

**January 7, 2024**  
**Epiphany Sunday**  
**Sacrament of Holy Communion**

**WELCOME**

**PRELUDES**

*The Communion Table*  
*I Sought the Lord*

*Gerald Peterson*  
*Dennis Eliot*

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRAYER CONCERNS AND REQUESTS**

**RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Arise, shine, your light has come!

**All: The glory of the Lord has risen.**

One: Let us offer him the treasures of our hearts and lives;

**All: Jesus Christ is light of the world.**

**\*OPENING SONG #24**

*God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens      Holy Manna*  
*(verse 1)*

***God, who stretched the spangled heavens infinite in time and place,  
flung the suns in burning radiance through the silent fields of space, we,  
your children in your likeness, share inventive powers with you. Great  
Creator, still creating, show us what we yet may do.***

*(verse 3)*

***We have ventured worlds undreamed of since the childhood of our race;  
known the ecstasy of winging through untraveled realms of space;  
probed the secrets of the atom, yielding unimagined power, facing us  
with life's destruction or our most triumphant hour.***

*(verse 4)*

***As each far horizon beckons, may it challenge us anew; children of  
creative purpose, serving others, honoring you. May our dreams prove  
rich with promise, each endeavor well begun. Great Creator, give use  
guidance till our goals and yours are one.***

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**CALL TO CONFESSION (Psalm 72:2)**

One: "God judges the nations with righteousness, and answers the poor with justice." Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sin:

**UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**God of glory, you sent Jesus among us as the light of the world, to reveal your love for all people. We confess that our sin and pride hide the brightness of your light. We turn away from the poor, we ignore cries for justice, we do not strive for peace.**

\*Please stand as you are able.

**In your mercy, cleanse us from our sin, and pour out the gifts of your Spirit, so that – forgiven and renewed – we may show forth your glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ.**

*(Moment of Silent Confession)*

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON (Psalm 72:6)**

One: “The mercy of the Lord is like rain, like showers that water the earth.”

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

**All: Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**\*SONG OF RESPONSE #853**

*We Are Marching in the Light of God*

*Siyahamba*

***We are marching in the light of God; we are marching in the light of God.  
We are marching in the light of God; we are marching in the light of, the  
light of God. We are marching, marching, we are marching, marching,  
we are marching in the light of God. We are marching, marching, we are  
marching, marching, we are marching in the light of God.***

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**\*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

One: Like the light of the star God sent to guide seekers and sages, the splendor of God’s light dawns on us in a peace that surpasses understanding. May the peace of Christ be with you.

**All: And, also, with you.**

**WORD**

**UNISON PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**Holy God, giver of all light and life, lift up our hearts and minds to Christ, that morning star that never fades. Reveal to us your Word and lead us to offer our lives to you in service and love; through Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

**FIRST SCRIPTURE READING** *Genesis 1:1–5*

When God began to create the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup> the earth was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup> Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. <sup>4</sup> And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

**SPECIAL MUSIC**

*Blessings*

*Laura Story*

*Performed by: Brenda Wahl*

**SECOND SCRIPTURE READING** *Mark 1:1–11*

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup> As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way, <sup>3</sup> the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight,’ ” <sup>4</sup> so John the baptizer appeared in the

\*Please stand as you are able.

wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup> And the whole Judean region and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him and were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup> Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals. <sup>8</sup> I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

<sup>9</sup> In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup> And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him. <sup>11</sup> And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

## **SERMON**

*"The Beginning"*

*Rev. Dr. John Wahl*

### **UNISON AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Colossians 1:15-20)**

**Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible. All things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn of the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. Amen.**

## **WITNESS**

### **INVITATION TO OFFERING**

*We take this time to reflect and recognize all contributions of time, talent, and treasure. A basket is available for making monetary donations.*

### **OFFERTORY**

*O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee*

*Paul Karvonen*

### **INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE / PRAYER OF GREAT THANKSGIVING**

One: Lord Jesus Christ, hope of the world...in your holy name we pray. The Lord be with you.

**All: And, also, with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them to the Lord.**

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

One: God of majesty and splendor, by your power...who forever sing to the glory of your name.

\*Please stand as you are able.

**CONGREGATION SINGS #552** *Holy, Holy, Holy*

*Land of Rest*

*(verse 1)*

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.***

*(verse 2)*

***Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.***

One: You are holy, O God of majesty...a living and holy sacrifice, dedicated to your service.

**CONGREGATION SINGS #553**

*Christ Has Died; Christ Is Risen*

*Land of Rest*

***Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again. Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.***

One: Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit among us...all glory and honor are yours, Almighty God, now and forever.

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**CONGREGATION SINGS #554**

*Amen*

*Land of Rest*

***Amen, amen, amen.***

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

## **SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP**

## **UNISON PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**Loving and Gracious God, you have gathered us at your table from east and west, from north and south. You have called us your beloved and fed us from your abundance. Transform us to be your hands and feet in the world so that we might serve you and our neighbors with joy. Amen.**

## **\*SENDING SONG #490**

*Wash, O God, Your Sons and Daughters*

*Beach Spring*

*(verse 1)*

***Wash, O God, your sons and daughters, newborn creatures of your womb. Number them among your people, raised like Christ from death and tomb. Weave them garments bright and sparkling; compass them with love and light. Fill, anoint them; send your spirit, holy dove and heart's delight.***

*(verse 2)*

***Every day we need your nurture; by your milk may we be fed. Let us join your feast, partaking cup of blessing, living bread. God, renew us; guide our footsteps, free from sin and all its snares, one with Christ in living, dying, by your Spirit, children, heirs.***

\*Please stand as you are able.

(verse 3)

***O how deep your holy wisdom! Unimagined, all your ways! To your name be glory, honor! With our lives we worship, praise! We your people stand before you, water-washed and Spirit born. By your grace, our lives we offer. Recreate us; God, transform!***

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**\*CHARGE AND BLESSING**

**\*BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE**

*Toccata in G Major*

*Lani Smith*

\*Please stand as you are able.

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Chalking the Doors**

This old Epiphany tradition involves using chalk to write the letters CMB and the numbers of the New Year, separated by crosses (+) over the doors of congregations and Christian homes: for example, 20 + CMB + 24. The letters CMB are said to stand for the names of the magi (Caspar, Melchior, Balthazar) or the Latin phrase *Christus Mansionem Benedicat* (Christ bless this house). At the close of today's service, we will be chalking the door of our sanctuary, and you are encouraged to do the same at your own home.

### **Sarah Circle – Tuesday, January 9, 2024**

This year's Bible study is:

***Sacred Encounter: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ In the Gospel of Luke.***

Study books are \$10.00. Large print is \$11.00.

**Meeting: VPC Library, The 2nd Tuesday of the month  
10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m., September through May**

All women interested are welcome to join.

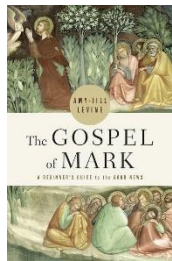
To purchase a study book, please contact Glenna Pool at 419-789-9446.

### **Thank you from Missions**

Mission would like to thank the congregation for their generosity this Christmas. Many gloves, hats, socks, and bus fare money was delivered to North Church to give to their congregation. Also, gifts from the angel tree were given to Chagrin Park Community Center. Your gifts will ensure that many will be warm this winter. Thank you again, Mission

## Six Session Bible Study

### ***The Gospel of Mark*** **A Beginner's Guide to the Good News** **By Amy-Jill Levine**



During worship for the first two months of the New Year, we will be looking at passages from the Gospel of Mark; widely regarded as the oldest of the four gospels. Through her book and accompanying video lessons, Jewish scholar, Amy Jill-Levine, brings the Good News of the gospel message alive as participants will come to see Jesus as divine and human, powerful and weak, approachable yet mysterious. The book features an in-depth study of select passages and illuminates the Gospel in its historical context and as a source for the other gospels.

You are invited to attend either weekly 90-minute session based on your own availability. Books will be available on January 7.

**Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.**

Jan. 18, 25, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22

**Mondays, 6:30 p.m.**

Jan. 22, 29, Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26

## Annual Meeting



The Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation will take place on Sunday, February 4, following the 10:30 a.m. worship service for the purposes of acting on nominations, reporting the annual budget, and approving pastoral terms of call. The meeting agenda and pertinent information will be made available by Sunday, January 28.

## Annual Per Capita Apportionment

Each year, the governing bodies of our denomination set a per-person apportionment to fund mission, education, and administrative programs for the wider church. For 2024, that amount has been set at \$38 per church member. Individuals / families who would like to pay this Per Capita, can add it to their pledge or offering. The balance will be paid through Valley's general fund. Please contact the church office, if you have any questions.

### **VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**[www.valleypresbychurch.org](http://www.valleypresbychurch.org)**

**VPC Guest Wifi Password: VPC12345**

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