January 25, 2026 ☩
Third Sunday After Epiphany

We welcome you to First Lutheran Church!

"God's Work. Our Hands. To serve ALL people."

An asterisk * invites you to stand in body or in spirit, and you are invited to read aloud responses found in **bold.**

P: Indicates the Presider. AM: Indicates the Assisting Minister.

We Gather

Prelude –

Words of Welcome

***Gathering Hymn** - no. 511 "Thy Strong Word"

***Confession and Forgiveness**

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

Amen.

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

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.**

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

***Kyrie -** page 3, *Now the Feast and Celebration*

***Hymn of Praise** – page 4, *Now the Feast and Celebration*

***Prayer of the Day**

P: Lord God, your lovingkindness always goes before us and follows after us. Summon us into your light, and direct our steps in the ways of goodness that come through the cross of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Scripture Acclamation - "Come and See"

We Listen to God's Word

First Reading: Isaiah 9:1-4

1 There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time [the LORD] brought
into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make
glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.
2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep
darkness— on them light has shined. 3 You have multiplied exultation; you have increased its
joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.
4 For the yoke of their burden and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian. Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 27:4 - 9 - *The psalm will be spoken responsively by whole verse.*

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
4 **One thing I ask of the LORD; one thing I seek;**
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life; to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek God in the temple.
5 For in the day of trouble God will give me shelter,
hide me in the hidden places of the sanctuary, and raise me high upon a rock.
6 **Even now my head is lifted up above my enemies who surround me.**
Therefore I will offer sacrifice in the sanctuary, sacrifices of rejoicing; I will sing and make music to the LORD.
7 Hear my voice, O LORD, when I call;
have mercy on me and answer me.

[8] **My heart speaks your message— "Seek my face."**
Your face, O LORD, I will seek.
[9] Hide not your face from me, turn not away from your servant in anger.
Cast me not away—you have been my helper; forsake me not, O God of my salvation.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:10- 18

[10] Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you
be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you but that you be knit together in the
same mind and the same purpose. [11] For it has been made clear to me by Chloe's people that
there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. [12] What I mean is that each of you says, "I
belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." [13] Has
Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? [14] I
thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, [15] so that no one can say that
you were baptized in my name. [16] I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I
do not know whether I baptized anyone else. [17] For Christ did not send me to baptize but to
proclaim the gospel—and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be
emptied of its power. [18] For 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.

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

***Gospel Acclamation** – page 7, *Now the Feast and Celebration* "Alleluia"

***Gospel:** Matthew 4: 12-23

The Gospel of Matthew, the 4th Chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[12] Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. [13] He left Nazareth
and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, [14] so that
what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: [15] "Land of Zebulun, land
of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles—[16] the people who
sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
light has dawned."
[17] From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

[18] As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and
Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishers. [19] And he said to them,
"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." [20] Immediately they left their nets and
followed him. [21] As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his
brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them.
[22] Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

23 Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

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

Sermon "Like and Follow" Deacon Brenda Handel-Johnson

*__Hymn__ – no. 798 "Will You Come and Follow Me"

*__The Apostles' 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 Intercession__

AM: 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. *After each petition*: Merciful God,
receive our prayer.
AM: 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.**

*__Sign of Peace__ P: The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.** Please offer one another some sign of Christ's peace.

Offering – For electronic giving please scan the QR on announcement page and ***Thank you!***

Offering music - ELW 306 "Come Beloved of the Maker" David and Susan Cherwien
Congregation please join the choir on verse 5

*__Offering Prayer__ AM: 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.**

We Share God's Holy Meal

***Great Thanksgiving and Preface** - *(sung)* page 10, *Now the Feast and Celebration*

***Holy, Holy, Holy** – page 10, *Now the Feast and Celebration*

***Words of Institution**

***The Lord's Prayer**

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

Distribution of Communion - *we will be serving communion continuously.*

Lamb of God – page 13, *Now the Feast and Celebration*
Hymn – A.C.S. *see back page* "Guide My Feet"
Hymn – no. 314 "Arise, Your Light Has Come!"

Prayer After Communion
P: 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. **Amen.**

We Go in Peace

Announcements

***Sending Hymn** – no. 866 "We Are Marching in the Light"

*__Blessing & Dismissal__

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.**

AM: Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy. **Thanks be to God.**

*__Postlude -__

In Worship Today

Pastor: Chris Culuris
Preacher: Deacon Brenda Handel-Johnson
Organist: Michael Asmus
Assisting Minister: Cheryl Kautt
Director of Choirs: Sarah Chambers

Usher: Charlotte Loken, Pat Perhaon,
Communion Preparer: Kristy Larson
Communion Servers: Tom Thorkleson
Acolytes: Loic Bly

Tech: Brett Petersen, Avery Loken
Bread Baker: Lynn Kidder

Prayers: We pray for those on our long-term list: Joan Williams, Betty Gustafson, Paul Aasen, Shirley Storkson, Gretchen Bray, Lenore Schnobrich, Gloria Kane, Harvey Kane, Lisa Handel-Dalvand, Karen Handel, Erika Schuldt, Laurie Dietrich, Bob Lamb, Dorothy and Paul Lutz, Steve Erickson, Barbra Grabowski (Ted Kunze's sister), Garrett Paul, Chaplain Ben Hilding, Mary Ann Scharf, David Ribar, Nate Tuener (family friend of Bob and Rhoda Stenson), Bruce Gray and Sandy Grochow.

FLC Refrigerator Page

Worship, Education and Service:

- **JEREMIAH: PROPHET OF DOOM**–Jeremiah warned his people of disaster to come, if they did not repent. Did anyone listen? This Wednesday at 6:45 in the Pioneer Parlor, Pastor Ted Kunze will continue the study of Jeremiah with an answer to that question! All are welcome. Bring your Bible or use one of ours.
- **Pontius Pilate's Passion**: This Lenten season, join Annalise Rivas for an exploration of the Passion story like you've never seen it before. Wednesday evenings from 6:45-7:30pm in the Pioneer Parlor, February 4- April 8. Three different options available: 1) view the videos on Wednesday nights and discuss 2) preview the full series each week in preparation for Wednesday discussion 3) read the full novel *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov (copies available). Contact Annalise for more information.
- **Next week Sunday, February 1 –** RIC Sunday Pastor Oby Ballinger will be preaching, and Welcome Waffles will be served. See the Acknowledgments page for more info.
- **Summer Service trip** opportunity - All students in grades 8-12 are invited to join the FLC/Trinity group that will be heading to Milwaukee for a service trip in June. See Deacon Brenda for the registration link. The deadline to register is January 30.

Events at FLC and around the area:

- As our Building Mortgage is now paid, **please do not** use your building envelopes anymore. If any are received, they will be deposited into the Capital Improvement Fund.
- **Thank You** to the anonymous couple who donated $600,000 to help us pay off our building mortgage! Your generosity inspired many others and is very appreciated!
- **Annual Meeting – today!** Join us following worship as we'll discuss and vote on our Annual Budget, review reports from our leaders and committees, revisit our strategic plan, and vote for our leaders.
- **LIGHTS FOR EPIPHANY** light bulb drive. The Green committee requests you bring new, energy-efficient light bulbs, in their original packaging, to church for them to deliver to the St. Peter Area Food Shelf for their clients. On Sundays in January, please find baskets marked for light bulb contributions in the Gathering Space. Thank you!
- **Meal Volunteers Needed:** Please consider being a meal server or clean-up crew for our Wednesday meals in January and February. Sign up in the narthex or at bit.ly/flcmeals1-2

Please use the QR code below for electronic giving and thank you!

QR offering code

Acknowledgments

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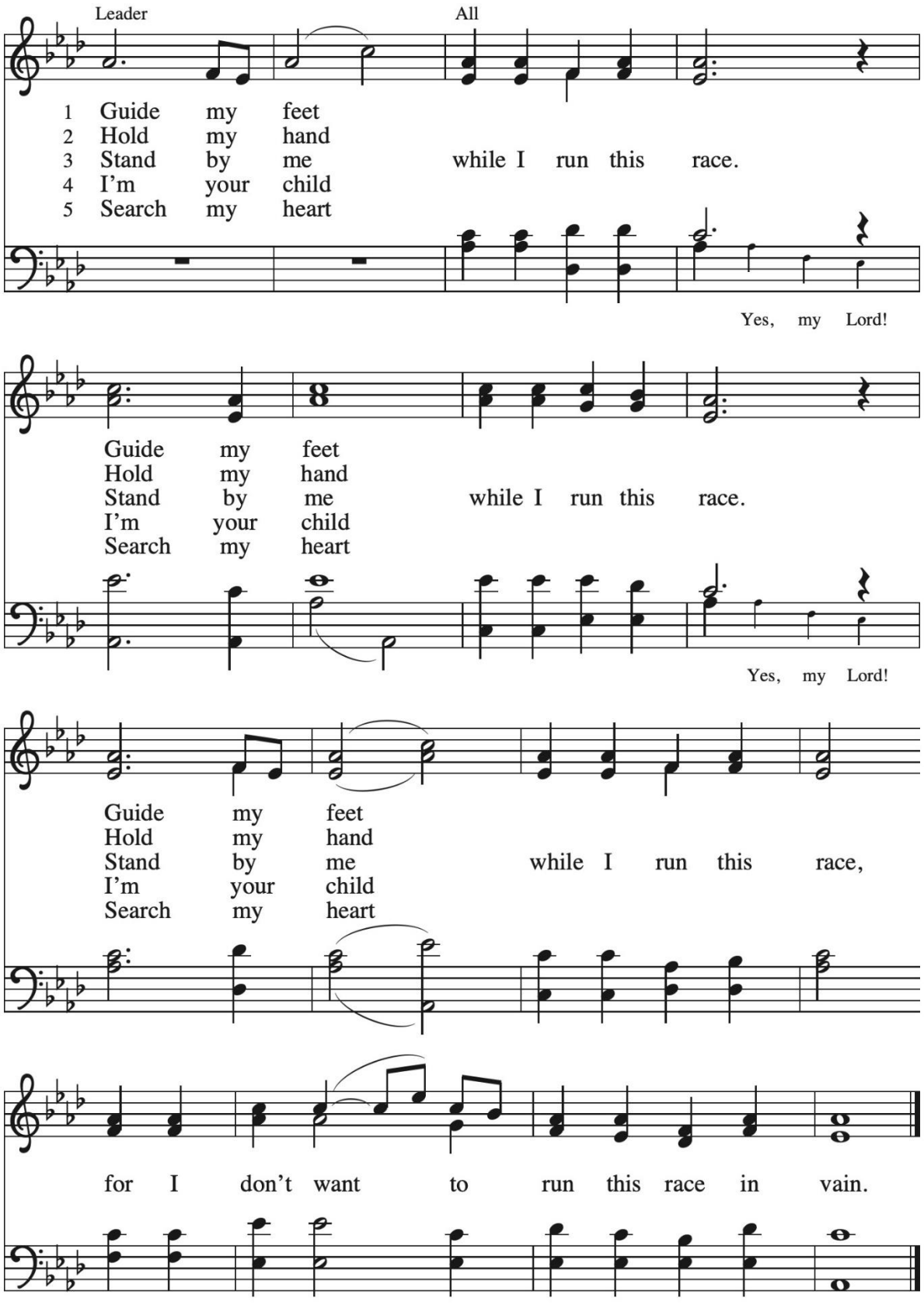
Celebrate our 18th year as a
Reconciling in Christ congregation
Sunday, February 1st
Pastor Oby Ballinger preaching
Welcome Waffles following Worship

Rev. Oby Ballinger grew up on a family farm near Rochester and went to Concordia College in Moorhead, graduated from Yale Divinity School, then served several Twin Cities congregations in the United Church of Christ. Oby organized UCC communities statewide to support marriage equality in 2012 as part of the Minnesotans United for All Families campaign, and has also been an organizer for racial, social, and economic justice. In January 2025, Oby left parish ministry after fifteen years to launch Prism Organizing Network, a statewide community organizing initiative focused on LGBTQ safety, dignity, and liberation. Prism follows a model of multiracial, multifaith organizing and develops leaders working for LGBTQ equality across the state. Through Prism, Oby has led almost twenty LGBTQ listening sessions throughout the state, and in 2026 Prism is starting to organize to address community needs that surfaced from those conversations. Oby lives in Saint Paul with his husband Javen Swanson, their cat Amos, and their dog Ruthie.

Guide My Feet