



Community of Christ Lutheran Church
First Sunday of Christmas, December 28, 2025
8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.
Pastor Stephen C. Bond



THE GATHERING

Welcome

Vicar Natalie Downs

Musical Prelude

“Caroling, Caroling” by Alfred Burt Eric Dickey

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed are you, O God, who first called light out of darkness, who is present with us now, who promises new creation. **Amen.**

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

O God in whom we hope,

We confess that we have turned from you, and from the goodness of your reign. We resist your gentle pull that draws us close to Christ. We reject your welcome, letting old divisions fester into hostility and hate. We wander off impatiently in our own direction, rather than wait for your coming. We have refused to learn your way of peace. Forgive us, O God. Turn these hearts back to you, and gather us into your peaceable kingdom. Amen.

God is doing a new thing, here and now. See it, and know you are forgiven.

You have been found and taken by the hand.

You have been welcomed into the family of Christ.

You are freed to belong in the people of God forever. Hear it, and know it is true.

Amen.

Hymn

“Love Has Come”

ELW 292

Greeting

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

Refrain

Assisting minister

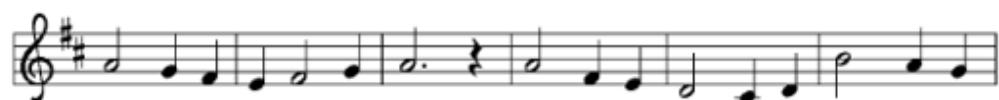


This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.

All



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



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



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

Refrain



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



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



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



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



Prayer of the Day

P O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Childrens Sermon

THE READINGS

The First Reading: Isaiah 63:7-9

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

⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people,
children who will not act deceitfully,"

and he became their savior

⁹ in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel

but his presence that saved them;

in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;

he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

L The Word of the Lord **C Thanks be to God!**

The Second Reading: Hebrews 2:10-18

¹⁰ It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters,

¹² saying,

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”

¹³ And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again,

“Here am I and the children whom God has given me.”

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people.

¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

L The Word of the Lord C Thanks be to God!



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23

P The Holy Gospel according to....C Glory to you, O Lord!

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

remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

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

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

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

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

Sermon

“The Work of Christmas”

Vicar Natalie Downs

Hymn

“What Child Is This”

ELW 296

Nicene Creed

C We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him, all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven; was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day, he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,

who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

WE DEDICATE OUR HEARTS IN PRAYER

P Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

AM God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

AM God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

AM God of righteousness, when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice, you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

AM God of life, you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ's siblings. Pour out your compassion in every place your people suffer, and protect them in the palm of your hand; **Tom Jennings, Larry Battles, Sue & Jim Enk, Christal & Chad Pritchard, Frank O'Konski, Luke Holtz, Ron Hetherwick, Jake Cope, Virginia Dillon, Staci, Laura Reimer, Greg Urbanski, Matt Jurrus, Sally, Tom Druschel, Cindy Hartbarger, Phyllis Sturgeon, Jeff Bucher, Albert Preston, Paul Ladd, Greg Ganelli, Jessica Queen, Charles Gorniak, David Reimer, Carol Borkowski, Barb Thober, Jim Schwartz, Maurice Atkinson, Jim Freimark, Mary Beth Brothers, Brooke Taylor, Jessica Baden...** and all others whom we remember in silence. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

AM God of compassion, you nurture children as the apple of your eye. As you sheltered your son Jesus from Herod's grasp, shelter all children in danger. As you comforted Rachel, comfort all who have lost children to violence. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

AM God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones. Even as we mourn, we offer thanks for those who have gone before us, trusting in your comfort and protection. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

THE MEAL

All Christians are welcome to commune at our Altar. You do not have to be a member of this congregation to receive Communion. Grape juice is available in the inner ring of glasses for those desiring it.

Sharing of the Peace

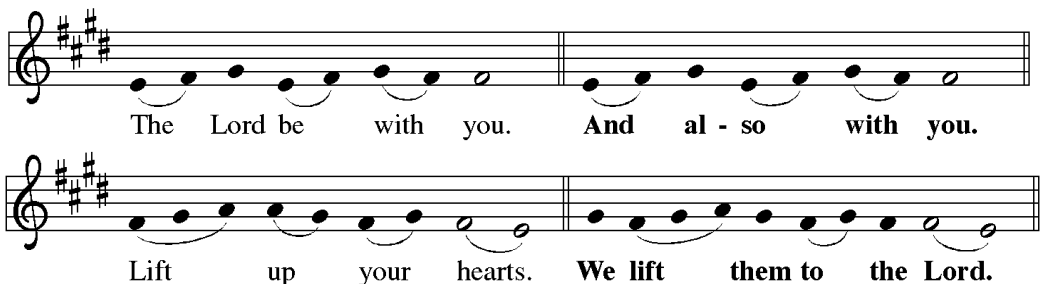
P The Peace of the Lord be with you all! **C And also with you!**
Share an expression of peace with your neighbor, please.

Our Tithes and Offering *Bring your gifts to the Altar, or you may offer gifts in the tray located at the rear of the sanctuary. Thank you.*

Offering Prayer

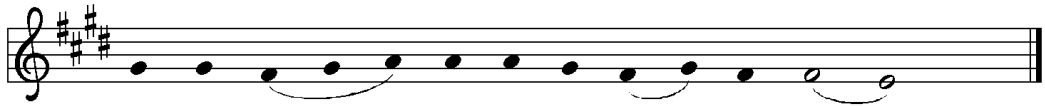
AM God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

The Great Thanksgiving





Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



It is right to give our thanks and praise.

****Eucharistic Prayer Continues**



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



heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes



in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

The Words of Institution

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. Jesus said, 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. Jesus said, Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray... **C** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Communion Hymns

"Lamb of God"

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Hymn

"In a Deep Unbounded Darkness"

ACS 1093

1 In a deep, un-bound-ed dark-ness, long be-fore the
2 Though our world is ev-er-chang-ing, you are con-stant,
3 Joy trans-forms our lips to boast-ing on-ly in your
4 God of Ha-gar, God of Sa-rah, God of no-mad



first light shone, you, O God, be - yond all mer - it
firm, and sure, faith - ful to your cov - 'nant prom - ise.
match - less grace, send - ing Christ to dwell a - mong us,
A - bra - ham; God of Mir - iam, God of Mo - ses,



worked a won - der faith makes known: in your mer - cy,
Trust - ing you, we live, se - cure: sing - ing prais - es,
Word made flesh in time and space: Friend and Sav - ior,
Fi - 'ry Pil - lar, great I AM: lead us home - ward,



in your mer - cy, you em - braced us
sing - ing prais - es, long as heart and
Friend and Sav - ior, in whose life we
lead us home - ward, to the love - feast



as your own,
breath en - dure, ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
glimpse your face,
of the Lamb,



1 Gen - tle Jo - seph heard a warn - ing from an an - gel in the night;
2 Tar - gets of a ty - rant's ar - my, seek - ing safe - ty, flee - ing strife,
3 Give us, God, such faith and cour - age when we move from place to place,



val - iant Mar - y, maid - en moth - er, roused from sleep, pre - pared for flight:
leav - ing house and land and kin - dred, spurred by dreams of peace - ful life;
and to those who come a - mong us, make us chan - nels of your grace.



thus the Christ - child's fam - 'ly lived out what the proph - et had fore - told,
through the des - ert of un - know - ing and the night of doubt they went,
Let us see in ev - 'ry strang - er ref - u - gees from Beth - le - hem,



that he might be called from E - gypt as God's peo - ple were of old.
guid - ed by God's prom - ised pres - ence, by that trust made con - fi - dent.
help us of - fer each one wel - come and re - ceive the Christ in them.

Post Communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

AM Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us.

Amen.

THE SENDING

Milestones & Announcements:

The Blessing

P May God who comes among us, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always. **Amen.**

Dismissal

AM Glory to God in the highest! **And peace to God’s people on earth!**
Go in joy. Embody God’s redeeming grace. **Thanks be to God.**

AM And next week, **C Bring a friend!**

Postlude

Making Jesus Known”

Welcome to Community of Christ! We welcome YOU to worship with us at one of our TWO worship services. Join us at **8:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m.** in person or on Facebook Live. We look forward to seeing you, and as always, **BRING A FRIEND!!!!**

Thank you to Vicar Natalie for preaching and to Rev. Holli Burkard for presiding over communion while Pastor Steve enjoys some time away.

"Peace Be Still" - Women's Retreat Calling all ladies!! On February 21st, Community of Christ Lutheran will be hosting a women's retreat called "Peace Be Still: Rest, Release, Renew." Take some time to pause and enjoy a restful time of bible study, worship, spiritual practices, and fellowship. Doors will open at 8 a.m. for check-in. Breakfast and coffee/tea bar will be available before the start of the retreat. The retreat will begin at 9 a.m. and will end at 5 p.m. Lunch will be included in the retreat price. The cost of attendance is \$50.00. Please feel free to invite other women in your life to attend. Reserve your spot by scanning the QR code, or by following this link: <https://forms.office.com/r/RNs14uginT?origin=lprLink>. Hurry and sign up today, there are only 50 slots available!

A portion of the retreat funds collected will be given to Salem Lutheran Church to support their food ministry. We will also be collecting for The Period Project, a drive to collect feminine hygiene products to support the needs at Salem Lutheran. We ask that each guest consider bringing at least one item to donate in support of this ministry.



The 2026 offering envelopes are now available on the table in the hallway! These envelopes cover weekly offerings as well as special services like Lenten Wednesdays, Holy Week, Easter, Thanksgiving, Advent, and more. If you have any questions about how to complete your weekly offering or are unable to locate your envelopes, please feel free to reach out to the church office. For those who prefer to give electronically, we offer the Simply Giving option, which allows for automatic withdrawals from your account. For more details, please contact Michelle at secretary@commofchrist.org. **Thank you for your generous support of the Lord's work at Community of Christ and beyond!**

Toledo Walleye Game Join us for a family fun night at the Huntington Center for a Walleye Game on Friday, January 23, 2026, \$17 per person. There are 53 total tickets available. To reserve your spot, sign up at the kiosk and submit your payment by *January 11, 2026*. Cash is the easiest option, but contact Chad Ackerman at 1chadackerman@gmail.com if you need alternatives. You can also drop the exact amount in a marked envelope with Michelle in the office. Don't miss out—sign up today!

New Year's Eve Blessing

As the year draws to a close, may you reflect on the blessings that have graced your life, the lessons learned, and the love shared. May the new year bring you fresh hope, boundless joy, and the courage to chase your dreams.

May you find peace in moments of stillness, strength in times of challenge, and inspiration in every new dawn. May your heart be open to new beginnings and your spirit be free to embrace the adventures ahead.

May 2026 be a year of growth, laughter, and deep connection, filled with light that shines brighter with each passing day.

Happy New Year!

***Reminder: The Church Office will be closed:
Thursday, January 1st.***



Give blood.
Help save lives.



Blood Drive
Community of Christ Lutheran Church

Community Center
6517 Finzel
Whitehouse, OH 43571

1/9/2026
12:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org
and enter: COMMUNITYCHRIST to schedule an appointment.



Scan to schedule an appointment

1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767 | RedCrossBlood.org | Download the Blood Donor App

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ANTHONY WAYNE AREA YOUTH

BOWLING NIGHT

Come hang out for a night of bowling, tasty food and drinks, and awesome company. Bring your best game and see if you can snag the top score!

DATE: JANUARY 18TH, 2026

TIME: 7:30 PM - 10:00 PM

LOCATION: INCREDIBOWL

5255 HEATHERDOWNS BLVD, TOLEDO, OH

6th-12th graders are invited to RSVP with the

QR Code or link by no later than Jan. 11

Cost: \$15 per person due with RSVP

