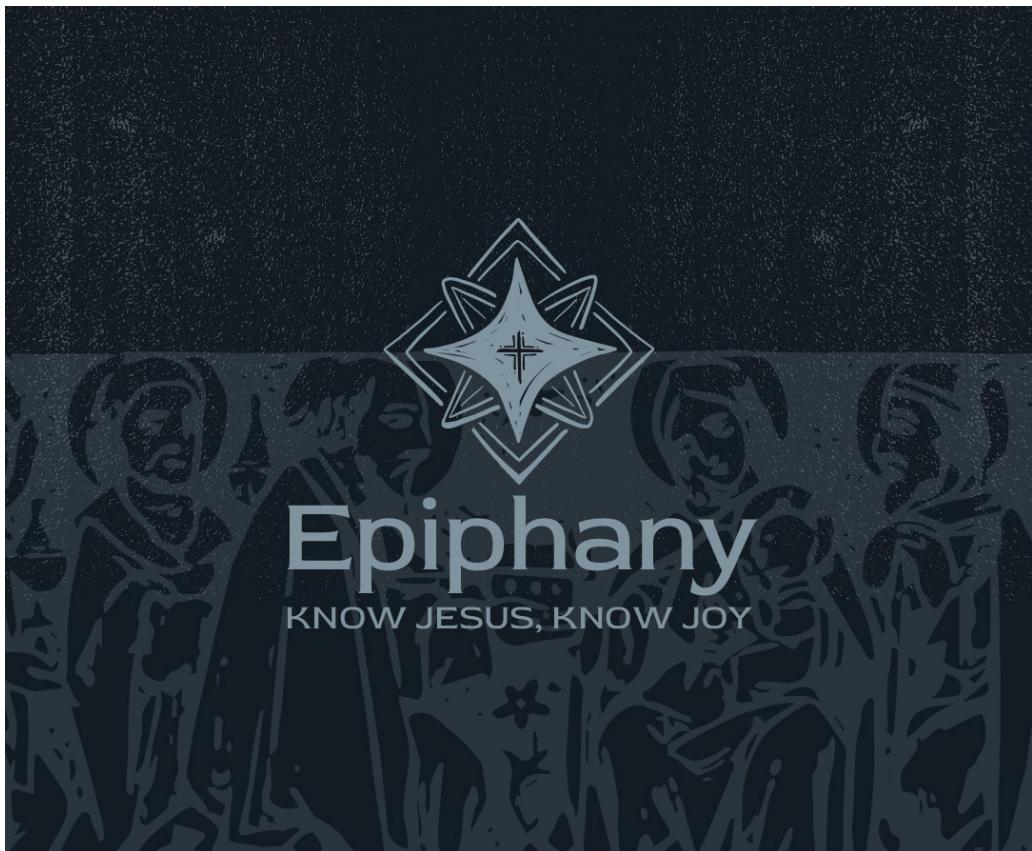


January 4, 2026



**The Most Valuable Wrapping Paper**

**LIVING HOPE**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

welcome to  
**WORSHIP**

We're so glad you decided to worship with us today. You could have chosen to be anywhere this morning, and you chose to spend your time with Living Hope. Thank you! It's an honor to have you here and to have the chance to fill you with hope. Welcome to Living Hope.

**CURRENT SERIES INFO**

**Current Series: Know Jesus, Know Joy**

Epiphany is the season of revelation—when God pulls back the curtain and shows us who Jesus truly is. From the worship of the Magi to the waters of baptism and the first signs of glory, Jesus is made known not just as a teacher, but as the Savior of the world. This series invites us to move beyond familiarity to true knowing. As we encounter Jesus in Scripture, worship, and daily life, we discover a joy that is deeper than happiness and stronger than circumstances. When Christ is revealed, joy is renewed. Because to know Jesus is to know joy.

**Today's Focus: The Most Valuable Wrapping Paper**

Wrapping paper is usually tossed aside after the gifts are opened at Christmas. But today we find out that the wrapping paper God wraps us up with is the most valuable thing ever: the precious blood of Christ. Jesus wraps us with his garment of salvation and his robe of righteousness. The wrapping paper looks for more valuable than the object it's wrapped around: us. But the reason God wraps us in Jesus' perfect garments is because he treats us as his treasure; a shining crown in the palm of his hand.



**LIVING HOPE**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

## ABOUT LIVING HOPE

Living Hope Lutheran Church is a brand new mission church on Chattanooga's east side. We are funded by and a member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, a collection of over 1,300 churches across the United States and Canada.

**Living Hope succeeds in its mission when hope forever in Jesus brings hope for every day in life.**

For more on our mission, background, and beliefs just visit our website: [livinghopechatt.com](http://livinghopechatt.com)

## ABOUT WORSHIP

Worship at Living Hope is designed to fill you with hope! The message you hear at Living Hope will center you on your Savior, Jesus, and what he's done for you. Worship isn't just about filling up God with praise. Worship is all about *God filling you* with good news!

We follow a basic order of service, called the liturgy. In the message, in specially selected Scripture readings, and in carefully crafted songs, prayers, and creeds, the liturgy proclaims the good news (gospel) about Jesus from start to finish. Gospel-centered worship is also designed to include participation of those in attendance.

- Feel free to get up to use restrooms **at any time** during the service.
- **Restrooms** are located around the corner to your right.
- A **nursery** is available for small children out the left-hand side of the worship space. Just look for the **Kid's Zone sign** just past the info corner by the main entrance. Feel free to use that space during worship. The service will be livestreamed into the room.
- **Kid activity bags** are available on a table by the entrance to the sanctuary.
- Please fill out a **connection card**. It's our best way to stay in touch with you and thank you for joining us today! You'll find connection cards on the table at the entrance.
- Everything you need to enjoy today's worship will be found in this Worship Folder. **Songs** will also be found on the screen.

*Show friends where you are—check in!*



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# Of the Father's Love Begotten

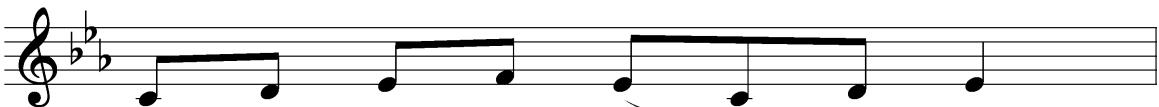
CW 358



1 Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten ere the worlds be -  
2 Oh, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed when the vir - gin,  
3 This is he whom seers and sa - ges sang of old with  
4 Let the heights of heav'n a - dore him, an - gel hosts his  
5 Christ, to thee, with God the Fa - ther, and, O Ho - ly



gan to be, he is Al - pha and O - me - ga,  
full of grace, by the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing,  
one ac - cord, whom the voic - es of the proph - ets  
prais - es sing, pow'r's, do - min - ions bow be - fore him  
Ghost, to thee hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing



he the source, the end - ing he,  
bore the Sav - ior of our race,  
prom - ised in their ful word.  
and ex - tol our King.  
and un - end - ing God be,



of the things that are, that have been,  
and the babe, the world's Re - deem er,  
Now he shines, the long - ex - pect ed;  
Let no tongue on earth be si lent,  
hon - or, glo - ry, and do - min ion



and that fu - ture years shall see  
first re - vealed his sa - cred face  
let cre - a - tion praise its Lord  
ev - 'ry voice in con - cert ring  
and e - ter - nal vic - to - ry

ev - er - more and ev - er - more.  
ev - er - more and ev - er - more.  
ev - er - more and ev - er - more.  
ev - er - more and ev - er - more.  
ev - er - more and ev - er - more.

Text: Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348–c. 413, abr.; (sts. 1–4): tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866, alt.; (st. 5): tr. Henry W. Baker, 1821–1877, alt.

Tune: plainsong, 13th cent.

Text and tune: Public domain

The name of the Triune God and sign of the cross remind worshipers of their baptisms.

## Christmas Gathering Rite

Come, let us praise the Father who sent his Son to be our Savior. Come, let us praise the Spirit who gives us hope and faith in the Son's love for us. Come, let us welcome the Son of God, who draws near to us as the Son of Mary.

The grace of our Lord (+) Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**And also with you.**

In every worship service we confess our sins then cling to the forgiveness that Jesus gives us. Confession is called the "heartbeat of the Christian."

## Confession & Absolution

Dear friends, we are waiting and watching for the day when Christ will come again in glory.

**My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning. *Psalm 130:6***

He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness.

**He will expose the motives of the heart.**

*1 Corinthians 4:5*

The hour has come for us to wake up from our slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

**The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.**

*Romans 13:11*

Let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light by turning to our God for mercy and pardon.

**Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful**

**and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions.**

**I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good.**

**For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity.**

**But I am truly sorry for my sins,**

**and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray:**

**Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

What God promised long ago through his prophets he has fulfilled in his Son, Jesus Christ. Christ came in human flesh: Immanuel, God with us. By his perfect life, he fulfilled God's law. By his innocent death, he paid sin's penalty. By rising from the grave, he opened heaven's door. Christ now comes to you through his words of light and life: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

*Revelation 22:10*

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

## God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

CW 356 sts. 1, Ref. 4



1 God rest you mer - ry, gen - tle - men, let noth - ing you dis - may;  
4 Now to the Lord sing prais - es, all you with - in this place,



re - mem - ber Christ, our Sav - ior, was born on Christ - mas Day  
and in true love and fel - low - ship each oth - er now em - brace;



to save us all from Sa - tan's pow'r when we were gone a - stray.  
this ho - ly tide of Christ - mas is filled with heav'n - ly grace.

*Refrain*



O ti - dings of com - fort and joy, com - fort and joy,



O ti - dings of com - fort and joy.

Text: English, 18th cent.

Tune: English Text and tune: Public domain

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you have filled us with the new light of the Word who became flesh and lived among us. Let the light of our faith shine in all we do; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## GOD'S WORD

### Epistle Reading

Ephesians 1:3–18

<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. <sup>4</sup>For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup>he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace <sup>8</sup>that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, <sup>9</sup>he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, <sup>10</sup>to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

<sup>11</sup>In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, <sup>12</sup>in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup>And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup>who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

<sup>15</sup>For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, <sup>16</sup>I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup>I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. <sup>18</sup>I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

The Gospel centers our worship as it shares with us the good news about Christ. We stand out of respect for our Savior as we hear about his words and deeds

*Please Stand*

## **Gospel**

*John 1:14-18*

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup>(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ ”) <sup>16</sup>Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

The gospel of the Lord

**Praise be to Christ!**

*Please be seated*

## **Children's Message**

*Children are invited to come forward into the front for the children's message. They will be given a special message designed just for them that ties in with the sermon.*

## Word of God, Come Down on Earth

CW 537



1 Word of God, come down on earth, liv - ing rain from  
2 Word e - ter - nal, throned on high, Word that brought to  
3 Word that caused blind eyes to see, speak and heal our  
4 Word that speaks your Fa - ther's love, one with him be -



heav'n de - scand - ing; touch our hearts and bring to birth  
life cre - a - tion, Word that came from heav'n to die,  
mor - tal blind - ness; deaf we are: our heal - er be;  
yond all tell - ing, Word that sends us from a - bove,



faith and hope and love un - end - ing. Word al - might - y,  
cru - ci - fied for our sal - va - tion, sav - ing Word, the  
loose our tongues to tell your kind - ness. Be our Word in  
God the Spir - it, with us dwell - ing, Word of truth, to



we re - vere you; Word made flesh, we long to hear you.  
world re - stor - ing, speak to us, your love out - pour - ing.  
pit - y spo - ken, heal the world, by sin now bro - ken.  
all truth lead us; Word of life, with one bread feed us.

Text: James Quinn, SJ, 1919-2010

Tune: Johann R. Ahle, 1625-1673, alt.

Text: © 1969 James Quinn, SJ, admin. OCP Publications. Used by permission: OneLicense no. 730027

Tune: Public domain

## Sermon Reading

Isaiah 61:10—62:3

<sup>10</sup> I will rejoice greatly in the Lord.

My soul will celebrate because of my God,  
for he has clothed me in garments of salvation.

With a robe of righteousness he covered me,  
like a bridegroom who wears a beautiful headdress like a priest,  
and like a bride who adorns herself with her jewelry.

<sup>11</sup> For as the earth produces its growth,

and as a garden causes what has been sown to sprout up,  
so God the Lord will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up  
in the presence of all the nations.

<sup>62:1</sup> For the sake of Zion I will not be silent.

For the sake of Jerusalem I will not be quiet,  
until her righteousness goes forth shining brightly,  
and her salvation burns like a torch.

<sup>2</sup> Nations will see your righteousness,  
and all kings will see your glory.

You will be called by a new name  
that the mouth of the Lord will assign to you.

<sup>3</sup> Then you will be a beautiful crown in the Lord's hand,  
and a royal diadem in the palm of your God.

EHV

## The Most Valuable Wrapping Paper

**Questions to consider while hearing the sermon:**

1. What common diagnosis do we all share?
2. Where might we turn to try and find solutions for our brokenness?

3. What does Jesus orchestrate for us in the opening verses of Isaiah 61?
4. What is the priceless “wrapping paper” Jesus covers us with?
5. What did Adam and Eve try to do after the Fall? How did God cover them?
6. God treats you as his \_\_\_\_\_!
7. God takes us from the junkyard and restores us. What does he make us?
8. What is the ultimate fulfillment of the prophecy of Israel’s righteousness and salvation burning like a torch?
9. In what way do we also reflect the radiance of God’s salvation to the world?
10. What is God’s new name for you?
11. What does Jesus make us to be in God’s eyes?

**My sermon notes:**

*Please Stand*

## On My Heart Imprint Your Image

CW1993 #320

On my heart im - print your im - age, Bless - ed Je - sus,  
King of grace, That life's rich - es, cares, and plea - sures Have no  
pow'r to hide your face. This the su - per - scrip - tion be:  
Je - sus, cru - ci - fied for me, Is my life, my hope's foun -  
da - tion, And my glo - ry and sal - va - tion.

Text: Thomas H. Kingo, 1634–1703, abr.; tr. Peer O. Strömm, 1856–1921, alt.

Tune: FREU DICH SEHR (87 87 77 88) *Trente quatre Pseaumes de David*, Geneva, 1551, alt.

Christians have used the Apostles' Creed since the second century to unite themselves together and to obey God's invitation to "confess with our mouth and believe with our hearts" (Romans 10:9).

## **Apostles' Creed**

Living in a world where people believe that the universe was formed through chance and accident, what do you believe?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

Living in a world where people are confronted with the guilt and punishment of sin, what do you believe Jesus did for you?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Living in a world where people are without hope and certainty, what do you believe?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.**

**Amen.**

*Please be seated*

## **Offering**

*We collect offerings out of thanks for what God has done for us so that we can support gospel work here and around the world. You can give using the envelope provided in your worship folder. You'll also find instructions there for how to give online if you'd prefer. Thank you for supporting our gospel ministry! If you are a guest with us don't feel obligated to contribute. This service is our free gift to you!*

Praying the prayer of the church is a time when we can pray for people in all kinds of circumstances and for the work of God's church on earth.

## **Prayer of the Church**

Eternal Lord, you speak to us in words of love and light and power. Fill us with peace today as we ponder the good news that you forgive our sins in Christ. Guide our lives today as we see clearly the path you have laid out for us. Work in us today through your Spirit that our thoughts, words, and actions glorify you and serve our neighbor.

**Fill us with the Word we have heard today and move us to believe and live it.**

Forgive us for the times we hear your Word but fail to live it in our lives. Break down the apathy that lurks in us and leads us to ignore eternal realities. Convict us with your law and then fill us so full of your gospel that we overflow with zeal to do your will.

**Give us thankful hearts to live and love with joy.**

Give us passion to share the story of your love with our family and friends. Overcome unbelief and open the hearts of people everywhere to believe the good news that Jesus has forgiven their sins and opened the gates of heaven.

**Fill us with joy over every sinner who repents and comes to trust in your grace.**

Extend your healing power to those who are sick and suffering in body or mind. Fill eager minds with wisdom to discover new ways to treat disease and illness. Give patience and compassion to those who care for the sick and dying.

**Lift the eyes of the dying to your love in Christ.**

Eternal Lord, you guide the world with your mighty power and love all people because your Son lived and died and rose again. Hear our prayers and answer them in your wisdom and grace.

**In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

When Jesus' disciples asked him how to pray he gave them the words of this prayer. (Matt. 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4) Since Jesus advises we pray this way, we say "The Lord's Prayer" every Sunday.

## 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.  
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

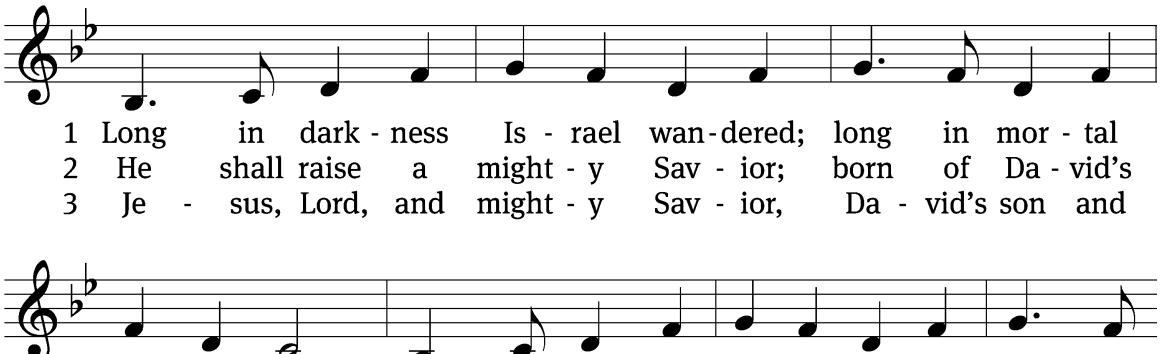
The historical "blessing of Aaron" (Numbers 6:24-26) has been spoken over God's people for over 3,500 years.

## Blessing

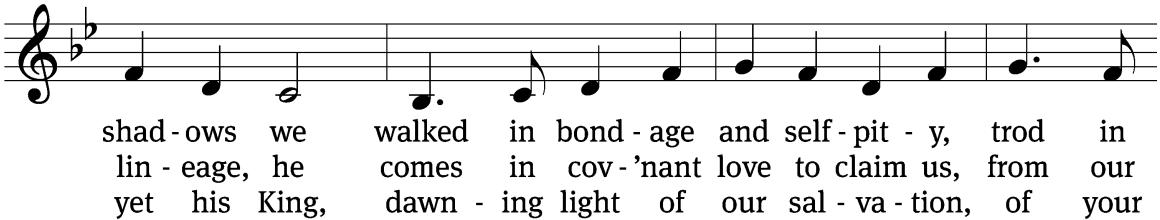
The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.  
**Amen.**

## Dawning Light of Our Salvation

CW 311



1 Long in dark - ness Is - rael wan - dered; long in mor - tal  
2 He shall raise a might - y Sav - ior; born of Da - vid's  
3 Je - sus, Lord, and might - y Sav - ior, Da - vid's son and



shad - ows we walked in bond - age and self - pit - y, trod in  
lin - eage, he comes in cov - 'nant love to claim us, from our  
yet his King, dawn - ing light of our sal - va - tion, of your



paths of sin and grief. In the proph - ets' words he told us,  
sins to set us free. Light to those who dwell in dark-ness,  
sav - ing pow'r we sing! Stand, O lame, and dance, ye bro - ken;



long the God of Is - rael spoke; he a - lone in strength would  
life to those from death who flee, joy un - to the earth, and  
know the Sav - ior's heal - ing grace. Come, O deaf, and hear him



save us from the hands of all our foes.  
glad - ness, to your path - ways dawn-ing peace!  
sing - ing; turn, O blind, be - hold his face!

*Refrain*



Ev - 'ry val - ley be ex-alt - ed! Ev - 'ry moun - tain



be made plane! Crook - ed ways re - pent and straight - en;



all cre-a - tion bend in praise!

Text: Wendell Kimbrough, b. 1983

Tune: Bruce Benedict, b. 1980

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Tune: © 2012 Cardiphonia. Used by permission: OneLicense no. 730027

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Upcoming Services

New sermon series: Know Jesus, Know Joy

Epiphany is the season of revelation—when God pulls back the curtain and shows us who Jesus truly is. From the worship of the Magi to the waters of baptism and the first signs of glory, Jesus is made known not just as a teacher, but as the Savior of the world. This series invites us to move beyond familiarity to true knowing. As we encounter Jesus in Scripture, worship, and daily life, we discover a joy that is deeper than happiness and stronger than circumstances. When Christ is revealed, joy is renewed. Because to know Jesus is to know joy.

### Thank you to today's musicians and vocalists!

Mark Hennings; piano



### Sunday School and Bible Study—After worship at 11:30

Sunday School for children and Sunday Study will take place after worship today. The adults are doing a study on the book of Judges called Broken Saviors as we take a deep dive into a very rich and messy book of the Bible full of applications for us today.

Children will meet with their appropriate age groups and are taught by a team of teachers with full background checks.

## Living Hope Small Groups

Find more information on the small groups bulletin board in the lobby about available groups to get involved with.

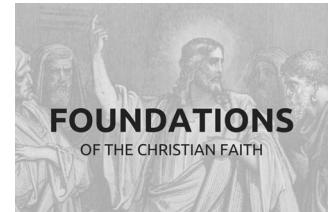
- Theology on Tap and Women's Group — (ON BREAK)
- Men's Group—Mondays every other week at 7am. (next meeting Mon. Jan 5)
- Hands of Hope—every other Thursday at 10am. (next meeting on Thurs Jan 15)

## Foundations Bible Study

If you're interested in membership here at Living Hope, Foundations is our "next step" class, but even if you're not interested in membership, you'll find it to be a good overview of what God has to say to you in his Word. If you're interested in attending the course just check the box on your connection envelope that says "I'd like to attend a membership class" in order to jump into a new group class or individual class. There are both in-person or online classes available!

In person classes are available on Saturdays at 11:00am at church.

Online classes are available on Thursdays at 7:30pm. Message pastor for a class link.



## Connection Envelopes

We'd love to get your valuable feedback on our worship service today. If this is your first time at Living Hope we also want the opportunity to give you a gift to say "thanks for being our guest!" You can place your connection envelopes in the offering plate as it passes or in the basket located at the entrance of the sanctuary. Also feel free to just hand it to pastor.

## Members' Minute

### Birthday Blessings:

Drew Knutson 1/8

Noah Gaulke 1/8

Jeremy Falls 1/10

**Service Teams — This week**

Sunday Setup Team—Frizzell, Turman  
Snack Provider—Bassett, Dyer  
Ushers—Lundquist, Rice  
Acolyte—Ben Schulz

**Service Teams — Next week Jan 11**

Sunday Setup Team—Smith  
Snack Provider—Hynson, Turner  
Ushers—Ludwig, Schulz  
Acolyte—Ember Turner



Pastor Eric Melso

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