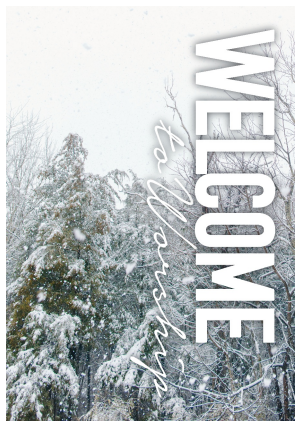


Epiphany Sunday
Sunday, January 4, 2026



*"Touched by the Gospel, we seek to be instruments of God's Peace,
for the sake of the World."*

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
1747 W. Milham Avenue ♦ Portage, MI 49024
Pastor Rachel Laughlin
Church phone: 269/343-3453 ♦ fax: 269/343-2025
Website: popportage.org
Prayer-mail: prayer@popportage.org
Find us on Facebook: *Prince of Peace, Portage, MI-ELCA*



Welcome in the name of Christ

Worshiping with kids?

- ❖ We love having people of all ages and abilities worshiping together!
- ❖ There is a family restroom in the Gathering Space and a changing table in the nursery to accommodate your family's needs.
- ❖ The nursery is staffed from 9-12 on Sundays. You can drop your youngster off before faith formation or at any time during these hours.
- ❖ Children are invited forward during the Children's sermon, where they can hear the bible story told in words and context they can understand. Older siblings and other friends are welcome to accompany children if that would make them more comfortable.

- ❖ Children's bibles are available in the pews, and ushers can provide children's bulletins upon request.
- ❖ Wiggles and noise are welcome! If your child needs more room to move, feel free to take them to the Playground in the Gathering Space. This area is stocked with quiet activities, coloring pages, and kid-sized furniture. This is also a great spot to enjoy refreshments after the conclusion of the worship service!

Wondering about communion?

- ❖ We believe Christ is fully present in the meal and it is Christ who invites us to share it.
- ❖ All are welcome to share communion with us regardless of age or faith tradition.
- ❖ Gluten free bread and wafers, wine, and grape juice are available.

Want to know more about our community?

- ❖ We strive to be an open, welcoming place for all people.
- ❖ Pastor Rachel enjoys meeting people after worship but never wants anyone to feel pressured to talk to her. Come say hi!
- ❖ Visit the welcome table in the gathering space if you have questions about Lutherans, the Christian faith, or Prince of Peace; if you have a specific prayer request, or want to share your contact information so we can get back to you about something in particular.

Thank you for joining us for worship today. May God bless you and give you peace this week.

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP

Entrance and Wassailing

The word "wassail" comes from the Anglo-Saxon, "Wes hail," meaning "be whole" – a greeting for "good health!"

The wassailers traveled from house to house singing, with a wassail cup which their hosts were expected to fill.

Prelude

"O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright!"

arr. Paul Manz

Gathering

"Brightest and Best of the Stars"

No. 303

Greeting and Welcome

Pastor: Christ is with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Today we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany! The word "epiphany" means "manifestation" and comes from the Greek word for "reveal" or make known. Here in worship on Epiphany, we celebrate that Jesus is the manifestation or revealing or in-breaking of God's light for all people of every time and place. That means people years ago and people in the future who haven't even been born yet and all of us and everyone all over the world right now! God's light, Jesus, is for everyone!

Because God's light is for everyone, everyone is welcome in God's house and family, and so are their gifts. Just as the magi showed their respect for Christ with gold, frankincense, and myrrh, we offer our gifts and talents to share God's light with others. Whatever we bring—no matter how simple—God accepts and puts to good use.

Sharing our gifts with God and each other gives us lots of joy! So, I hope you're ready to sing loud and share that joy today, and then to take the Light of Christ with you when you leave today to share it with the world around you throughout the week.

Prayer of the Day

Pastor: Almighty and ever-living God,

All: you revealed the incarnation of your Son by the brilliant shining of a star. Shine the light of your justice always in our hearts and over all lands, and accept our lives as the treasure we offer in your praise and for your service, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Children's Sermon

WE HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

Sit

The Star

First Reading

Isaiah 60:1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Poem

Star Silver

by Carl Sandberg

The silver of one star
Plays cross-lights against pine green
And the play of this silver
crosswise against the green
Is an old story...
thousands of years.

And sheep raisers on the hills by night
Watching the woolly four-footed rambles,
Watching a single silver star –
Why does the story never wear out?

And a baby slung in a feed-box
Back in a barn in a Bethlehem slum,
A baby's first cry mixing with the crunch
Of a mule's teeth on Bethlehem Christmas corn,
Baby fists softer than snowflakes of Norway,

The vagabond Mother of Christ
And the vagabond men of wisdom,
All in a barn on a winter night,
And a baby there in swaddling clothes on hay –
Why does the story never wear out?

The sheen of it all
Is a star silver and a pine green
For the heart of a child asking a story,
The red and hungry, red and hankering heart
Calling for cross-lights of silver and green.

Stand

Acclamation

“The First Noel ”

No. 300

vs. 1, 3, 5 - All, vs. 2 - High, vs. 4 - Low

A Savior Born

Matthew 2:1-12

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 2nd chapter
Glory to you, O Lord.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

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

Sit

Sermon

Pastor Rachel Laughlin and Em Witteveen

- 1 We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.

Refrain

Oh, star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright;
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light!

- 2 Born a king on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again;
king forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign.

Refrain

- 3 Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a deity nigh;
prayer and praising, gladly raising, worshiping God Most High.

Refrain

- 4 Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

Refrain

- 5 Glorious now behold him arise, King and God and Sacrifice;
heav'n sings alleluia: alleluia the earth replies.

*Refrain***Prayers of the Church**

Je - sus, name a - bove all names, beau - ti - ful

3 Sa - vior, glo - ri - ous Lord, Em -

5 man - u - el, God is with us, bles - sed Re -

7 deem - er, liv - ing Word.

After "Generous God," worshipers respond "**Pour out your Love.**"
Repeat "**Jesus, Name Above All Names**" after completion of the intercessory prayers.

WE SHARE IN HIS MEAL**Sharing of the Peace**

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: And also with you.

Worshipers share a sign of God's peace with one another, greeting each other with words like
"Peace be with you. . . And also with you."

Sit
Offering

Please **date** and complete the fellowship registration pad.

Offering Response

"This Little Light of Mine"
stand for last verse

No. 677

Liturgical Hand Washing

*I wash my hands in innocence, and go around your altar, O Lord, singing aloud a song of thanksgiving,
and telling all your wondrous deeds. – Psalm 26:6-7*

Offering Prayer

Asst: 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.

All: Amen.

Stand

Great Thanksgiving - Grace Before the Meal

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.

Pastor: 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. 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 all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Santo, Santo, Santo

Sung first in Spanish, then in English



San - to, san - to, san - to, mi co - ra - zón te a - do - ra.
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, my heart, my heart a - dores you.



Mi co - ra - zón te sa - be de-cir: San - to_e-res Se - ñor.
My heart is glad to say the words: You are ho - ly, God.

Eucharistic Prayer

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.

The Lord's Prayer

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

All: 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.

Invitation to the Meal

Pastor: If you desire to receive what God offers, come to this Table. Come with your faith and your doubt. Come with your questions and your hopes. Come with your grief and your love. Come taste the Lord's goodness. There is room for you here because this is Christ's table. You are welcome.

Sit

Holy Communion - the Lord's Supper

All are welcome at Christ's table regardless of age or membership status. All communion servers will have sanitized their hands before handling the communion elements. Ushers will direct you to come forward. The pastor and assisting minister will distribute the bread (gluten-free) and the other servers will distribute the wine (red) or grape juice (white). Individually packaged gluten free wafers and sets of completely sealed elements (wheat wafer and grape juice) are available on the stands near the bread distributors. You may pick one of those up yourself, if you prefer. You may place your empty cup in the baskets on the tables as you return to your seat.

If you would prefer not to receive communion, you are invited to come forward for a blessing. Please cross your arms over your chest to indicate your preference to the servers.

Lamb of God

1) O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way; you
2) O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way; you
3) O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way: e -
suf - fered death our lives to save: have mer - cy now we pray.
set us free from guilt and grave: have mer - cy now, we pray.
ter - nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

Communion Hymns

“Light Shone in Darkness”

No. 307

“Bright and Glorious Is the Sky”

No. 301

vs. 1, 3, 5

Table Blessing

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

All: Amen.

Sending of Communion

Communion ministers may be sent to take the sacrament to those who are absent.

Pastor: Gracious God, whose mercy endures from generation to generation: As Mary set out to visit Elizabeth before she gave birth to her son, bless those who go forth to share your word and sacrament with our sisters and brothers who are sick/homebound/imprisoned. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those to whom we bring this communion, that through the body and blood of your Son we may all know the hope of your promised coming in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Sit

WE ARE SENT OUT TO SERVE

Announcements

Worshipers are invited to share announcements not listed in the weekly Peace Proclamations:

*blessings: like anniversaries, birthdays, births or new jobs, prayer concerns and answered prayers. So that all present on person and livestreaming can see and hear you, **come up the ramp to the chancel then go to the pulpit** to give your announcement*

Pastor: The magi bring gifts
For woman and her child,
Three sermons in one
And a warning besides.

Gold for a king,
Whose reign lasts forever
Across time and space,
A commonwealth for all.
Frankincense to burn,

A scent to rise
From altar to heaven,
Declaring the divine is here.

Myrrh for burial, oil
To embalm the One
Whose death breaks death
And gives life the last word.

Their warning is timely
For these things have begun,
And while there is time to ponder,
It is also time to run.



Stand

Final Blessing

Pastor: The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter, ✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.

All: Amen.

WE ARE SENT OUT TO SERVE

Sending Hymn

"O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright!"
vs. 1, 2, 4, 5

No. 308

Dismissal

Asst: Glory to God in the highest!

All: **And peace to God's people on earth!**

Asst: Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Music for the Close of Worship "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright!"

arr. Dietrich Buxtehude

Today's Servers
January 4, 2026

Worship Asst.: Em Witteveen
Reader: Rob Wagley
Ushers: Greg Guthrie, Kay Kincaid
Technology: Mike Whately
Prayer Station: Lynne Wathen
Sacristy Asst.: Marilyn Storch
Communion Assts.: Karen Adams
Altar Guild: Diane Snyder
Fellowship Host:
Fellowship Treats:
Church Lockup: Laurie Brown

Next Week's Servers
January 11, 2026

Worship Asst.: Sharey Biles
Reader: Karen Adams
Ushers:
Technology: Mike Whately
Prayer Station:
Sacristy Asst.: Laila Poisson
Communion Assts.: Lisa Creed
Altar Guild: Sandy Bennett
Fellowship Host:
Fellowship Treats:
Church Lockup: Jenny Deming

Star Silver by Carl Sandberg, Public Domain
Jesus, Name Above All Names, Text and music © 1984 Scripture in Song, admin. Music Services.
Permission under CCLI Annual License #11064917
Dialogue, Permission under Augsburg Annual License 262200
Santo, Santo, Santo, Text and music Public Domain
O Lamb of God, Text and Music: © 2022 Augsburg Fortress. Permission under Augsburg Fortress Annual License 262200
Ponder, Meta Herrick Carlson, Ordinary Blessings for the Christmas Season
All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Use this QR code to donate online to
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
and its ministries.
See the Peace Proclamations for more details.



Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Staff

Church phone: 269/343-3453

Staff

Pastor: Rachel Laughlin ext 11	Intern: Kathleen Robinson ext 15
Administrative Asst: Tamara Preston ext 10	Music Director: Janet Hill ext 16
Accountant: Marilyn Storch ext 14	Custodian: Steve Haddix ext 20
Technology Manager: Mike Whately ext 13	Nursery: Melissa Copeland & Megan Zimmerman ext 17
Engagement Coor: Em Witteveen ext 12	Care Team Email: prayer@popportage.org

Service/Sermon Notes

- What was the main point or key phrase in the service/sermon?
- What part of the Bible story or service/sermon made me say, "HUH?"
- What part of the Bible story or service/sermon made me say, "AH-HA!?"
- How does the Bible story or service/sermon apply to my life?

You may take other notes, draw images, or leave other questions/comments about the sermon here.