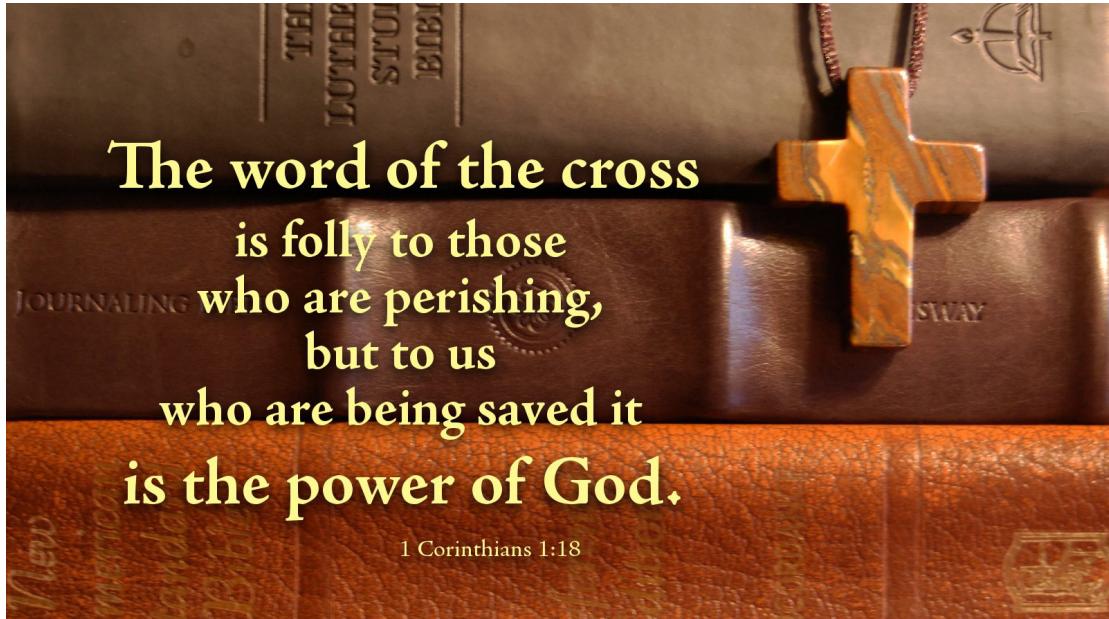


The Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

February 1, 2026

Worship Service with Holy Communion

9:30 a.m.



“Be and Make Disciples of Jesus Christ”

Grace Lutheran Church

111 Lutheran Drive, P.O. Box 86

Eaton, Ohio 45320

937.456.6258

GraceEaton111@gmail.com — www.gracelutheranofeaton.com

Pastor: Dwight Hanson

WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

In Holy Communion our Lord Jesus graciously invites those who have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to repent of all that separates us from God, and to receive his sacred and real presence for the forgiveness of sins.

In addition to wine, grape juice is also offered.

Children who do not yet receive Communion may come for a blessing.

Please take a moment this morning to fill out the “Attendance & Communion” Registration Cards (located in the pew racks). Pass your card to the end of your pew.

P - Presiding Minister; A - Assisting minister; **C - Congregation;**
* - PLEASE STAND

LBW - Green Hymnal

WOV - Blue Hymnal

+ + +

PRELUDE: “Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light” (Schop, 1641)

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

***BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS:**

P In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid:

C **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.**

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C **But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

(Kneeling or sitting; silence for self-reflection and examination)

P Most merciful God,
C **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.**

P 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.

C **Amen.**

THE SHARING OF GOD'S PEACE:

P The peace of the Lord be with you, always.

C **And also with you.**

(We share the peace)

***GATHERING HYMN: “Songs of Thankfulness and Praise” (LBW 90)**

***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.**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

P Almighty God, surrounded by the snares of this world, we cannot stand apart from the power of your grace. Strengthen us in body, mind, and spirit so that we may continue in the face of all that threatens to overcome us;

C **through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

FIRST LESSON: Micah 6:1-8

A A reading from Micah:

¹Hear what the LORD says: Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. ²Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the LORD, and you enduring foundations of the earth, for the LORD has an indictment against his people, and he will contend with Israel. ³“O my people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me! ⁴For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. ⁵O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD.” ⁶“With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” ⁸He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD

require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

A The Word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

PSALM 15 —Let us read responsively from Psalm 15.

A ¹LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle? who may abide upon your holy hill?
C ²Whoever leads a blameless life and does what is right, who speaks the truth from his heart.
A ³There is no guile upon his tongue; he does no evil to his friend; he does not heap contempt upon his neighbor.
C ⁴In his sight the wicked is rejected, but he honors those who fear the LORD.
A ⁵He has sworn to do no wrong and does not take back his word.
C ⁶He does not give his money in hope of gain, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.
A ⁷Whoever does these things shall never be overthrown.

SECOND LESSON: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

A A reading from 1 Corinthians.

¹⁸For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” ²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. ²⁶For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no human being might boast in the

presence of God. ³⁰And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

A The Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

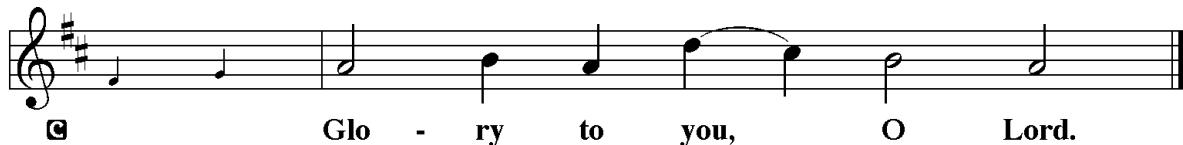
*VERSE:



C Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

*HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 5:1-12

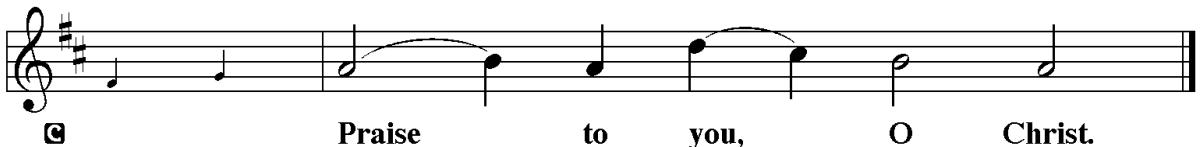
P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the fifth chapter.



C Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

¹Seeing the crowds, {Jesus} went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: ³Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. ⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. ⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

P The Gospel of the Lord.



CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON: Pastor Dwight Hanson — The Witness of the Mountains

*HYMN OF THE DAY: “*In a Lowly Manger Born*” (LBW 417)

*APOSTLES' CREED:

C 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.

PRAYERS:

A Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, to whom we answer, and from whom we receive all that is good, pour out the Holy Spirit upon us so that we are just and kind and humble. Make the whole of our lives to be Christ-centered, with hearts open to the blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven. We pray for all who have been brought low and are suffering, that they would know the healing and peace of your gracious care. Lord, in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

A We pray for the needs of the Church: For the wisdom of the cross of Christ to guide our way through this world; and for the understanding that Jesus is the source of our life, both now and forever. Lord, in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

A We pray for the needs of the world, that all who still feel the effects of the devastating storm may be lifted up with endurance and assistance. Thank you for dedicated first responders and plow drivers. Keep them all safe. We pray for the people of Ukraine and Iran, and all nations suffering war or turmoil. We pray for genuine justice to reign in the world. Guide our civic leaders with wisdom. Watch over all who serve with honor to keep the peace in harm's way, and their families. Lord, in your mercy,

C **Hear our prayer.**

A We pray for all who need healing, in body, mind or spirit: *Jim Carlisle, Kelly Coffman, Rob & Suzie Dell, John Hacker, Amy & Bryan Jackson, Richard Lehman, Connie Martin, Devin Mays, Sally Mowell, Barb Orr, Brenda Renner, Maggie Risko, Judy Schamel, Tom Schamel, Jackie Steiner, George Suggs, Wayne Williams*, as well as those whom we name silently in our hearts at this time (pause for silent prayer). Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray,

C **Trusting in your mercy, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

OFFERING

ANTHEM: ***“What Shall I Offer My God?”*** ***Choir***

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE:

Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

*OFFERTORY PRAYER:

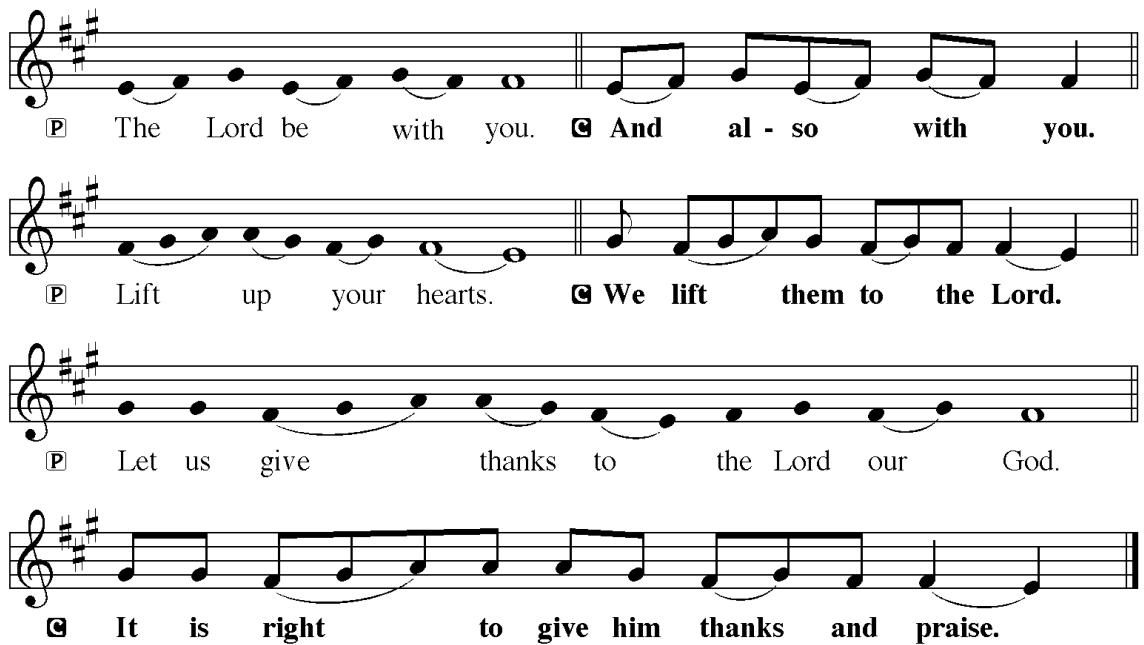
P Let us pray.

P Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of all things.

C **Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*HOLY COMMUNION

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING:



The musical notation consists of four staves of music in G major (one sharp) and common time. The notation uses a mix of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are spoken in pairs, with the first speaker in a square and the second in a circle. The music is divided into four sections by vertical bar lines.

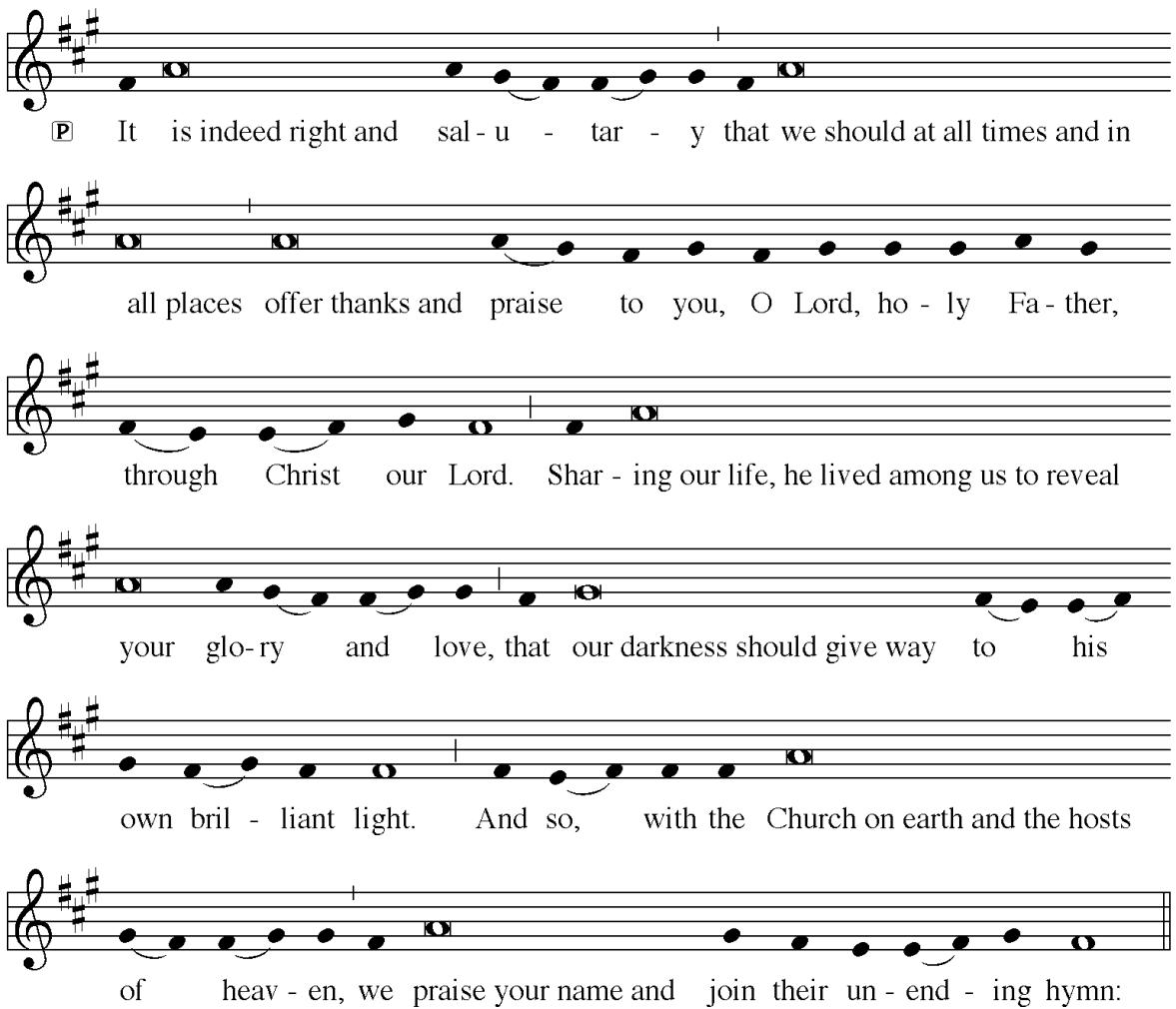
Section 1: P The Lord be with you. C And al - so with you.

Section 2: P Lift up your hearts. C We lift them to the Lord.

Section 3: P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

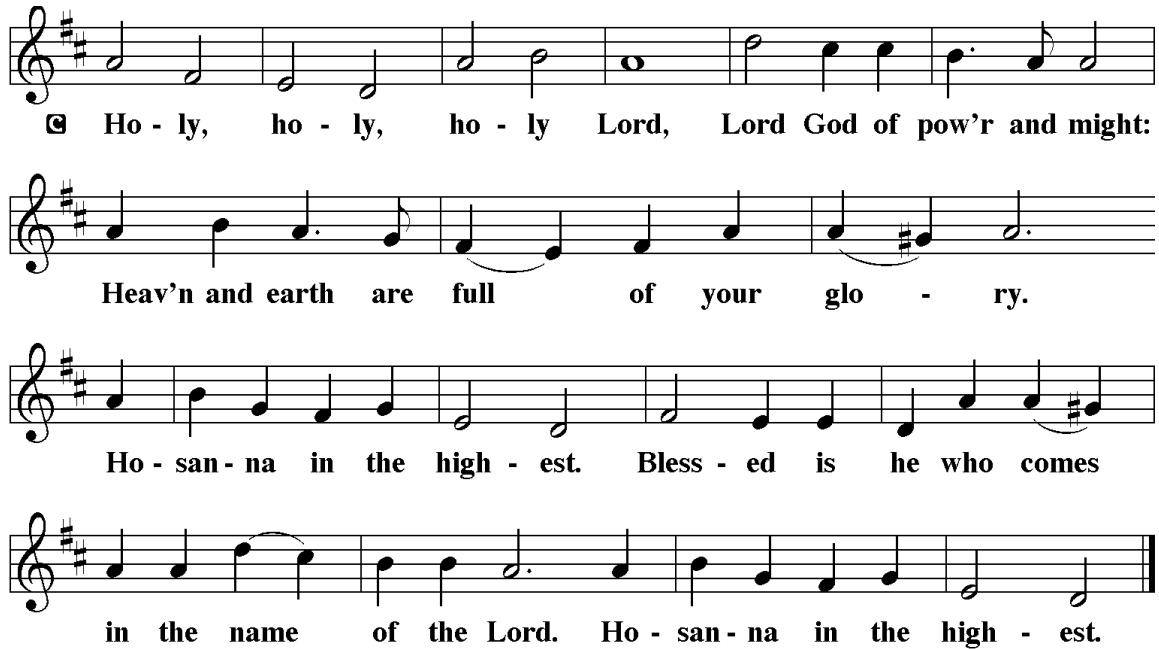
Section 4: C It is right to give him thanks and praise.

*PREFACE:



P It is indeed right and sal - u - tar - y that we should at all times and in
all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, ho - ly Fa - ther,
through Christ our Lord. Shar - ing our life, he lived among us to reveal
your glo - ry and love, that our darkness should give way to his
own bril - liant light. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts
of heav - en, we praise your name and join their un - end - ing hymn:

*SANCTUS:



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:

P In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

*LORD'S PRAYER:

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.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION AND BLESSING OF CHILDREN

Holy communion will be received kneeling or standing at the rail.

COMMUNION HYMNS: **“Lamb of God”**



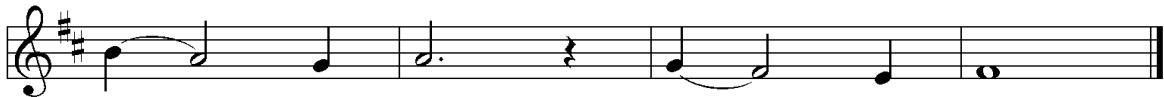
C Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



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.

“O God of Mercy, God of Light” (LBW 425)

“O Living Bread from Heaven” (LBW 197)

“O Christ, Our Light, O Radiance True” (LBW 380)

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

C **Amen.**

***POST-COMMUNION PRAYER:**

P Let us pray:

C **Pour out upon us the spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of those whom you have fed with one heavenly food; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

***BLESSING:**

P Almighty God, Father, + Son and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C **Amen.**

***SENDING HYMN:** **“Arise, Your Light Has Come” (WOV 652)**

***DISMISSAL:**

A Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

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Flowers on the Altar this morning are given to the Glory of God by:

- 1-The Allen & Kelly Coffman Family in Memory of Connie Coffman's Birthday.
- 2-Carol Matevia in Honor and Celebration of her Birthday on January 20th.

GRACE AT A GLANCE

Grace Lutheran Church

111 Lutheran Dr., P.O. Box 86 - Eaton, OH 45320
Phone: 937-456-6258 Email: GraceEaton111@gmail.com
www.gracelutheranofeaton.com ~ Like us on Facebook

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday -Friday: 10—1, 2—5

TODAY

9:30 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion
10:30 a.m. Fellowship & Adult Education
10:30 a.m. Youth Sunday School—Valentine's Day Service Project
6:00 p.m. Sunday S'mores

Monday

February 2

Pastor's Day Off
9:45 a.m. Choose to Lose
12:30 p.m. Bulletin Production with Sermon (2/1)

Tuesday

February 3

Wednesday February 4

9:00 a.m. Bible Study
5:30 p.m. Confirmation
6:30 p.m. Choir

Thursday

February 5

7:00 p.m. AA Meeting (FH)

Friday

February 6

12:30 p.m. Bulletin Production (2/8)

Saturday

February 7

7:30 a.m. Men of Grace @ Bob Evans

UPCOMING WEEK SPECIAL EVENTS

Sun. 2/8—Worship

Mon. 2/9—Pastor Off, Chose to Lose, Bulletin Production (2/8), Phoebe Women's Bible Study

Tues. 2/10—Mom's Bible Study, Wine & the Word, Lakeside Fellowship

Wed. 2/11—Bible Study, Confirmation, Choir

Thurs. 2/12—Council & Executive Committee, AA Meeting

Fri. 2/13—Bulletin Production (2/15), Sweetheart Dinner and Game Night

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SIGN-UP TO SPONSOR A HOMELESS SHELTER MEAL FOR 2026

There is a **sign-up sheet in the Narthex or you can contact Kelly Mt. Castle to sign up (937-336-1223)**. The board of elders thanks you for helping with this very important ministry.

Calling ALL ladies! The Phoebe Women's Bible Study is exploring attending the "Extraordinary Women" conference in Ft. Wayne, IN on April 17-18. This would be an overnight event and cost is \$79/person, also will be getting hotel rooms. We would love to have a group of us go. Speakers include: Tim Tebow, Lysa Terkeust, Margaret Feinbreg, as well as a concert with Anne Wilson. Please let Tiffany Ingram know if you would be interested in attending before 2/8. For more info: ewomen.net



WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Altar Guild for February: Becky Lenk & Tiffany Ingram
Offering Counter for February: Carol Perry; 2/25—Janice Barnes

Sunday, February 1—Epiphany 4

9:30 a.m.

Greeter: Gerry & Barbara Myers
Usher: Clayton Kiracofe
Lector: Tiffany Ingram
Communion: Patty Barnes, Janice Barnes

Sunday, February 8—Epiphany 5

9:30 a.m.

Greeter: Marti Good-Ernst & Michael Good
Usher: Darryl Leyes
Lector: Mary Shetter

Sunday, February 15—Transfiguration

9:30 a.m.

Greeter: Allen & Kelly Coffman
Usher: Allen Coffman
Lector: Kelly Coffman
Communion: Tiffany Ingram, Debbie McKinney

Sunday, February 22—Lent 1

9:30 a.m.

Greeter: Dean & Mary Shetter
Usher: John Kiracofe
Lector: Barb Myers

Attendance & Stewardship — (\$4,187 needed wkly)

01.25.26 9:30 a.m. 0 \$—0— No Worship Due to weather

Great Commission Outreach Partners:

*World Mission Prayer League—Chris & Emily and family, Lutheran Military
Veterans and Families, Abundant Grace, West Chester*

Grace Lutheran Mission Endowment Fund: The purpose of this fund is to extend the ministry of Grace Lutheran Church, apart from the general operation of the congregation. To learn more about our Mission Endowment Fund, please contact the church office and we'll give your question to the appropriate person.

IN OUR PRAYERS

After 4 weeks we will remove names from this list. If you would like to keep someone on the list, please note their name on the back of the "Attendance & Communion Registration" form.

URGENT PRAYER LIST:

HEALING: (In Alphabetical Order)

Jim Carlisle: (Healing from hip surgery)

Kelly Coffman: (Prayers for healing of a fractured toe)

Rob & Suzie Dell: (Having health issues)

John Hacker

Amy & Bryan Jackson: (for comfort and healing)

Richard Lehman: (He is rehabbing at Kingston of Miamisburg)

Connie Martin: (Friend of several folks at Grace—Dealing with cancer)

Devin Mays: (Great-nephew of Karen & Darren Marshall—having medical issues)

Sally Mowell: (Friend of Marshall's—Cancer has returned)

Barb Orr: (Friend of Debbie McKinney—Dealing with multiple cancers)

Brenda Renner: (Prayers for upcoming biopsy)

Maggie Risko: (Lisa Kira cofe's mother—recovering from a broken hip)

Judy Schamel: (Prayers for Healing at home)

Tom Schamel: (Health issues)

Jackie Steiner: (As she deals with Huntington's Disease)

George Suggs: (Dealing with health issues)

Wayne Williams

LONG-TERM PRAYER LISTJackie Steiner, Rhonda Paige Atkinson, Amy Jackson, Andy Proeschel, Judy Newkirk, Mike & Judy Schamel, Suzan Pauley, Tim Lanthrop, Barb Goebel, Carmen Hasdorff, Martha Grimme, Tom Schamel, Amanda & Shayla Dell, Susan Root, Fran Kester, Teddi & Mike Watkins, Ruth Hardin, Jenifer Combs, Doug Davis, Pastor Dean & Sandy Haferman, Dave Brumbaugh, Scot Emig, Barbara Worley, Carolyn MacFadyen, Judy Jay, Will Suggs, Earl House, Barbara Lakes, Becky Hoskins, Kayli Johnson, Joe McHenry, Tom Barnes: and those serving in the military: Maj. Love Hartman; Capt. John Ketteman; SPC Brandon Mann; Brad Newkirk; Lt. Col. Kyle Hundley, Alex Pollitt, Airman, U.S. Air. Force.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY:

Fellowship & Education

Following Worship—Refreshments for all are served in the Fellowship Hall immediately following worship on Sundays.

- **Youth Sunday School classes** meet @ **10:30 a.m.** — in the Sunday School music room (Education wing) and start with songs and prayer, then go to the adjacent classroom for our lesson. Bring a friend! Parents are always welcome.
- **Adult Education**— Following 9:30 a.m. worship, the adults meet to discuss the lessons of the day. Coffee and snacks provided.
- **Every other Sunday— Sunday S'mores @ 6:00 p.m.** —a Middle School- & High School-aged Youth Sunday Evening Ministry. Friends are welcome. Tina Ebright is the moderator and she can be reached at 937-472-5663.

Adult Bible Studies (during the week)

- **The 2nd Monday of each Month — 7:00 p.m.—The Phoebe Women's Bible Study.** They are studying— ***“Living with Defiant JOY”*** a six-session study. Contact Kelly Mt. Castle (937-336-1223 or email: kelly.mtcastle@gmail.com).
- **The 2nd & 4th Tuesdays of the Month:**
 - * **6:00 p.m. — Wine & The Word** — this group shares a light meal (at the home of Carol Perry). They will be choosing a new study. If you would like to join them, please contact Carol at 937-456-6683 or cbperry122@embarqmail.com
 - * **7:00 p.m. — Lakeside Fellowship is held** at the Lakengren home of Dan & Karen Schultz. If you would like to join this group, please contact Karen/Dan at 419-890-7965 or dkschultz52@yahoo.com.
- **The 2nd Tues. of each month — 5:30 p.m. — FOR MOMS . . .** They are studying a 6-session Bible Study for **MOMS — Mom Set Free by: Jeannie Cunnion.**
- **The Wednesday Morning Prayer & Bible Study — 9:00 a.m.** — meets in the Meeting Room off of the Fellowship Hall. They are studying the ***minor prophets***.
- **The 3rd Thursday of each month — 2:00-4:00 p.m. — “Graceful Fiber Guild”** — meets in the Fellowship Hall or the adjacent meeting room. Bring a craft you've been working on or just come to learn a new craft. Everyone is welcome to join us! Our next meeting is ***Thurs., Feb. 19th.***

These studies are open to any member and our friends. No prior Bible study background is needed. Please bring your Bible.

UPCOMING EVENTS

IN FEBRUARY



The Second Annual Sweetheart Dinner & Game Night — Friday, February 13, 2026 — Spaghetti Dinner with all the Fixin's @ 6 p.m. & Game Night Special @ 7 p.m.—We'll be fixing a *Variety of Sauces & Pastas*. Homemade Meat Balls with Goodies and Garlic Bread (**both regular & Gluten Free**) and we'd love it if you could bring a **dessert to share!** Bring a friend or two to the Best Sweetheart dinner in Town!! Sign up on the sheet in the Narthex.



THE GREAT CHILI COOK-OFF & COMPETITION IS BACK!!!
We're Bringing Back the Chili Cook-off Competition for
SMI Haiti—Rice and Beans Fund

Sunday, February 15, 2026
In the Fellowship Hall
Following worship

Anyone interested in participating is asked to sign up on the sheet in the Narthex.
Find additional information in the February issue of the Grace Herald



Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026—Worship with Holy Communion
& the Imposition of Ashes
Sun, Feb. 22—Lent 1
Wed. Feb. 25 — Midweek Lent 1—Soup Supper, Worship



LIFE LINE SCREENING — You're invited to a Life Line Screening event! at Grace Lutheran Church on **Thursday, Feb. 26, 2026** — *Life Line Screening is the nation's leader in Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease Risk Screenings* (Trusted

by over 11 million customers) - Screenings are simple and painless. Get peace of mind or early detection.

Who should attend: Anyone age of 40+

Special Pricing for \$129—Carotid Artery Disease Screening; Atrial Fibrillation Screening; Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening; Peripheral Artery Disease Screening.

4 ways to book your appointment...1) Call 800-324-9458 and use promo code HABC001; 2) Visit llsa.social/habc; 3) Scan to QR Code (found in the Feb. Grace Herald); 4) Text the word "circle" to 216-279-1607.

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Epiphany 4 – February 1, 2026

“Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.”

- Matthew 5:11 -

Penn and Teller are amazing magicians. Though other magicians do more spectacular feats, this pair can leave you scratching your head and asking, “How did they do that?” One thing they are known for is revealing the secret behind their tricks, without giving away the mystery and the magic of their performance.

One time they did a skit on the show “Saturday Night Live.” They made tissue ghosts fly in the air and appear to levitate above their heads. It seemed so simple, but it was impossible to figure out how they did it. After several minutes of these dancing and flying tissue ghosts, the camera pulled back to reveal that Penn and Teller had been hanging upside down. There was no magic involved; they were simply dropping the ghosts to the floor or had them hanging on strings. The trick was ruined by their revelation, but the real wonder came in how they could pull it off with no one noticing.

This kind of twist is often found in the Scriptures as well. For example, the Beatitudes in today’s lesson are beloved and well-known verses to most Christians, especially those who have experienced some sort of suffering. We want to think that we will find some reward for our suffering through our faith in God, and we want to see God’s blessings poured on those who are poor in spirit, in mourning, meek, hungry and thirsty for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers and persecuted — because they have experienced these things.

But let’s pull back the camera and look at this from a new perspective. What if the suffering actually **is** the blessing? The stories of the saints show us that faith in Christ does not always bring happiness, prosperity or peace.

Have you ever noticed how those moments of suffering offer us the greatest opportunities to be witnesses for the grace of God? The world sees the kingdom of heaven through our response to our suffering and how we rely on the comfort and mercy of God. We look on the surface for the blessing but the reality is that blessedness is from God — no matter the circumstances. Do not be surprised when this is what God does for you.

Blessed Are You

*Find the 36 **bold** words from Matthew 5:3-12 (ESV)*

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

“**Blessed** are the **poor** in **spirit**, for theirs is the **kingdom** of **heaven**. “**Blessed** are those who **mourn**, for they shall be **comforted**. “**Blessed** are the **meek**, for they shall **inherit** the **earth**. “**Blessed** are those who **hunger** and **thirst** for **righteousness**, for they shall be **satisfied**. “**Blessed** are the **merciful**, for they shall **receive** **mercy**. “**Blessed** are the **pure** in **heart**, for they shall **see** **God**. “**Blessed** are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be **called** **sons** of **God**. “**Blessed** are those who are **persecuted** for **righteousness’ sake**, for theirs is the **kingdom** of **heaven**. “**Blessed** are you when others **revile** you and persecute you and **utter** all kinds of **evil** against you **falsely** on my **account**. **Rejoice** and be **glad**, for your **reward** is **great** in **heaven**, for so they persecuted the **prophets** who were before you.

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