

# CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

400 Barclay Avenue Forest Hills, PA 15221  
412-271-7173 [www.christlutheranfh.org](http://www.christlutheranfh.org)  
Facebook: ChristLutheranChurchFH

The Reverend Ronald Breight	Pastor
Douglas Skalka	Organist
John Crawford	Worship Assistant
Annette Bowen	Lector
Julia Stoner	Acolyte

Missionaries: The Rev. Vincent Mroz, The Rev. Dr. Jonathan and Deaconess Cheryl Naumann

Sunday bulletins, news, puzzles, and sermons are available on our website listed above. Services are live-streamed on our Facebook page.

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## The Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 21, 2025

### ORDER OF SERVICE

**Prayer on entering church:** Lord, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells. In the multitude of Your tender mercies prepare my heart that I may enter Your house to worship and confess Your holy name; through Jesus Christ, my God and Lord. Amen.

### PRELUDE

Prelude on "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

Dick Sanderman

### RINGING OF THE BELLS/ WELCOME

## OPENING HYMN (*please rise and sing*)

### Lift Up Your Heads

Hymnal p. 341

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates! Behold the King of glory waits.  
The King of kings is drawing near; The Savior of the world is here.  
Life and salvation He doth bring; Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.  
To God the Father raise your joyful songs of praise.

A righteous Helper comes to Thee; His chariot is humility,  
His kingly crown is holiness, His scepter, pity in distress,  
The end of all our woes He brings: Therefore the earth is glad and sings.  
To Christ the Savior raise your grateful hymns of praise.

How blest the land, the city blest, Where Christ the Ruler is confessed!  
O peaceful hearts and happy homes To whom this King in triumph comes!  
The cloudless Sun of joy is He Who comes to set His people free.  
To God the Spirit raise Your happy shouts of praise.

Fling wide the portals of your heart; Make it a temple set apart  
From earthly use for heav'n's employ, Adorned with prayer and love and joy.  
So shall your Sov'reign enter in And new and nobler life begin.  
To God alone be praise For word and deed and grace!

Redeemer, come and open wide My heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide!  
O enter with Thy grace divine; Thy face of mercy on me shine.  
Thy Holy Spirit guide us on Until our glorious goal is won.  
Eternal praise and fame We offer to Thy name.

## CONGREGATION GREETING

## INVOCATION

*The sign of the cross (†) may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.*

P: In the name of the Father and of the (†) Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
C: Amen.

## CONFESSIO<sup>N</sup><sup>1</sup>

P: Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C: **who made heaven and earth.**

P: If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

C: **But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.**

P: Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

*(We take a moment of silence before the Lord as we call to mind how we have not properly loved Him, ourselves, or other people.)*

C: **Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.**

P: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

## KYRIE

Hymnal p. 204

P: Heavenly Father, as we prepare for the arrival of Your Son, enlighten and empower us by Your Word and Spirit that we would remain steadfast in the hope of everlasting life, be strengthened in the peace we have with You through Christ Jesus, overflow with joy because of the abundance of Your mercies, and live in the way of love towards all people.

C: *(sung)* **Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

To God on high be glory And peace to all the earth;  
 Goodwill from God in heaven Proclaimed at Jesus' birth!  
 We praise and bless You, Father; Your holy name, we sing  
 Our thanks for Your great glory, Lord God, our heav'nly King.

To You, O sole begotten, The Father's Son, we pray;  
 O Lamb of God, our Savior, You take our sins away.  
 Have mercy on us, Jesus; Receive our heartfelt cry,  
 Where You in pow'r are seated At God's right hand on high –  
 For You alone are holy; You only are the Lord.  
 Forever and forever, Be worshiped and adored;  
 You with the Holy Spirit Alone are Lord Most High,  
 In God the Father's glory. "Amen!" our glad reply.

## COLLECT

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us pray.

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

## FIRST READING

Isaiah 7:10–17

L: The first reading for the Fourth Sunday in Advent is from chapter seven of Isaiah.

*The birth of Immanuel is prophesied.*

*Following the reading...*

L: This is the Word of our Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

# PSALMODY

## Psalm 24

L: Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.

C: **Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.**

L: The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,  
the world and those who dwell therein,  
for He has founded it upon the seas  
and established it upon the rivers.

C: **Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.**

L: Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?  
And who shall stand in His holy place?  
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not lift up his soul to what is false  
and does not swear deceitfully.  
He will receive blessing from the Lord  
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.  
Such is the generation of those who seek Him,  
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

C: **Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.**

L: Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.  
Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle!  
Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory!

C: **Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.**

**A: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

## SECOND READING

Romans 1:1–7

**L:** The second reading is from chapter one of Romans.

*Paul greets the saints in Rome with words of blessing.*

*Following the reading...*

**L:** This is the Word of our Lord.

**C:** **Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (*please rise and sing*)

Hymnal p. 205

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**These things are written that you may believe  
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

## HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 1:18–25

**P:** The Holy Gospel is according to St. Matthew, chapter one.

**C:** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

*Joseph is encouraged by an angel of the Lord.*

*Following the reading...*

**P:** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C:** **Praise to You, O Christ.**

## THE NICENE CREED<sup>2</sup>

**I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven and was incarnate by the Holy**

Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## HYMN OF THE DAY

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Hymnal p. 357

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.

*Refrain:* Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,  
Who ord'rest all things mightily;  
To us the path of knowledge show,  
And teach us in her ways to go. *Refrain:*

O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,  
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height  
In ancient times didst give the Law  
In cloud and majesty and awe. *Refrain:*

O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree,  
Free them from Satan's tyranny  
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save,  
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave. *Refrain:*

O come, Thou Key of David, come,  
And open wide our heav'nly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
And close the path to misery. *Refrain:*

O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,  
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,

And death's dark shadows put to flight. *Refrain:*

O come, Desire of nations, bind  
In one the hearts of all mankind;  
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,  
And be Thyself our King of Peace. *Refrain:*



## Children's Christmas Program *Our Long-Awaited Savior*



**Narrator:** About a thousand years before the birth of Christ, it says in the book of Ruth: In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name, Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah, and they went to Moab and lived there. (Ruth 1:1-2)

**Elimelech:** After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision:

"Do not be afraid, Abram.  
I am your shield,  
your very great reward."

But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir."

Then the word of the Lord came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son

*who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."* (Genesis 15:1-5)

**Narrator:** Naomi's two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband. (Ruth 1:4-5)

**Narrator:** Hearing that the famine was over in Bethlehem, Naomi said: "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the Lord show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband." (Ruth 1:8-9)

**Narrator:** "Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her." But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. (Ruth 1:15-16)

**Narrator:** In time Naomi's empty arms would be filled with life once more. Naomi's Kinsman Boaz would soon marry Ruth and carry on the line of the promised Redeemer through God's gift of her son, Obed. The women living in Bethlehem said, "Naomi has a son!" and they named him Obed, servant of the Lord. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. (Ruth 4:17)

**Narrator:** So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:4-7)

*Please sing O Little Town of Bethlehem.*

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting Light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, And gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wondering love.

O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth  
And praises sing to God, the King, And peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of His heav'n.

No ear may hear His coming, But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive Him still, The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin and enter in, Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell:  
Oh, come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

**Narrator:** Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." (Luke 2:13-14)

*Please sing the first two verses of **Hark the Herald Angels Sing.***

Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the new-born King;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies;  
With the angelic host proclaim.  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the new-born King!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored.  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold Him come,  
Offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,  
Hail the incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as Man with man to dwell;  
Jesus, our Immanuel!  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the new-born King!"

**Narrator:** After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the East went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. (Matthew 2: 9-12)

*Please sing Joy to the The World.*

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room  
And heaven and nature sing. And heaven and nature sing.  
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ,  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy. Repeat the sounding joy.  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found. Far as the curse is found.  
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness  
And wonders of His love. And wonders of His love.  
And wonders, wonders of His love.

## OFFERING OF OUR TITHES AND GIFTS

### VOLUNTARY

Pastorale on "The Angel Gabriel"

Dick Sanderman

### OFFERING SONG

What Child Is This

Hymnal p. 370 v. 1, 3

What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mary's lap is sleeping?

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet

While shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the king, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;

Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The babe, the son of Mary!

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh;

Come, peasant king, to own Him.

The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone Him.

Raise, raise the song on high, The virgin sings her lullaby;

Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The babe, the son of Mary!

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P: Let us pray for ourselves, the church, and the world.

*Following each petition:*

P: Lord, in Your mercy,

C: **hear our prayer.**

## THE SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord's Supper (Holy Communion) is being celebrated in today's service. In preparation for that, please be reminded that the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper are not merely representations or symbols of Jesus' body and blood but Jesus' body and blood sacrificed on the cross are present in, with, and under the bread and wine (The Real Presence). How is this possible? This is beyond human understanding, but we remember that with God all things are possible. This truth is a divine mystery instituted by Jesus, taught by his Apostles, fervently held by the Christian church, and one in which we participate through faith. To be properly prepared to receive this sacrament, you must:

- 1) Recognize that you have indeed sinned against God and other people and are accountable to God for those sins;
- 2) Be sorry (repentant) for those sins;
- 3) Believe that in this sacrament Jesus bestows forgiveness, life, and salvation; and
- 4) Sincerely desire to live a godly life from this point forward.

If you are not a member of Christ Lutheran Church, please speak with the pastor before receiving communion here for the first time. If you choose to come forward to receive a blessing rather than the Lord's Supper, indicate this by crossing your arms over your chest.

## PREFACE

Hymnal p. 208

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks unto the Lord, our God.

C: **It is meet and right to give Him thanks and praise.**

P: It is truly good, right, and salutary... praising You and singing:

## **SANCTUS (sung)**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth adored;  
Heav'n and earth with full acclaim shout the glory of Your name.  
Sing hosanna in the highest, sing hosanna to the Lord;  
Truly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!**

## **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**P:** Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life...

## **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.**

## **THE WORDS OF OUR LORD**

### **PAX DOMINI**

**P:** The peace of the Lord be with you in all ways.

**C:** Amen.

## **AGNUS DEI (sung)**

**O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,  
You take the sin of the world away;  
O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,  
Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.**

**O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,  
You take the sin of the world away;  
Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ,  
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.**

**Prayer before communing:** Dear Savior, at Your gracious invitation I come to Your table to eat and drink Your holy body and blood. Let me find favor in Your eyes to receive this holy Sacrament in faith for the salvation of my soul and to the glory of Your holy name; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit one God now and forever. Amen.

## DISTRIBUTION

*Form a line at the communion rail starting at the left side. When the line is half full, begin filling it in from the right side. When invited, approach the rail and kneel/stand. If you want to receive a gluten-free wafer at communion, let the worship assistant know as he comes by with the wafers. After communion, exit through the right doorway, place individual communion cups in the tray, and proceed down the stairs back to your seat.*

## DISTRIBUTION HYMN

**Of the Father's Love Begotten**

Hymnal p. 384

Of the Father's love begotten Ere the worlds began to be,  
He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending  
He, Of the things that are, that have been,  
And that future years shall see Evermore and evermore.

Oh, that birth forever blessed, When the virgin, full of grace,  
By the Holy Ghost conceiving, Bore the Savior of our race,  
And the babe, the world's Redeemer,  
First revealed His sacred face Evermore and evermore.

This is He whom seers in old time Chanted of with one accord,  
Whom the voices of the prophets Promised in their faithful word.  
Now He shines, the long expected;  
Let creation praise its Lord Evermore and evermore.

O ye heights of heav'n, adore Him; Angel hosts, His praises sing.  
Pow'rs, dominions, bow before Him And extol our God and King.  
Let no tongue on earth be silent,  
Ev'ry voice in concert ring Evermore and evermore.

Christ, to Thee, with God the Father, And, O Holy Ghost,  
to Thee Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving  
And unending praises be, Honor, glory, and dominion,  
And eternal victory Evermore and evermore. Amen.

## DISTRIBUTION HYMN

### When All the World

Hymnal p. 346

When all the world was cursed By Moses' condemnation,  
Saint John the Baptist came With words of consolation.  
With true forerunner's zeal The greater One he named,  
And Him, as yet unknown, As Savior he proclaimed.  
  
Before he yet was born, He leaped in joyful meeting,  
Confessing Him as Lord Whose mother he was greeting.  
By Jordan's rolling stream, A new Elijah bold,  
He testified of Him Of whom the prophets told:

Behold the Lamb of God That bears the world's transgression,  
Whose sacrifice removes The devil's dread oppression.  
  
Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away our sin,  
Who for our peace and joy Will full atonement win.  
  
O grant, dear Lord of love, That we receive, rejoicing,  
The word proclaimed by John, Our true repentance voicing,  
That gladly we may walk Upon our Savior's way  
Until we live with Him In His eternal day.

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## VOLUNTARY

### On Christmas Night All Christians Sing

David Anderson

## NUNC DIMITTIS

Hymnal p. 211

O Lord, now let Your servant Depart in heav'nly peace,  
For I have seen the glory Of Your redeeming grace:  
A light to lead the Gentiles Unto Your holy hill,  
The glory of Your people, Your chosen Israel.

All glory to the Father, All glory to the Son,  
All glory to the Spirit, Forever Three in One;  
For as in the beginning, Is now, shall ever be,  
God's triune name resounding Through all eternity.

### POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

P: Gracious God, our heavenly Father, You have given us a foretaste of the feast to come in the Holy Supper of Your Son's body and blood. Keep us firm in the true faith throughout our days of pilgrimage that, on the day of His coming, we may, together with all Your saints, celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom which has no end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

### BENEDICTION

P: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and (†) give you peace.

C: Amen.

### CLOSING HYMN

Hark the Glad Sound

Hymnal p. 349

Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,  
The Savior promised long;

Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne And ev'ry voice a song.

He comes the pris'ners to release, In Satan's bondage held.  
The gates of brass before Him burst, The iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken heart to bind, The bleeding soul to cure,  
And with the treasures of His grace To enrich the humble poor.

**Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace, Thy welcome shall proclaim,  
And heav'n's eternal arches ring With Thy beloved name.**

**Prayer after worship:** Almighty and merciful God, I have again worshiped in Your presence and received both forgiveness for my many sins and the assurance of Your love in Jesus Christ. I thank You for this undeserved grace and ask You to keep me in faith until, with all Your saints, I inherit eternal salvation; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

## **POSTLUDE**

**O Little Town of Bethlehem**

**Robert M. Thompson**

<sup>1</sup>*The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."* John 20:22-23. We take heart that the absolution proclaimed by the pastor is as from the Lord Himself.

<sup>2</sup>*It is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.* Romans 10:10. Our response to the Word of God that has just been read is our confession of faith in the one, true, triune God.

*Christ Lutheran Church is a member of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.*