

**REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**Serving Absecon - Galloway Township**  
**Rev. Heidi Link – Pastor**  
**Brian Conover - Music Director**

**Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026**  
**THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY / 8:30 & 10:00 AM**

**\* 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.**

**\* OPENING SONG**

**I Can Hear My Savior Calling**  
*Where He Leads Me*



1 I can hear my Sav - ior call-ing, I can hear my Sav - ior call-ing,  
2 I'll go with him through the gar-den, I'll go with him through the gar-den,  
3 I'll go with him through the judg-ment, I'll go with him through the judg-ment,  
4 He will give me grace and glo-ry, he will give me grace and glo-ry,



I can hear my Sav - ior call-ing, "Take thy cross and fol-low, fol-low me."  
I'll go with him through the gar-den, I'll go with him, with him all the way.  
I'll go with him through the judg-ment, I'll go with him, with him all the way.  
he will give me grace and glo-ry, and go with me, with me all the way.

*...song continues...*

*\* - Congregation Stands (If for any reason you are unable to stand during the service, please remain seated.)*

*Refrain*

Where he leads me I will fol-low, where he leads me I will fol-low,  
 where he leads me I will fol-low, I'll go with him, with him all the way.

Text: E. W. Blandy  
 Music: NORRIS, John S. Norris, 1844–1907

### \* GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.**

Let us pray: 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**

### FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:1-4

- 1 But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he 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.

### RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 27:1, 4-9

- <sup>1</sup> 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?
- <sup>4</sup> **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.**
- <sup>5</sup> 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.**

## **MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE OFFERING**

**Refrain:** Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! (Repeat)

**Oh, how right it is to give thanks to Him, our creator and our king;**

**We sing out our praise to the holy one; We rejoice, we rejoice in our God! (Repeat  
Refrain)**

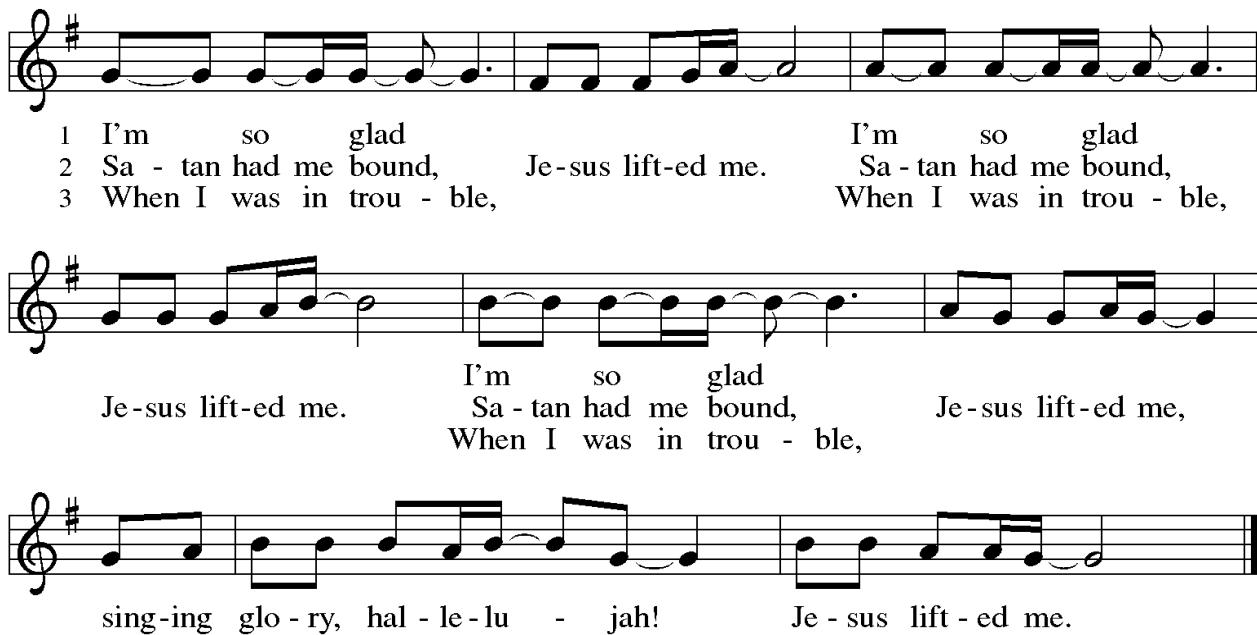
## **SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18**

**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.

## \* SONG OF PRAISE

### I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me



1 I'm so glad I'm so glad  
2 Sa - tan had me bound, Je-sus lift-ed me. Sa - tan had me bound,  
3 When I was in trou - ble, When I was in trou - ble, Je-sus lift-ed me.  
I'm so glad Sa - tan had me bound, Je-sus lift-ed me,  
When I was in trou - ble, Je-sus lift-ed me,  
sing-ing glo - ry, hal - le - lu - jah! Je - sus lift - ed me.

Text: African American spiritual

Music: JESUS LIFTED ME, African American spiritual

## \* THE WORD OF GOD: Matthew 4:12-23

A reading from the Gospel of St. Matthew:

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.

Word of God, Word of Life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## SERMON

### CONGREGATIONAL SONG

### I Love to Tell the Story



1 I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove,  
2 I love to tell the sto - ry: how pleas - ant to re - peat  
3 I love to tell the sto - ry, for those who know it best



of Je - sus and his glo - ry, of Je - sus and his love.  
what seems, each time I tell it, more won - der - ful - ly sweet!  
seem hun - ger - ing and thirst - ing to hear it like the rest.



I love to tell the sto - ry, be - cause I know it's true;  
I love to tell the sto - ry, for some have nev - er heard  
And when, in scenes of glo - ry, I sing the new, new song,



it sat - is - fies my long - ings as noth - ing else would do.  
the mes - sage of sal - va - tion from God's own ho - ly word.  
I'll sing the old, old sto - ry that I have loved so long.

*Refrain*



I love to tell the sto - ry; 'twill be my theme in glo - ry



to tell the old, old sto - ry of Je - sus and his love.

Text: Katherine Hankey, 1834–1911

Music: HANKEY, William E. Fischer, 1849–1936

## \* APOSTLE'S CREED

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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

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.*

Holy One, you entrust the message of the cross and the mission of the gospel to the church in every land. Guide the newly baptized and deepen the faith of all who follow Christ. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Holy Creator, you lavish creation with splendor, and we praise you for the gift of life. Teach us to live as wise stewards, sharing the earth's resources with all inhabitants of this garden planet. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Holy Judge, your power is love, and you judge the nations by the measure of Christ. Free any who are unjustly accused or wrongly condemned. We pray for those in authority (*local and national officials may be named*). Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Holy Lover, you care for vulnerable young children, frail elders, and any who are sick (*especially*). We pray for all who are affected by natural disasters (*individuals or situations may be named*). Provide for their needs and relieve their suffering. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Holy Giver, you gather, forgive, and shape us as disciples of Christ. Nurture in us a spirit of patience and respect, that we may love one another as you love us. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Holy Savior, you free us from the power of death. Lead and guide us until we come at last into the communion of all your saints in light. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

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

The Peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

## OFFERING / SPECIAL MUSIC

### \* OFFERING SONG

#### As with Gladness Men of Old



1 As with glad - ness men of old did the guid-ing star be - hold;  
2 As with joy - ful steps they sped, Sav - ior, to thy low - ly bed,  
3 As they of - fered gifts most rare at thy cra - dle, rude and bare,



as with joy they hailed its light, lead - ing on - ward, beam-ing bright;  
there to bend the knee be - fore thee, whom heav'n and earth a - dore;  
so may we with ho - ly joy, pure and free from sin's al - loy,



so, most gra-cious Lord, may we ev - er - more be led by thee.  
so may we with will - ing feet ev - er seek thy mer - cy seat.  
all our cost-liest trea - sures bring, Christ, to thee, our heav'n-ly king.

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898, alt.  
Music: DIX, Conrad Kocher, 1786-1872

### \* OFFERING PRAYER

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.**

### \* THE 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 him thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right and salutary...*(Here the minister continues with the preface appropriate to the day or season, concluding:)* we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might:  
 Heav'n 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.

#### \* WORDS OF INSTITUTION

With Thanksgiving, we remember that in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the disciples saying: "Take and eat; this is my body given for you. Do this in 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 in remembrance of me."

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim:

**Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. Amen.**

#### \* THE 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

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

**We come.**

#### DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*(BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS who believe that the risen Christ is present in the Eucharist to forgive sin and renew life are invited to either come to the altar area for communion as directed or share at your pew. If you come forward, you will receive the elements. If you choose to receive at your seat, please remain there, kneel as you are able, and receive the elements using the communion packets available from the ushers. If there are other special needs, please speak to an usher.)*

## \* POST COMMUNION BLESSING

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

## \* POST COMMUNION SONG



Lord, now you let your servant go in peace; your word has been ful -  
filled. My own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which you have pre -  
pared in the sight of ev - 'ry people: A light to re - veal you to the  
na - tions and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.  
Glo - ry to the Fa - ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Spir - it,  
as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now,  
and will be for - ev - er. A - men

## \* PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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. **Amen.**

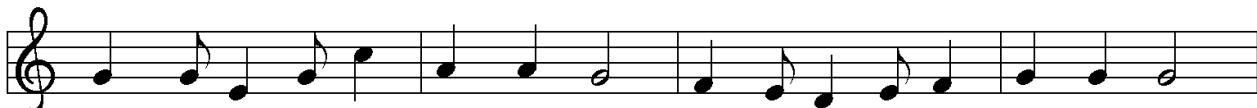
## \* BLESSING

And now a blessing: 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.**

## \* CELEBRATIONS!!!

### \* CLOSING SONG

#### Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ



1 Let us tal - ents and tongues em - ploy, reach-ing out with a shout of joy:  
2 Christ is a - ble to make us one, at the ta - ble he sets the tone,  
3 Je - sus calls us in, sends us out bear-ing fruit in a world of doubt,



bread is bro-ken, the wine is poured, Christ is spo - ken and seen and heard.  
teach-ing peo - ple to live to bless, love in word and in deed ex - press.  
gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Im-man - u - el) ev - 'ry - where!



Je - sus lives a-gain, earth can breathe a-gain, pass the Word a-round: loaves a - bound!

Text: Fred Kaan, b. 1929

Music: LINSTEAD, Jamaican folk tune; adapt. Doreen Potter, 1925–1980

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## \* SENDING

Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy.

**Thanks be to God.**

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