body*

Picking up from our discussion last week about the importance of working together as a holy community, this week's texts insist that we not only value different gifts but that we also recognize the value of a diverse body of the faithful.

Paul spoke earlier in 1 Corinthians 12 about the varieties of gifts that work together to further the ministry of the Spirit in each place. In this week's readings, he introduces the metaphor of a body. No longer are we simply talking about humans who may receive one or other gifts from the Spirit. Now we are learning that each individual—as that individual—is a unique and irreplaceable gift to their community.

All baptized believers are part of the body of Christ, and Christ's body on earth needs each individual part to function fully. A human body that is all eyes would be nonfunctioning (but apparently angels have different rules ... Ezekiel 10:12; Revelation 4:6). Similarly, a body that is all feet would be constantly tripping over itself. Paul uses this ridiculous imagery to shame the desire of homogeneity within congregations. If a person sees that he/she/they are unlike the rest of the local body, Paul is emphatic that this person doesn't cease to be part of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:15-16). Just as a body is *necessarily* made up of hundreds of various parts and will cease to function if too many of the parts are missing, so, too, the body of Christ absolutely must be made of hundreds of different parts to function well. Paul's intent here is to talk about people with specific gifts, but the lesson goes further to teach us that a church body without a healthy diversity of members simply, by definition, can't be a fully functioning body. We need lots of different kinds of humans to be Christ's body on earth.

As an aside, I think it could be useful for congregational and personal reflection to meditate on what part you might be in Christ's body. After much prayer, I gained tremendous focus in my ministry when I was inspired to think of myself as a spleen in the body of Christ. The spleen is a humble part, to be sure, that works behind the scenes (unless something horrible happens). But its job is to keep the rest of the body healthy by removing impurities in the blood and training new blood cells to fight infections. I like to think that in my roles of training up pastors and lay leaders, I'm helping keep the body healthy by filtering out poisonous theology and toxic biblical interpretations that hinder the growth and work of the body of Christ. What part of the body of Christ might you be?

Knowing how the roles we play work together is certainly not just a New Testament concept. In the reading from Nehemiah, we learn about a mass Scripture-reading for the recently returned exiles. On a new moon festival, the returned Jews gathered to hear the book of the Law of Moses. During the exile in Babylon, it seems that many Jews grew up without learning Hebrew, and that many or most of their number had never heard about several of the customs and laws found in the book that Ezra was reading to them.

To facilitate this mass education, the community needed different parts to work together. Carpenters made a special teaching pedestal (Nehemiah 8:4). Ezra, the scribe, read the book all morning long (8:3). He knew that the crowd included three distinct groups: 1) those who understood what he was saying, 2) men who didn't understand and 3) women who didn't understand (8:2-3). To make the text accessible to everyone, Ezra made sure that he had translators with him on the podium to read the laws in Aramaic and other languages of exile (8:4, 8). As a second step, Levites were dispersed throughout the crowd to explain to the people what they were hearing in the various languages (8:7-8). Because they knew that the assembly of God's people didn't have the equitable access to their holy texts, they planned ahead of time to use their different strengths and skills so that everyone could hear and understand the texts according to their own languages and abilities. Because of this communal preparation, all the people together, no matter their linguistic or interpretative abilities, raised hands, knelt down and worshiped God together as one assembled body.

The body of Christ must be made up of diverse and unified parts, otherwise it will not function. What part of the body might you be? How can you work together with your congregation, synod, churchwide and siblings in Christ to be the body of Christ in this world—together?

*This Lectionary Blog and other resources for the journey of faith available at [LivingLutheran.org](http://LivingLutheran.org).*



*Cory Driver is an ELCA missionary serving as the director of graduate studies at the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Cairo (Egypt). His book on wilderness spirituality, *Life Unsettled*, is available from Fortress Press.*

# THE BODY OF CHRIST

N K N O W L E D G E V V P K N X Y  
 C P B G I F T S V U U N I T Y N F  
 O H E A L I N G Q C M G O J F U A  
 J X J P I O B V M P S P D Q U M I  
 Y D H R N W I S D O M S F V E I T  
 V I V I T B Z H E S O E K O C R H  
 A V F Y E W I R X C D B O D Y A V  
 P E I F R S P T H Q J T Q P K C V  
 L R L X P P R O W W Y R Y X N L L  
 M S E O R U O N Q W Y C P D Z E M  
 B I J M E O P G R X M M B U Q S O  
 S T W C T Z H U S C A G B E Y E X  
 P Y L B A T E E J H A N D G O J O  
 A K F Y T W C S J Q K Z V Z Y J I  
 R E O T I V Y N T A E V R M O P M  
 T O O A O X J X V Y A K N E Z Y R  
 S Z T J N V A S P I R I T A Z V O

Diversity  
 Prophecy  
 Wisdom  
 Ear  
 Body

Unity  
 Miracles  
 Knowledge  
 Hand  
 Spirit

Interpretation  
 Healing  
 Gifts  
 Foot

Tongues  
 Faith  
 Eye  
 Parts