

**December 31, 2023**  
**First Sunday of Christmas**  
**Lord of Life Lutheran Church**  
**Happy New Year!**



How does a  
weary world  
rejoice? We root ourselves  
in ritual

**WELCOME**  
**MUSICAL OFFERING**

Suzanne Bowen

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Every year we celebrate Christmas.

**Every week we break bread.**

Every week we gather for worship.

**Every day we count our blessings.**

Every minute God is near.

**Yes, every minute God is near.**

These are the rituals of our faith.

**Let us worship Holy God.**

### **CALL TO CONFESSION**

Church family, our faith is decorated with rituals and rhythms that help tie us to God. Confession is one of those rituals. Every week we gather in this space and tell the truth about our lives. And every week God hears our prayers and offers us grace. This holy dance of confession and mercy is one of the many rituals I could not live without. So let us embrace this holy tradition together. Let us pray:

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**God of rhythms, we confess:**

**our faith would not be what it is without rituals.**

**Unlike you, we depend on bread and water.**

**We have to return to this space again and again  
to hear old, familiar stories.**

**For if we stopped,**

**we know it would not take long before we lost our way.**

**Forgive us for our fragility, and thank you for giving us  
ordinary rituals and rhythms to hold onto.**

**With grateful and humble hearts we pray,  
amen.**

### **WORDS OF FORGIVENESS**

Friends, it is not enough to hear once a month or once a year that you are forgiven. We need to hear it every single week. Every single week we need to be reminded that we are held in God's loving embrace. So hear this good news: no matter where you are on your journey of life, love, or faith, and no matter what you have done or left undone, you belong to God. You are claimed. You are known. You are forgiven. This is the good news of the gospel! Thanks be to God! Amen!

**HYMN**

*Love Has Come*

#292

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Gracious God, When our world turns upside down or when the road ahead is unclear, we return to ritual. We come to the sanctuary. We break bread at table. We pour water. We greet one another as family. And we listen to your Word. Today we pray—meet us in this moment. Meet us in these rituals that anchor us and speak a word of hope. We are listening. We are drawing near. We are seeking you.  
Amen.

## CHILDREN’S SERMON

### THE HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 2:21-38

<sup>21</sup> After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

<sup>22</sup> When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the law of the Lord, ‘Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord’), <sup>24</sup> and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, ‘a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.’ <sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; <sup>[a]</sup> this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. <sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. <sup>[b]</sup> <sup>27</sup> Guided by the Spirit, Simeon <sup>[c]</sup> came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, <sup>28</sup> Simeon <sup>[d]</sup> took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

<sup>29</sup> ‘Master, now you are dismissing your servant <sup>[e]</sup> in peace,  
according to your word;

<sup>30</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation,

<sup>31</sup> which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

<sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
and for glory to your people Israel.’

<sup>33</sup> And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. <sup>34</sup> Then Simeon <sup>[f]</sup> blessed them and said to his mother Mary, ‘This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed <sup>35</sup> so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.’ <sup>36</sup> There was also a prophet, Anna <sup>[g]</sup> the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, <sup>37</sup> then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup> At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child <sup>[h]</sup> to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

## MESSAGE

### HYMN OF THE DAY

*In the Singing*

#466

### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe that faith is a journey  
marked by rituals and rhythms.

We come to worship.

We confess our sins.

We pass the peace.

We offer grace.

We hear the Word.

We baptize children.

We break the bread.

And we tell the story  
of a loving God.  
And through these sacred rituals,  
we are reminded:  
we are not alone.  
God is near,  
and we have work to do.  
May this belief  
shape the rhythm of our lives.  
Amen.

## THE PRAYERS

## SHARING OF THE PEACE

SONG DURING OFFERING      *As the Grains of Wheat*      #465

OFFERTORY      *Lamb of God*      #195

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also 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.**

## EUCHARISTIC PRAYER AND 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.**

## DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

## COMMUNION BLESSING

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## BENEDICTION

SENDING HYMN      *Joy to the World*      #267

## SENDING

Liturgy and Prayers are adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](https://sanctifiedart.org).

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