

Service of Holy Communion Epiphany & Baptism of Our Lord January 11th, 2026



INTRODUCTION

The feast of Epiphany (“manifestation”) concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God’s glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God’s love to all people. In the waters of the Jordan, Jesus is revealed as the beloved Son of God. Through this great epiphany, Jesus fulfills all righteousness and becomes the servant of God who will bring forth justice and be a light to the nations. In the waters of baptism we too are washed by the Word, anointed by the Spirit, and named God’s beloved children. Our baptismal mission is to proclaim good news to all who are oppressed or in need of God’s healing.

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

P. Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, creator of heaven and earth, the Word who spoke life into being, the Wind stirring the waters. **Amen.**

P. Let us turn in confession to the one who knows us completely.

The congregation sits or kneels. Silence is kept for reflection.

Mighty God, lover of justice, **you call us to life in community, but we have served our own interests at the expense of our neighbors. We have sown deceit where honesty was needed. We say the right words, but our hearts are far from you. Turn us to seek your face. Knit us together and give us the mind of Christ, that we may do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

The former things have passed away, and new things God now declares: Like a spring of water that never fails, God covers you in the righteousness of Christ, and forgives your sin in ☩ Jesus' name. May the Spirit give you strength to live for others, and bless you with the gift of peace. **Amen.**

Congregation stands

GATHERING HYMN

Shall We Gather at the River

ELW 423

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.**

KYRIE

A. In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

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

C. Lord, have mercy.

A. 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.

C. Lord, have mercy.

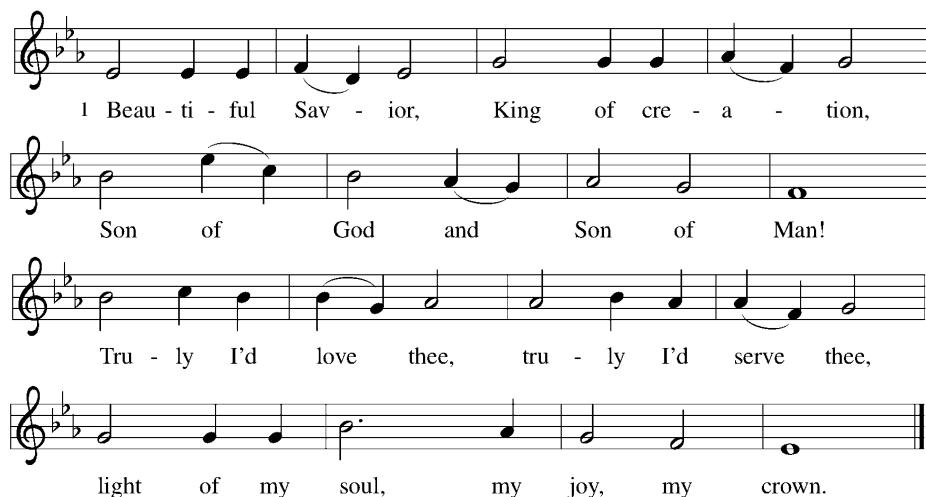
A. For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

A. Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C. Amen.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE



PRAYER OF THE DAY

P. O God our Father, at the baptism of Jesus you proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized into Christ faithful to their calling to be your daughters and sons, and empower us all with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Congregation is seated

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 42:1-9

- ¹ Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
- ² He will not cry out or lift up his voice
or make it heard in the street;
- ³ a bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.
- ⁴ He will not grow faint or be crushed
until he has established justice in the earth,
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.
- ⁵ Thus says God, the LORD,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,

who gives breath to the people upon it
and spirit to those who walk in it:

⁶ I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness;
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;

I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations,

⁷ to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.

⁸ I am the LORD; that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to idols.

⁹ See, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth,
I tell you of them.

A. Word of God, word of life.

C. Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 29 (*read responsively*)

¹ Ascribe to the LORD, you gods,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

² **Ascribe to the LORD the glory due God's name;
worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.**

³ The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders;
the LORD is upon the mighty waters.

⁴ **The voice of the LORD is a powerful voice;
the voice of the LORD is a voice of splendor.**

⁵ The voice of the LORD breaks the cedar trees;
the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

⁶ **the LORD makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.**

⁷ The voice of the LORD
bursts forth in lightning flashes.

⁸ **The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**

⁹ The voice of the LORD makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests
bare.

And in the temple of the LORD all are crying, "Glory!"

¹⁰ **The LORD sits enthroned above the flood;
the LORD sits enthroned as king forevermore.**

¹¹ O LORD, give strength to your people;
give them, O LORD, the blessings of peace.

SECOND READING: Acts 10:34-43

³⁴ Peter began to speak to [Cornelius and his household]: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every people anyone who fears him and practices righteousness is acceptable to him. ³⁶ You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. ³⁷ That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

A. Word of God, word of life. **C. Thanks be to God.**

A TIME FOR THE CHILD IN US ALL

Children & Youth are invited forward for a special sermon time with Pastor Peggy.

Congregation stands

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Repeat alleluia

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

GOSPEL: Matthew 3:13-17

P. The holy gospel according to Matthew. **C. Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹³ Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from the heavens said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

P. The gospel of the Lord. **C. Praise to you, O Christ.**

Congregation is seated

SERMON

Water and the Word

Congregation stands

HYMN OF THE DAY

Christ, When for Us You Were Baptized

ELW 304

APOSTLE'S 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 THE CHURCH

A. As God's beloved children united in Christ, let us pray for the church, the whole human community, and the well-being of the earth, our home.

A brief silence.

A. Steadfast God, give courage to your servant church. Heal our divisions and unite us in mission. Uphold our lay leaders, missionaries, pastors, and bishops, and all who proclaim hope in a broken world. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A. Restoring God, cleanse the life-giving waters of rivers, seas, and springs. Create in us an urgent desire to preserve the beauty and bounty of your good creation. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A. Righteous God, you guide the nations. Reconcile warring enemies and end cycles of violent retribution. Defend the rights of prisoners, detainees, and all who flee from persecution. Sustain international aid workers and peacemakers. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A. Compassionate God, you care for all in distress. Provide safety and support for those seeking asylum or in need of shelter. Be near to the dying, and comfort all who are grieving or ill especially... those we now say aloud... and those we hold in our hearts. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A. Loving God, awaken the gifts of the Spirit in this congregation, that we may serve Christ by loving one another, our neighbors, and our enemies. We pray for travelers and those who are homebound. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A. Promising God, in baptism we die and rise with Christ. We give thanks for those who have gone before us, and we trust that we will join them in your everlasting peace. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

P. Confident that the Holy Spirit receives our prayers and answers us, we commend all for whom we pray to God's loving-kindness made known to us in Christ Jesus our Savior. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P. The Peace of Christ be with you always.

C. And also with you.

P. Let us share with each other a sign of Christ's peace.

Congregation is seated

CHOIR ANTHEM Christ When for Us You Were Baptized *Michael Helman*

MEAL

OFFERTORY INVITATION

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via Venmo



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Thank you for your generous gifts!

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Congregation stands

OFFERTORY SONG

1 Let all things now liv - ing a song of thanks - giv - ing to
God the cre - a - tor tri - um - phant - ly raise,
who fash - ioned and made us, pro - tect - ed and stayed us, who
still guides us on to the end of our days.
God's ban - ners are o'er us, God's light goes be -
fore us, a pil - lar of fire shin - ing forth in the night,
till shad - ows have van - ished and dark - ness is ban - ished, as
for - ward we trav - el from light in - to light...

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A. Let us pray... God of majesty, no eye has seen, no ear has heard what you have prepared for those who love you, yet in this meal you reveal the wideness of your mercy. Use what we have gathered to feed us with the reign of God come near, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

DIALOGUE & PREFACE OF THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

P. The Lord be with you.

C. And also with you.

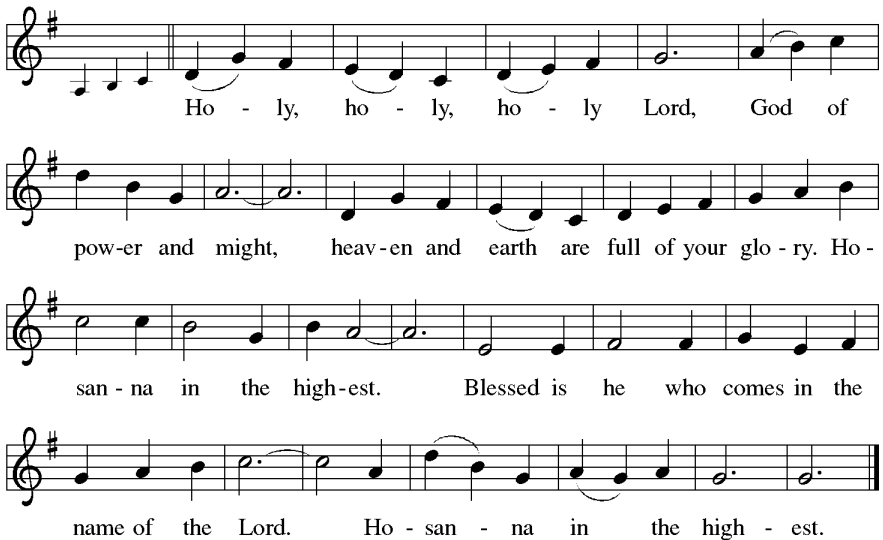
P. Lift up your hearts.

C. We lift them to the Lord.

P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C. It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P. 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; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. 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:



The congregation sits or kneels.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P. Blessed are you, O holy God: you are the Life and Light of all. By your powerful word you created all things.

Through the prophets you called your people to be a light to the nations. Blessed are you for Jesus, your Son. He is your Light, shining in our darkness and revealing to us your mercy and might.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his preaching and healing, his dying and rising, and his promise to come again, we await that day when all the universe will rejoice in your holy and life-giving light.

By your Spirit bless us and this meal, that, refreshed with this heavenly food, we may be light for the world, revealing the brilliance of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Believing in the real presence of Christ, we practice Eucharistic hospitality. All baptized persons are welcome to Communion this morning. Children may come forward for a blessing.

Please come forward, guided by the Ushers, to receive the bread and wine. Gluten free wafers are available, please note this to Pastor Peggy when you come forward. Grape juice is available in the second communion plate. As you return to your seat via the side aisles you can place your empty cup in the baskets on either side.

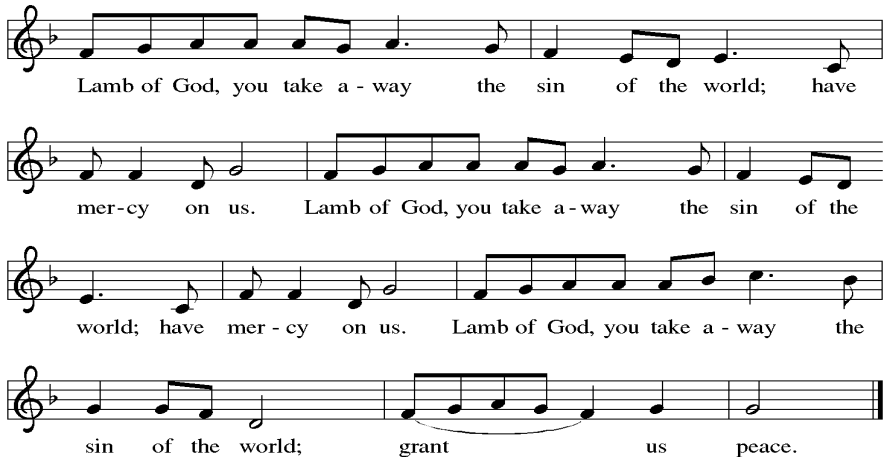
P. Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! Come to the table, taste and see.

FIRST COMMUNION CELEBRANT

Carsen Luedtke

Carsen is invited forward with her family to receive her first communion. The congregation is then invited forward. The bread today was made by Carsen and her family in honor of this next step in her faith journey.

COMMUNION SONG



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.

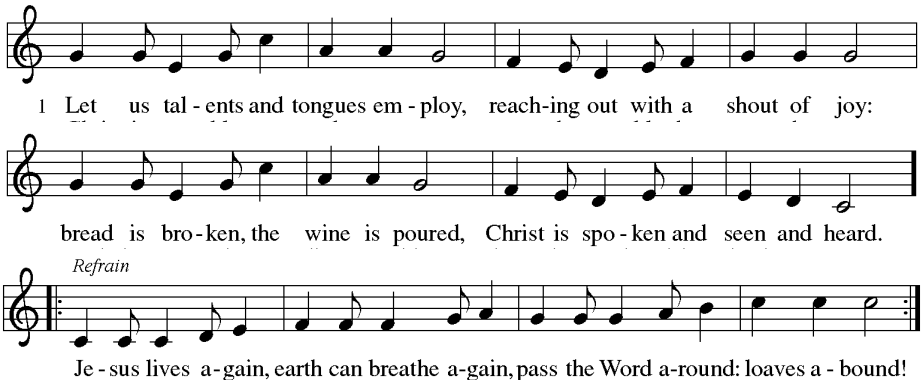
DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

After all have received Communion the congregation stands.

TABLE BLESSING

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

SONG AFTER COMMUNION



1 Let us tal - ents and tongues em - ploy, reach-ing out with a shout of joy:
bread is bro - ken, the wine is poured, Christ is spo - ken and seen and heard.
Refrain
Je - sus lives a - gain, earth can breathe a - gain, pass the Word a - round: loaves a - bound!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A. Let us pray. Radiant God, we have seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. In the sacrament of his body and blood you have drawn us to your heart. Send us from this table with delight, that our lives may reflect the beauty of love, and bear witness to all we have seen and heard, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BENEDICTION

P. May the triune God, who has put a new song in your mouth and tuned your heart for praise ☩ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN Songs of Thankfulness and Praise ELW 310

DISMISSAL

A. Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy. **C. Thanks be to God.**

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Announcements for January 11th, 2026

Welcome to Holy Counselor Lutheran Church. May you experience the joy of God’s presence in our worship!

If today is your **first time** worshipping at Holy Counselor, please be sure to fill out the “Guest Book” on the table in the narthex and take a welcome bag.

Please ask our ushers any questions you may have regarding worship this morning. **Large print bulletins are available.**

Worship is live streamed to our church Facebook page, but the camera is pointed away during Communion and is not on the children when they come forward during A Time for the Child in Us All.

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**Altar flowers are in celebration of Carsen’s First Communion from her family!**

**Welcome to the Table of Christ, Carsen.**  
**Congratulations on your first Holy Communion!**

**Thank you, Lawnie Luedtke, for providing this morning’s refreshments in celebration of her daughter Carsen’s First Holy Communion.**

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Volunteers for Today's Worship

Lay Asst.	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Ushers	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Comm. Asst.	Debbie Lennon
Tech	Mark Rossi
Tellers	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Refreshments	Luedtke Family

Volunteers for Next Sunday, Jan. 18th

Lay Asst.	Debbie Lennon
Ushers	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Comm. Asst.	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Tech	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Tellers	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Refreshments	Emilie Dupont

******* Join us for refreshments after worship*******

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***A HUGE, heartfelt thank you to the congregation for our staff Christmas gifts!  
We all feel so blessed by our shared ministry here and we are thankful for  
the love, support, and encouragement this time of year and always.  
May God bless all of you! Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!  
With love, June, Cathy, and Pastor Peggy***  
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THIS WEEK AT HOLY COUNSELOR

Sunday, Jan 11: Sunday School, 8:45-9:15am

Worship w/Communion, Epiphany & Baptism of our Lord, 9:30am

Choir Practice following worship

Tuesday, Jan 13: Pastor's Comm. Office Hours, Café e Dolci, Warwick, 12-2pm

Wednesday, Jan 14: Adult Ed, Zoom, 10am

Saturday, Jan 17: Sisters in Prayer, Zoom, 8:30am

Sunday, Jan 18: Sunday School, 8:45-9:15am

Worship w/Communion, 9:30am

Choir Practice following worship

Pastor's Community Office Hours: Pastor Peggy will be at **Café e Dolci in Warwick, NY THIS Tuesday, January 13th from 12-2pm** for Community Hours. All are welcome to drop in for a visit as she is present in the community.

2026 Calendars for Sale: Happy New Year! Get a new calendar for your home. They are **\$20 each**. All calendar sales go directly to support the church.

Boiler Replacement & Electric Hot Water Heater: Due to a recent leak, damage and old age of the boiler at the parsonage immediate replacement was needed. Unfortunately, the hot water heater also has a leak and needs to be replaced. Good news is we will be putting in an electric one that will use our solar panels. Please **help support the boiler replacement and hot water heater fundraiser** in the Narthex to cover these costs. **The boiler is almost paid for because of your generosity!** Thank you to all who have given already!

Annual Congregational Meeting: Our annual meeting is Sunday, January 25th following worship with a makeup weather date of February 1st. Please plan to attend to celebrate the 2025 year, hear updates about the church, and approve the 2026 spending plan. **A potluck luncheon will follow, please bring a dish to pass.**

Women's Lenten Retreat: We are hosting our 2nd Annual Woman's Retreat at HCLC on **Saturday, March 7th from 9 am-3 pm**. All women are invited to come explore a Lenten journey this winter about self-care. The day includes Pastor Peggy as our keynote speaker, worship, music, workshops and meditation. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. There is a recommended **donation of \$15** for building use. Please **RSVP** to the office (office@hc-lutheranchurch.org) **by Monday, February 9th**. See Kathy Heeren or Pam Kucks with any questions.

Your legacy gift to the church: In your will or trust you can make a difference in the life of the people in this congregation. The new year is always a great time to review your will. Also, as a reminder if you give electronically via tithe.ly please update it to reflect your new intent for 2026. Thank you! If you have any questions, please contact John Heeren or Pastor Peggy.

Youth Council Representative: For 2026 we will **need a new youth representative on church council**. If you are a youth interested in this service position, please contact Pastor Peggy or Diane Rossi. Thank you to Kevin, who has been our youth rep and will be heading off to college next year.

Paper Drive: We are running low on toilet paper and paper towels. **Please contribute** to our "Paper Drive" this month. All **donations can be placed** in the fellowship room against the left wall by the chairs. Thank you!

Food Pantry: Thank you for the recent generous food drives, we are still in **need of:** canned chicken noodle soup, boxed cereal, canned stew, canned chili, boxed potatoes, children's juice boxes or pouches, 4-pack toilet paper & toothpaste. You can always bring donations of canned goods, paper goods, and hygiene products. All donations can be **placed in the blue bin** by the sanctuary doors. Thank you!



Holy Counselor
LUTHERAN CHURCH
Church Office (973) 827-5251
www.hc-lutheranchurch.org

The Reverend Peggy Ludlow: pastorpeggy@hc-lutheranchurch.org
Director of Music: June Tarantino: music@hc-lutheranchurch.org
Office Administrator: Diane Rossi: office@hc-lutheranchurch.org
Bookkeeper: Wynn White: accounts@hc-lutheranchurch.org

MISSION STATEMENT

*As Children of God,
we are called to share and serve
Christ's love and bring God's word to all.*

CHURCH COUNCIL

Pastor Rev. Peggy Ludlow
President Nancy Knecht
Vice President Frank Urbaniak
Treasurer Claire Speroni
Recording Secretary Dawn McCormick
Financial Secretary John Heeren
Outreach Coordinator Francine Vince
Nurture Coordinator Fred Schoenagel
Administration Coordinator Diane Rossi
Youth Representative Kevin Drache

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Kristina Heeren
Pam Kucks
Matt Moller
Aileen Donovan

Holy Counselor is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Munsee people, and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.

