

*Epiphany of Our Lord ~ January 7, 2024*  
*Aiding Hope Lutheran Church*

2402 W. Grandview Blvd. Erie PA 16506 – 814.868.8685  
Rev. Karen Parsh, Pastor 814.881.3266 – pastorparsh@gmail.com  
Ministry of Music – Sheryl Williams



The feast of Epiphany (“manifestation”) concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God’s glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God’s love to all people.

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit call us together as the people of God

*Please stand.*

**CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the Word made flesh,  
our life and our salvation. **Amen.**

Trusting the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior, let us confess  
our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God of life,

**you promise good news of great joy for all people, and call us to be  
messengers of your peace. We confess that too often we hoard our  
joy, our resources, and our security.**

**We nurture conflict and build barriers. We neglect the needs of our  
neighbors and ignore the groaning of creation.**

**Have mercy on us.**

**Where we are self-centered, open our hearts.**

**Where we are reluctant, give us courage.**

**Where we are cynical, restore our trust.**

**Renew us with your grace and give us again the hope of eternal life  
in you. Amen.**

Hear the good news:

We are children of God and heirs of God's promises through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In † Jesus we are forgiven and redeemed. Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth shall know the salvation of God. **Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG ~ ELW 303** *Brightest and Best of the Stars v.1,2,3*

**GREETING**

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.**

**HYMN of PRAISE**

☉ Glo-ry to God, glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God in the high - est;

glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

☐ Lord God, heav-en-ly king, al - might - y God and Fa - ther, we

wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.

☉ Glo-ry to God, glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God in the high - est;

glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

☐ Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther,

Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the

world: have mer - cy on us; you are seat - ed at the  
right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.

**C** Glo-ry to God, glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God in the high - est;  
glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

**U** For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,  
you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,  
in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

**C** Glo-ry to God, glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God in the high - est;  
glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth,  
and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Let's Pray Together

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

**O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

### **WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

*Please be seated.*

#### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 60:1-6**

<sup>1</sup>Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.<sup>2</sup>For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.<sup>3</sup>Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.<sup>4</sup>Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.<sup>5</sup>Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.<sup>6</sup>A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

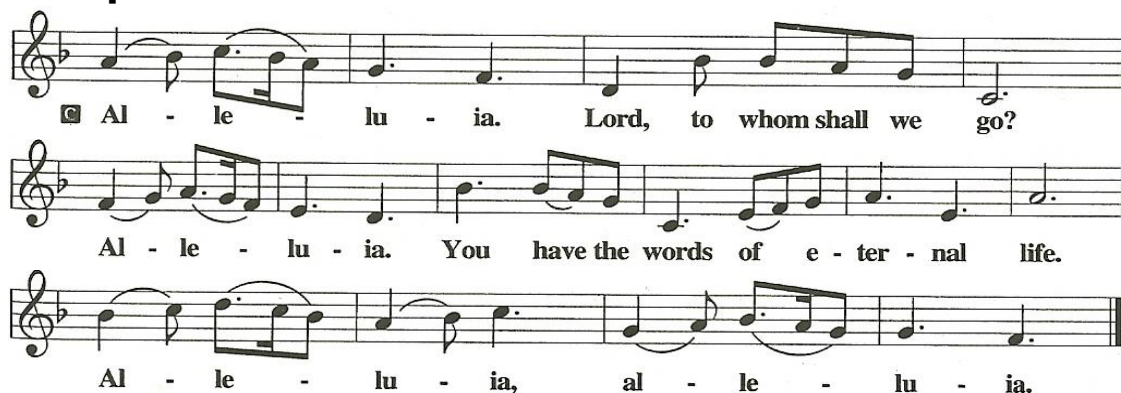


<sup>8</sup>Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, <sup>9</sup>and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; <sup>10</sup>so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. <sup>11</sup>This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, <sup>12</sup>in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand.*

### **Gospel Acclamation**



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?  
Al - le - lu - ia. You have the words of e - ter - nal life.  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

### **GOSPEL: Matthew 2:1-12**

The holy gospel according to Matthew, Chapter 2. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." <sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup>and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup>'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" <sup>7</sup>Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." <sup>9</sup>When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was.

<sup>10</sup>When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup>On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road. The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Please be seated.*

**SERMON** ~ Pastor Karen Parsh

**HYMN of the DAY** ~ **ELW 300** *The First Noel* v. 1,3,5

### **NICENE CREED**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen**

### **PRAYERS of INTERCESSION**

Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves. *A brief silence.*

Humble the hearts of your faithful people, that we seek to be servants of your gospel and witnesses to your mysteries. Give us boldness in faith, that we make the good news of Christ's birth known to all people.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Establish justice on earth for all its inhabitants. Lead us to protect fragile ecosystems and endangered species. Empower the work of all who research, engineer, and make accessible alternative and renewable sources of energy. Make us careful stewards of your creation. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Nations shall come to your light and kings to your dawning. Remove corruption and fear from the hearts of leaders and authorities. Lead governments to expand policies and resources that care for refugees and all migrants. Strengthen the work of resettlement agencies. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Defend the cause of all who are in need, all facing poverty, and all who are oppressed. Come quickly to those who feel that their lives and livelihoods are fragile. Give them strength and lead them forth with hope. Enrich the spirits of all who feel hopeless, fearful, or despairing. Stay close to those who await healing or relief especially: Family and friends of Christopher and Frank, Dave, Damian, Tammy, Aahron & Becky, Harry, Esther, Evelyn, Deliver all in any need. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

As the magi offered gifts to the Christ child, empower us to give generously. Prosper the work of ministry partnerships in our community. Together, help us share what we have to ensure that our neighbors have enough food, resources, and opportunities. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You have redeemed the lives of your faithful departed. Through the love of Christ, gather us into one body with them, and reveal to us the mystery hidden for ages in the One who created all things. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace. **Amen.**

## **PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

*Let us offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.*

## **MEAL**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

*Please be seated*

## **OFFERING and PRESENTATION of GIFTS**

**OFFERING HYMN ~ WOV 646** *We Three Kings*



## OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray together. **God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen.**

*Please Stand*

## 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.**

## PREFACE

It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and ever living God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes again to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of  
pow-er and might, heav - en 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. Ho -  
san - na in the high - est.

## **THANKSGIVING at the TABLE**

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,  
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,  
who preached good news to the poor,  
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection,  
and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out your Holy Spirit, that by this Holy Communion  
we may know the unity we share with all your people  
in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

*Please be seated*

## **INVITATION to COMMUNION**

Glory to God in the highest! Come to the table of peace.

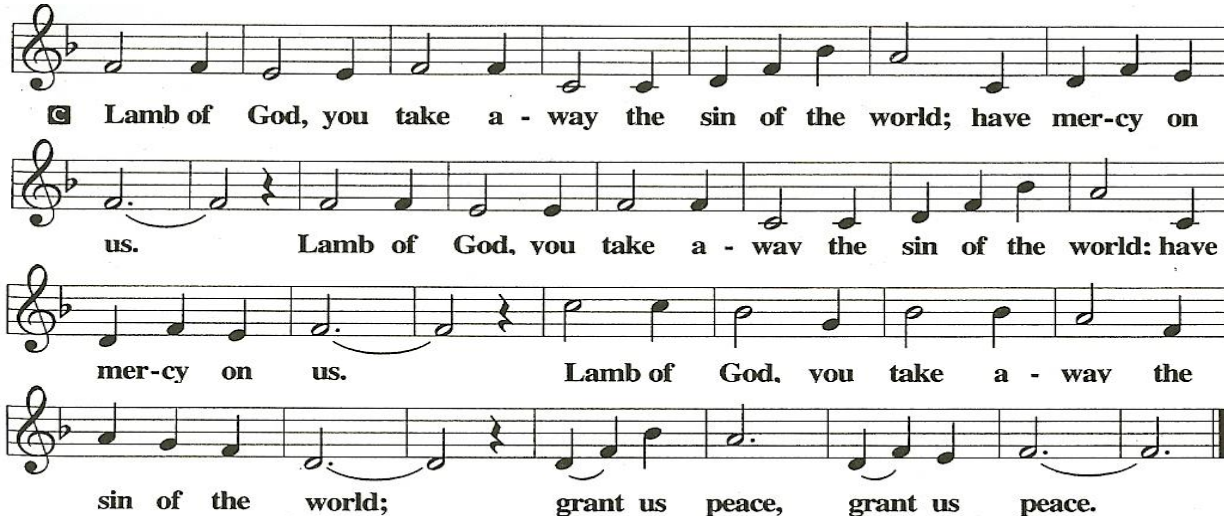
At Abiding Hope all believers are welcome to share Holy Communion at the table of the Lord. After receiving the bread, (gluten free) you may receive wine from the chalice poured into individual glasses or you may choose pre-poured grape juice (in center of tray) as an alternative.

## COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you.  
The blood of Christ, shed for you.

**Amen.**

## LAMB of GOD



☐ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on  
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world: have  
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

**COMMUNION HYMNS ~ WOV 638** *Holy Child within the Manger*  
**ELW 292** *Love Has Come*

## PASTORAL BLESSING

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

## POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. **God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

*Please stand*

## SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**SENDING HYMN ~ ELW 302** *As with Gladness* v.1,4,5

## BLESSING

God bless you and keep you, † Jesus grant you grace and truth, and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **DISMISSAL**

Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **POSTLUDE**

### **GOSPEL MESSAGE ~ The Center and the Margin**

It is no surprise that the magi make a stop in Jerusalem before venturing out to Bethlehem to find Jesus. After all, it would be unusual for foreign emissaries to bypass a major city on their way to a smaller, lesser-known community. If you are looking for a king, it makes sense to start in the center. On the one hand, Jerusalem is home to the official record, and sure enough, the magi get reliable directions there. The king is to be born "in Bethlehem of Judea," according to the authorities, "for so it has been written by the prophet." King Herod himself points the way. But Jerusalem is also where the threat lies. Privilege is too precious to risk, so the people in power decline to accompany the magi to Bethlehem to see the new thing that God is doing. Forget what the scripture says—there is simply no room for another king of the Jews. The center will not tolerate a challenge from the margin. Nevertheless, the margin is where God is found. It is God on the margin who draws near enough to enslaved people to hear their cry. It is God on the margin who blesses those who are poor or persecuted. It is God on the margin who is incarnate in the hungry and thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner (Matthew 25:35-40). It is God on the margin who is driven outside the city to die. No wonder God is also born there. The first great epiphany is that Emmanuel, God with us, is not bound to the centers of power and influence. Rather, he encounters those who follow the light of revelation to unlikely places. And for them, joy and wonder await.

### **PARISH NOTES ~ January 7, 2024**

[ahadministrator@hotmail.com](mailto:ahadministrator@hotmail.com) - [www.abidinghopeerie.org](http://www.abidinghopeerie.org) -

FB: [abidinghopelutheranchurch](https://www.facebook.com/abidinghopelutheranchurch)

*Altar Candles are given to the Glory of God,  
In Memory of Gordon and Mark Wunch, from Carol Wunch*

**Please pray for:** Family and friends of Christopher Dipko and Frank Cirillo (Marygrace Cirillo's brother), Dave Parsh, Aahron & Becky Maury, Damian Santabene, Tammy Sharp McIntyre, Harry Speakman, Esther Klakamp, and Evelyn Senger.

**Sunday, January 7: Worship, 9:30a. Bible study classes resume @ 10:45a.**

**Sunday, January 7: 24 Day of Advent KAFP program -final day for donations.**

**Wednesday January 10: Lunch and Listen @ 12noon.** Bring your lunch, visit with friends and enjoy an interesting talk by guest speaker, Rabbi Morais from the Jewish Temple here in Millcreek. The Rabbi will speak to us at **12:30p**. COME AND BRING A FRIEND OR TWO. Beverages & desserts provided.

**Sunday, January 14:** At **9:00am**, Pastor Karen will hold a meeting for those on the "**visiting team**" for our **homebound members**. New volunteers are welcome. Please consider becoming part of this Outreach Ministry.

**Worship, 9:30a Town Hall meeting after service. Bible Study, 10:45a. Choir, 10:45a. Confirmation class 10:45a @ St. Paul's.**

**Wednesday, January 17:** Prayer Warriors from 1 to 3p. You may come in at any time to pray, in either the "Quiet Room" or Sanctuary.

**Thursday, January 18:** To start out the new year, **Ladies Night Out** will meet **530p** at the **Bullfrog** (entrance on Peach St next to Little Caesar's). Join in for a fun night of good food, conversation and some LAUGHS. Please **RSVP** by **Monday, Jan 15** to Carolyn Hayes, 814.464.3625. Drivers/riders meet @ AHLC, 5:00p. All ladies are welcome.

**Poinsettia Plants:** Members who sponsored poinsettias are welcome to take following this morning's service.

**Capital Funds Campaign:** The sound system is installed and working. A contribution (in any amount) will help reach our goal, we are getting close! See the chart of our church's progress in the narthex. Please note that your gift is for the "Sound System". Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this important project. Donation basket is in "quiet room."

**Office Hours:** Monday, Tuesday, 9:30a-3:30p. Wednesday, 9:30a-12:30p. For **immediate pastoral assistance**, call **Pastor Karen**, 814-881-3266.

**Altar Flowers:** Anyone who wishes to **donate flowers** for Sunday worship, weekly sign-up sheet and request forms on table in narthex. Arrangements- **\$20.00 each**. Place the **completed form and payment** in the offering plate, or to the office at least two weeks, no less than one, prior to your chosen Sunday.

## **WORSHIP LEADERS ~ JANUARY 7, 2024**

Videographer	Penny Gresh
Greeter/Coffee	Nancy Cunning
Lector/Prayers	Judi Pacileo
Assisting Min/Acolyte	Damian Santabene
Comm. Assist/cups	Connie Kerr-Vogt
Communion tray	Nancy Cunning
Presenter	Lois Kuhns
Presenter	Cindy Filson
Usher	Rick Filson
Usher	Andy Saska
Counters	Dave Cunning & Lois Kuhns