



St. Peter's Lutheran Church  
Highspire  
Epiphany 4  
February 1, 2026

## **Introduction**

Who are the blessed ones of God? For Micah, they are those who do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. For Paul, they are the ones who find wisdom in the weakness of the cross. For Jesus, they are the poor, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who mourn, and those who hunger for righteousness. In baptism we find our blessed identity and calling in this countercultural way of living and serving.

## **Overview**

### **A Hunger for Justice**

In today's first reading, God cries, "O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me!" (Micah 6:3). The people of God have forgotten God's deliverance and who God has called them to be. Like a shrewd prosecutor, God has placed them on trial and is examining their actions, recounting the signs of mercy and loving kindness shown to them from generation to generation and searching for a sign that they are living into who God has called them to be. And so, they are reminded that this is how you shall live: do justice, love kindness, walk humbly.

A Latin American prayer asks: "Lord, to those who hunger, give bread. And to those who have bread, give the hunger for justice." The words of this more modern-day prayer do not sound so different from the ancient words spoken by the prophet Micah to God's people. "What does the Lord require of you," asks Micah, "but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). The hunger of God's people has already been filled by the mercy of God, and so they are called by God to feed the hunger of others through lives of justice, kindness, and humility.

In the Sunday assembly, God surrounds the gathered people with reminders of who and whose they are: we splash in the waters of baptism, are brought to new life in the word, are fed and forgiven through bread and wine. Around the table, hunger is satisfied, and a hunger for justice is renewed. From the table, God sends the gathered assembly, blessed and broken, to feed the hunger of others as, together, we await the fulfillment of the kingdom.

WORDS OF WELCOME  
PRELUDE

Juliet Mitton

### **The Gathering**

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

\*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS ELW p. 116

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

**C Amen.**

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

**C Amen.**

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

**C have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

P God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ☩ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

**C Amen.**

\*GATHERING HYMN Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart W&P #41

\*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 Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C Amen.**

### **The Word**

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

FIRST READING: **Micah 6:1-8**

*With the mountains and the foundations of the earth as the jury, God brings a lawsuit against Israel. God has "wearied" Israel with a long history of saving acts. God does not want or expect lavish sacrifices to attempt to earn divine favor. Rather God empowers the people to do justice, to love loyalty to God, and to walk shrewdly in God's service.*

1 Hear what the Lord says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,  
and let the hills hear your voice.

2 Hear, you mountains, the case of the Lord,  
and you enduring foundations of the earth,  
for the Lord has a case against his people,  
and he will contend with Israel.

3 "O my people, what have I done to you?  
In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

4 For 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.

5 O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,  
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,  
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,  
that you may know the saving 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?

7 Will 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?"

8 He has told you, O mortal, 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?

L The word of the Lord

**C Thanks be to God**

PSALM: **Psalm 15** (read responsively)  
*Lord, who may abide upon your holy hill? (Ps. 15:1)*

1 Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle?  
Who may abide upon your holy hill?

**2 Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right,  
who speak the truth | from their heart;**

3 they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their  
friends; they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.

**4 In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor  
those who fear the Lord. They have sworn upon their  
health and do not take back their word.**

5 They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes against the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.

**SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31**

*According to the world's standards of power and might, the message of the cross seems stupid and offensive. Yet this word reveals the paradoxical way God has chosen to work power and salvation through weakness, rejection, and suffering. Hence the message of the cross becomes true wisdom and power for believers.*

18 The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. 22 For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, 23 but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

26 Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, 29 so that no one might boast in the presence of God. 30 In contrast, God is why you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 in

order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

L The word of the Lord

**C Thanks be to God**

\*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Halle, Halle, Hallelujah ELW # 172  
(2 times)

\*GOSPEL: **Matthew 5:1-12**

P The holy gospel according to Matthew

**C Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Jesus opens the Sermon on the Mount by naming those who are blessed in the reign of God.*

1 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

P The gospel of the Lord.

**C Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

Pastor George Scott

SERMON

Pastor George Scott

\*HYMN OF THE DAY Let Streams of Living Justice ELW # 710

\*APOSTLE’S CREED ELW p.127

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

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.*

God our wisdom, renew the church in the power of the Spirit, that it may do justice, love kindness, live humbly, and boldly proclaim Christ crucified. We pray for social justice and humanitarian aid ministries. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God our source, we honor you by caring wisely for your creation. We pray for the health of old growth forests, ice caps, and ocean currents. Preserve the diversity of life on earth. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God our righteousness, raise up visionary leaders who serve with integrity and respect human rights. Increase freedom in every nation. Protect educators, journalists, artists, and religious activists who are reviled for speaking truth. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God our advocate, you give hope to all who suffer because of persecution, poverty, or war. Reunite separated families and bring orphaned children to safety. Comfort any who grieve or suffer in any way especially *Don Alsedek, Connie Barner, Rachel Benkovic, Elijah Dean, Rose Hoover, Samson Kennedy, Bernie Kunz, Rob Lipsitt, and Jeff Myers.* Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God our blessing, we pray for the children and youth of this congregation, and for parents, grandparents, mentors, teachers, and youth ministers who model love for their neighbor and care for others. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God our joy, we give thanks for the lives of those before us who journeyed humbly with you. 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.

**C Amen.**

\*PEACE

ELW p. 128

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C And also with you.**

SPECIAL MUSIC Morning Has Broken

Bell Choir

### The Meal

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

\*OFFERTORY HYMN This Little Light of Mine

ELW# 677



1 This lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;  
2 Ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;  
3 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;



this lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;  
ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;  
Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;



this lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine,  
ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine,  
Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine,



let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.  
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

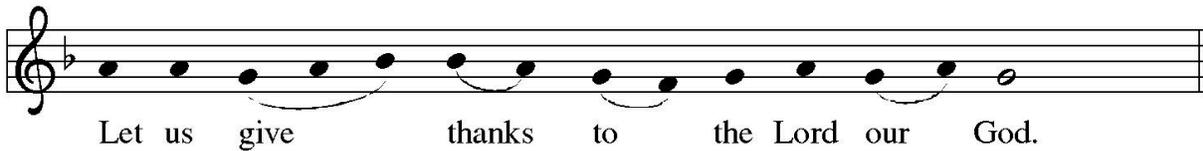
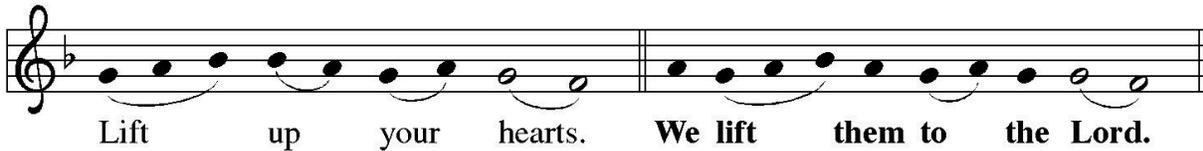
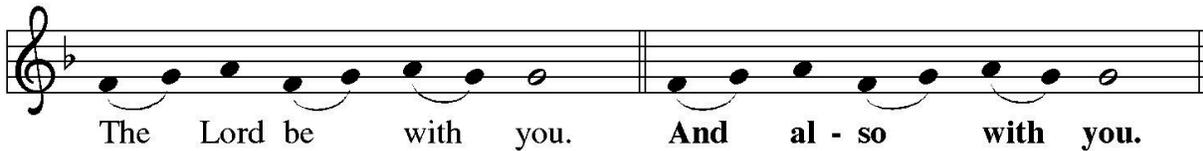
**\*OFFERTORY PRAYER**

A 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.

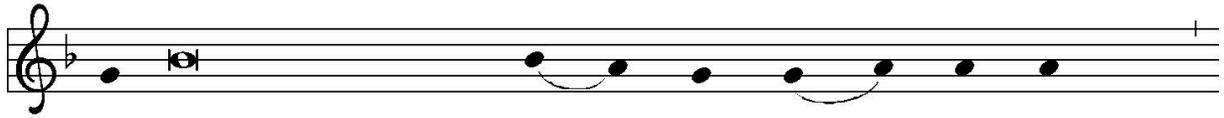
**C Amen**

**\*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

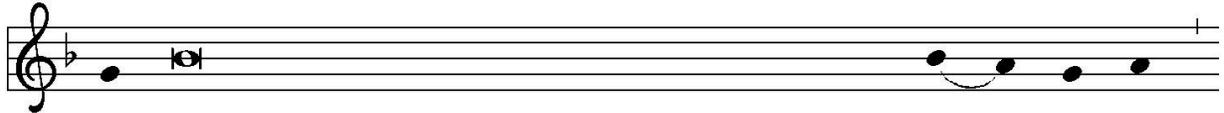
ELW p.129



\*PREFACE



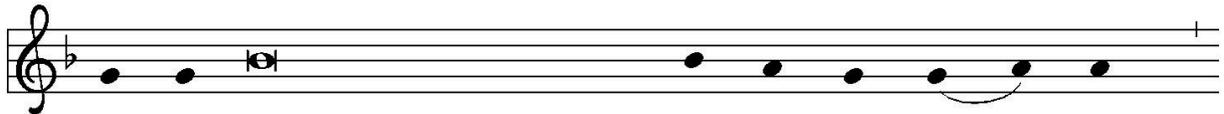
It is indeed right, our du - ty and our joy,



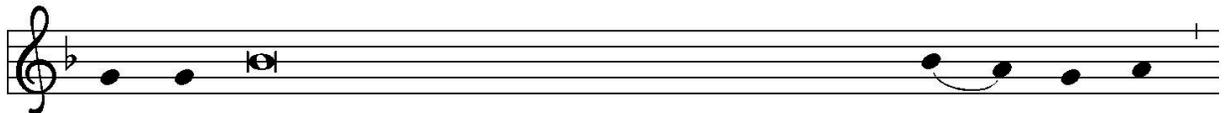
that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you,



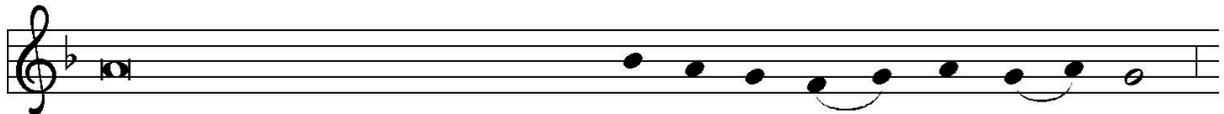
al - mighty and merciful God, through our Sav - ior Je - sus Christ.



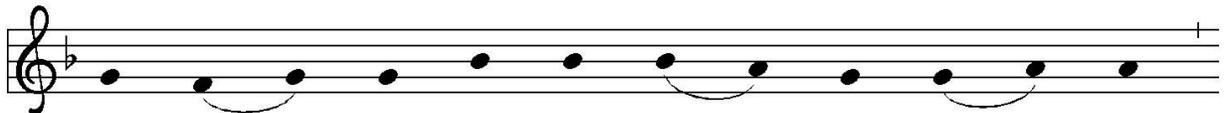
By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all na - tions;



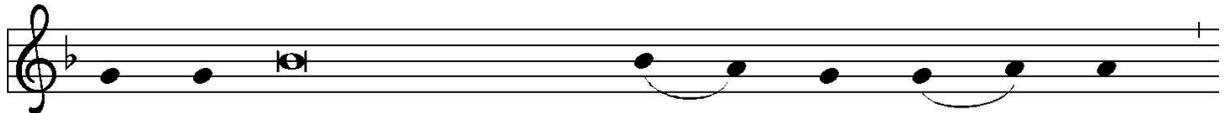
in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your be - lov - ed Son,



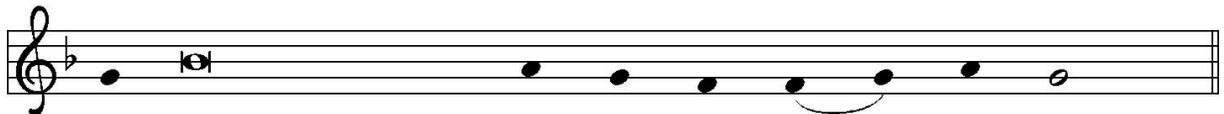
and in the miracle of water turned to wine he re - vealed your glo - ry.



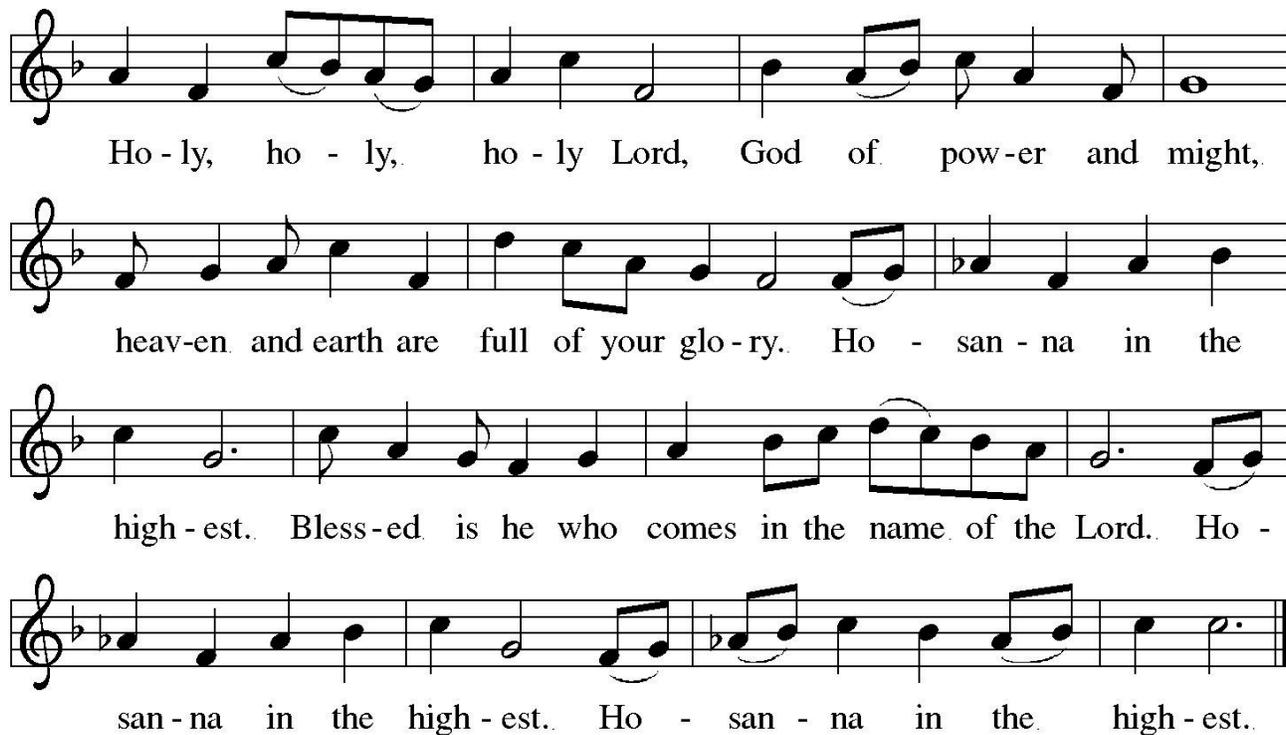
And so, with all the choirs of an - gels,



with the church on earth and the hosts of heav - en,



we praise your name and join their un - end - ing hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,  
 heav - en 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. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

**\*EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

P Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:  
 Blessed are you for the birth of creation.  
 Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.  
 Blessed are you for your promise to your people.  
 Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.  
 Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.  
 Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

*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.*

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup  
we remember your Word dwelling among us,  
full of grace and truth.

We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.

We look with hope for his coming.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.

Come among us.

Bless this meal.

May your Word take flesh in us.

Awaken your people.

Fill us with your light.

Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours,

Holy One of Israel,

Word of God incarnate,

Power of the Most High,

one God, now and forever.

**C Amen.**

\*THE LORD'S PRAYER

ELW p.112

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.

**\*SHARING THE MEAL**

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

**COMMUNION HYMNS:**

Lamb of God

ELW p.135

O God of Mercy, God of Light

ELW# 714

The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve

ELW# 551

**The Sending**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

**\*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 your love, and bear witness to all we  
have seen and heard, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C Amen.**

**\*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.

**C Amen.**

\*SENDING HYMN Rise Up, O Saints of God!

ELW# 669

\*DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy.

**C Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

Juliet Mitton

***Thank you, Rev. George Scott for presiding over worship  
today, you are a blessing to us.***

***We appreciate Juliet Mitton for sharing her musical talent with  
us this morning. Thank you, Juliet.***

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**Prelude** - Juliet Mitton

**Gathering Hymn** - "Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart" W&P #41  
words & music -Henry Smith @ Integrity Music, Inc. CCLI Song #20285

**Gospel Acclamation** - "Halle, Halle, Hallelujah" ELW #172 PUBLIC DOMAIN

**Hymn of the Day** - "Let Streams of Living Justice" ELW #710 THAXTED  
words -William Whitla @ 1989 music - Gustav Holst PUBLIC DOMAIN

**Special Music** - "Morning Has Broken" arr. Kevin McChesney BUNESSAN  
from Ring Together Praise @1997 Jeffers Handbell Supply, Inc. Bell Choir

**Offertory Hymn** - "This Little Light of Mine" ELW #677 PUBLIC DOMAIN  
words & music - African American Spiritual

**Sanctus** - "Holy, Holy, Holy" p. 130, setting 2, ELW

**Distribution of Communion** - Lamb of God, p.135, ELW, setting 2  
"O God of Mercy, God of Light" ELW #714 words - Godfrey Thring music -  
Joseph Barnby arr. @2006 Augsburg Fortress PUBLIC DOMAIN

"The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve" ELW #551 CHESTERFIELD words -  
Delores Dufner @1993 OCP, GIA Publications music - Thomas Haweis  
PUBLIC DOMAIN

**Sending Hymn** - "Rise Up, O Saints of God!" ELW #669 FESTAL SONG  
words -Norman O. Forness @ admin. Augsburg Fortress music - William H.  
Walter PUBLIC DOMAIN

**Postlude** - Juliet Mitton

### **St. Peter's Lutheran Church Highspire Contact Information:**

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E-mail: [stpetershighspire240@gmail.com](mailto:stpetershighspire240@gmail.com)

For pastoral care, please reach out to the church office at 717-939-3492 or  
by email at [stpetershighspire240@gmail.com](mailto:stpetershighspire240@gmail.com). You can also call Patrick  
Hawkins at 717-903-2987.

## **ALTAR FLOWERS**

We are in need of sponsors for the altar flowers on the following Sunday's:  
February 8th

If you would be interested, please reach out to Helene Hoch at 717-343-8397. Thank you!

The centerpiece is presented to the Glory of God by Steve, Clydene and Stephanie Strauss in memory of Steve's father, Charles Strauss, whose birthday anniversary is January 29th.

## **Worship Participants for February 1, 2026**

Presiding Minister	Pastor Georg Scott
Music Director	Stephen Strauss
Worship Assistant	Patrick Hawkins
Musician	Juliet Mitton
Lector	Clydene Strauss

## **Worship Participants for February 8, 2026**

Presiding Minister	Rev. Gail Wolling
Music Director	Stephen Strauss
Worship Assistant	Brian Keyser
Musician	Deb Dillane
Lector	Grace Hoover

## **CHOIR REHEARSALS**

This Wednesday, February 4th, there will be rehearsal for the Bells at 6:30pm and Choir at 7:15pm. Join us at rehearsals and offer your talents to the Lord through music! Any questions, call or text Steve at 717-265-6854.

## **All are Welcome Bible Study**

The All are Welcome Bible Study meets on Tuesday nights at 6:30pm. We are currently reading Psalms. We send out a weekly email with the Zoom link, as well as a brief summary of what we covered the previous week. To get the link for attending the Zoom session, or just to get on the weekly email list, please contact Matt and Mary Hunt at [allarewelcomebiblestudy@gmail.com](mailto:allarewelcomebiblestudy@gmail.com)

### **Annual Congregational Meeting**

Due to the inclement weather this past weekend, the Annual meeting has been rescheduled for Sunday, February 8th. There will be lunch provided by the Council, and they are asking for you to bring a dessert to share. Hope to see everyone there!

### **Synod Assembly Voting Members Needed**

The thirty-ninth Annual Assembly of the Lower Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, will be held on Friday, June 5, and Saturday, June 6, 2026, in person at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, 839 West Market Street, York, Pennsylvania. We are looking for 2 volunteers from our congregation to represent St. Peter's at Synod Assembly. If you would be interested, please let any member of council, or the church secretaries know if you would be interested.

### **"Souper" Bowl Time! - February 8 & 15**

Share your Super Bowl spirit with our seminarians!!! We will be collecting monetary donations Super Bowl Sunday, February 8 and Sunday, February 15 for the food pantry at the Gettysburg campus of United Lutheran Seminary. Look for the large soup pot with the New England Patriots and the Seattle Seahawks logos to place your donations. Giant Food Store and ALDI Grocery Store gift cards will be purchased for the food pantry at the Gettysburg campus, giving the coordinators the ability to accommodate dietary restrictions and purchase perishable foods for the seminary students.

**Please write "Souper" Bowl Sunday on the memo line on your check payable to St Peter's Lutheran Church and, for cash donations, write "Souper" Bowl Sunday on the envelope with your name (and your envelope # if you want this to be included in your giving statement).**

Again, thank you for your generosity as we reach out beyond our community. Any questions, see Clydene Strauss.

*Come to church and stay for fellowship every Sunday in the Parlor. Enjoy coffee and snacks and friendly conversation! If you would be interested in "Hosting a Sunday" please check the sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board located in the hallway outside the Music Room/Church Office.*