

# Shepherd of the Mountains

## Lutheran Church (LC-MS)

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Ministers: Each and Every Member Pastor: R. Wayne Morton

### New Year's Eve

### The Eve of the Name of Jesus

December 31, 2017

#### The Distribution of the Lord's Supper

Following Holy Scripture, which speaks of the blessing of forgiveness (and therefore life and salvation) for those who discern the reality of Christ's bodily presence in the Supper ( Mt. 26:28, e.g.), but warns of harm and judgment for those who don't (1 Cor. 11:27-30, e.g.), we urge all those baptized and catechized individuals (youth and adults) who would come to the Lord's Table today to celebrate Holy Communion to examine your hearts to see that you:

repent of your sin;

believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;

affirm the real presence of Christ's true body and blood

in/with/under the bread & wine;

and desire to live your life in accordance with the will of God.

If you have not previously communed here at Shepherd of the Mountains, please first introduce yourself to our Pastor, in order that all those who will commune together today - who will share the one bread and the one cup - may be assured that we share as well the same confession and understanding.

(Young) children who are not yet capable of such self-examination are nevertheless invited to come forward - not to receive the body and blood of our Savior, but rather, the blessing of our gracious God.

We strongly encourage all who would come to the Lord's Table today to prepare for this Holy Communion with the examination drawn up by Dr. Martin Luther for those who intend to go to the sacrament, "Christian Questions with Their Answers," on *LSB* pages 329-30.

#### As We Gather

The observances of New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are special church traditions, each of which has a rich history. In many places, New Year's Eve is celebrated as a time when God's people gather in church to express thankfulness for the year and ask God's blessing on the year about to begin. New Year's Day, the "eighth" Day of Christmas, is observed as the time of the Circumcision of our Lord - a time that pre-viewed and prefigured that day when His sacred blood would most fully be poured out on the cross. One theme that unites the two observances is the theme of light. New Year's Eve celebrates the time of returning light to the world after the shortest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. New Year's Day celebrates that Jesus, the Light of the World, has come in human form to bring the light of salvation to the darkened world. In gathering for worship, we celebrate that Jesus is our Light and our Redeemer.

#### \* (stand) The Invocation

*Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

**People: Amen.**

#### The Opening Prayer

*Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty God, we bless You for Your light that is growing among us. We rejoice in the lengthening of daylight and in the hope and promise of the New Year. We bless You for the growth of Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem and the Light of the World. Look with favor upon Your people gathered for worship at this time. Be our Light in all times and places. May Your Holy Spirit enlighten us with His gifts that we may reflect Your glory in all that we say and do. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

**People: Amen**

\* (stand) The Confession and Absolution of our Sin

*Pastor: It's a new year. The old has gone; the new has come.  
Or has it? For don't we tend to drag all our old worries and fears and problems into the new year with us? And then we look ahead and wonder—and perhaps even fear—what the new year will bring, whether joy or sorrow, blessing or trouble, sickness or health.  
The beginning of a new year can be exciting and fresh. It can also be daunting and depressing as we realize the things we should have said, should have accomplished, or on the other hand, those things we should not have said or done.  
The new year gives us a time for pause and reflection. A good way for us to reflect is to use God's own Word as a mirror, to show us ourselves as we look according to God's Law.  
On this eve of the new year, we turn to Luther's Small and Large Catechisms to help us reflect and repent*

*Pastor: The First Commandment - "You shall have no other gods." What does this mean?*

**People: We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.**

*Pastor: Where has your trust been this year? Where will it be in the coming year? Have you faithfully let Him alone be your God, or have you sought some other in which to put your faith and trust? Has your heart fled not to Him but rather from Him when things went wrong? How often has your conscience sought help, comfort, and salvation in its own works? How many times have you looked with only worldly eyes and seen only what the world sees -*

*that those who trust God and not mammon suffer grief and want and are opposed and attacked by the devil? How often have you failed to remember - and give thanks - that it is He who gives us body, life, food, drink, nourishment, health, protection, peace, and all temporal and eternal blessings, that it is He who protects us from every evil, He who saves and defends us from every danger? We take a few moments to reflect on this commandment and to repent of our sins.*

(Pause for silent reflection.)

*Pastor: The Second Commandment - "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God. " What does this mean?*

**People: We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.**

*Pastor: How have you used God's name this past year? How can you use it appropriately in the coming year? Have your lips and your tongue been in the right relation to God? The Almighty's name cannot be more grievously abused than for purposes of falsehood and deceit. How often have you been guilty? To lie and deceive is in itself a gross sin, but it is greatly aggravated when we attempt to justify and confirm it by invoking God's name and using it as a cloak to cover our shame. How often have you used the name of God aright - in the service of truth and all that is good - calling on it in time of need, or praising and thanking it in time of prosperity? We pause to reflect and repent.*

(Pause for silent reflection.)

*Pastor: The Third Commandment - “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” What does this mean?*

**People: We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.**

*Pastor: This commandment is about keeping the Sabbath day holy, by devoting it to holy words, holy works, holy life. The Word of God is the true holy thing above all holy things; therefore this commandment is about the Word of God. At whatever time God’s Word is taught, preached, heard, read, or pondered, there the person, the day, and the work are sanctified by it. Conversely, any conduct or work done apart from God’s Word is unholy in the sight of God, no matter how splendid and brilliant it may appear. What part has the Word of God played in your life this past year? Have you despised preaching? Have you been like that multitude of others who listen to God’s Word as they would to any other entertainment, who only from force of habit go to hear preaching and depart again with as little knowledge of the Word at the end of the year as at the beginning? Have you regularly and diligently studied the Word? Have you been concerned not only about hearing the Word but also about learning and retaining it? For where the heart stands idle and the Word is not heard, the devil breaks in and does his damage before we realize it; but on the other hand, when we seriously ponder the Word, hear it, and put it to use, such is its power that it never departs without fruit. It always awakens new understanding, new pleasure, and a new spirit of devotion, and it constantly cleanses the*

*heart and its meditations. So, what about in the coming year? We pause to reflect and repent.*

*(Pause for silent reflection.)*

*Pastor: The Fourth Commandment—Honor your father and your mother. What does this mean?*

**People: We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.**

*Pastor: We all have or have had parents. We are all subject to a variety of authorities. This commandment applies to us all, not only to the children among us. What has your relationship with parents and authorities been like this year? How might it change in the year ahead? God commands us not simply to love our parents but also to honor them, and it is a much greater thing to honor than to love. Honor includes deference, humility, and modesty. It requires us . . . above all to show by our actions, both of heart and of body, that we respect them highly and that next to God we give them the very highest place. They are not to be deprived of their honor because of their ways or their failings. . . . By means of commandments [God] reminds and impels everyone to consider what his parents have done for him. . . . Out of the authority of parents all other authority is derived and developed. Through civil rulers, as through our own parents, God gives food, house and home, protection and security. Therefore since they bear this name and title . . . it is our duty to honor and magnify them as the most precious treasure and jewel on earth. . . . They who would bear the name of Christian owe it to God to*

*show “double honor” (1 Tim. 5:17) to those who watch over their souls and to treat them well and make provision for the. . . . Let everybody [to whom God has given and entrusted children] know that it is his chief duty, on pain of losing divine grace, to bring up his children in the fear and knowledge of God. . . . Because this commandment is disregarded, God terribly punishes the world, hence there is no longer any civil order, peace, or respect for authority.*

*We pause to reflect and repent.*

*(Pause for silent reflection.)*

*Pastor: The Fifth Commandment—You shall not murder. What does this mean?*

**People: We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.**

*Pastor: This seems like such an easy commandment to keep, that is, until we understand it in its fullness as Luther expounds it in his explanation. Then we find that it’s not so easy. In this commandment we leave our own house and go out among our neighbors to learn how we should conduct ourselves individually toward our fellow men. It forbids anger, for anger, reproof, and punishment are the prerogatives of God and his representatives - parents and rulers. He has therefore placed this and the other commandments as a boundary between good and evil. . . . We must live among many people who do us harm, and so we have reason to be at enmity with them. [But] he wishes to have all people defended, delivered, and protected from the wickedness and violence of others, [so] he has set up this*

*commandment as a wall, fortress, and refuge about our neighbor so that no one may do him bodily harm or injury. . . . No one should harm another for any evil deed, no matter how much he deserves it. Not only is murder forbidden, but also everything that may lead to murder. . . . God wishes to remove the root and source of [every] bitterness toward our neighbor. [Therefore,] we should not harm anyone - by hand or tongue. Our heart should harbor no hostility or malice toward anyone in a spirit of anger and hatred. . . . Likewise we should not fail to do good to our neighbor when we have the opportunity. . . . It is God’s real intention that we should allow no man to suffer harm, but show to everyone all kindness and love . . . especially toward our enemies. Whom have you hurt or harmed this past year? Whom have you failed to help? Will this change in the new year?*

*We pause to reflect and repent.*

*(Pause for silent reflection.)*

*Pastor: The Sixth Commandment—You shall not commit adultery. What does this mean?*

**People: We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.**

*Pastor: Again, this one seems pretty easy, but then we hear what Jesus tells us: “I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” The person nearest and dearest to a man is his wife. . . . Therefore it is explicitly forbidden here to dishonor his wife. . . . Not only is the external act forbidden,*

*but also every kind of cause, motive, and means. Your heart, your lips, and your whole body are to be chaste and to afford no occasion, aid or encouragement to unchastity. . . . God sanctioned the married life above in the fourth commandment, but here he has secured it and protected it. Therefore he also wishes us to honor, maintain, and cherish it as a divine and blessed state. . . . It is not an estate to be placed on a level with the others; it precedes and surpasses them all, whether those of emperor, princes, bishops, or anyone else. This commandment requires everyone not only to live chastely in thought, word and deed in his particular situation but also to love and cherish the wife of husband whom God has given. . . . Cherishing each another wholeheartedly and with perfect fidelity is one of the chief ways to make chastity attractive and desirable. . . . Our lives as well as our hearts are to be pure and decent. How have you broken this commandment this year, and what can you do differently in the year ahead?*

*We pause to reflect and repent.*

*(Pause for silent reflection.)*

*Pastor: The Seventh Commandment—You shall not steal. What does this mean?*

**People: We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.**

*Pastor: Like the Fifth and Sixth Commandments, this is bigger than it seems. Most of us don't out-and-out steal things, but this commandment includes taking advantage of our neighbor in any sort of dealing*

*that results in loss to him. Let everyone know, then, that it is his duty, at the risk of God's displeasure, not to harm his neighbor, take advantage of him, or defraud him by any faithless or underhanded business transaction. More than that, he is under obligation faithfully to protect his neighbor's property and further his interests. . . . Beware of this, I repeat, as of the devil himself. Such a man's sighs and cries will . . . reach God, who watches over poor, sorrowful hearts, and he will not leave them unavenged. . . . We are commanded to promote and further our neighbor's interest, and when he suffers want we are to hope, share, and lend to both friends and foes. Examine yourself. What have you done or not done? What will you do or not do? We pause to reflect and repent.*

*(Pause for silent reflection.)*

*Pastor: The Eighth Commandment—You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. What does this mean?*

**People: We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.**

*Pastor: Besides our own body, our wife or husband, and our temporal property, we have one more treasure which is indispensable to us, namely our honor and good name. . . . Therefore God will not have our neighbor deprived of his reputation, honor, and character any more than of his money and possessions. . . . This commandment does not apply just in court, however; it applies to every moment of every*

*day. It forbids all sins of the tongue by which we may injure or offend our neighbor. . . . When you become aware of a sin, simply make your ears a tomb and bury it until you're appointed a judge and authorized to administer punishment by virtue of your office. . . . We have so many opportunities to tear down or to build up the people in our lives. Take a moment and reflect and repent regarding the way you speak to people and about people.*

*(Pause for silent reflection.)*

*Pastor: The Ninth and Tenth Commandments are both about coveting. We'll take them together. The Ninth Commandment—You shall not covet your neighbor's house. What does this mean?*

**People: We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.**

*Pastor: The Tenth Commandment—You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor. What does this mean?*

**People: We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbor's wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty.**

*Pastor: This last commandments is addressed not to those whom the world considers wicked rogues, but precisely to the most upright - to people who wish to be commended as honest and virtuous because they have not offended against the preceding command-*

*ments. In lawsuits. In ordinary business affairs. The world does not consider this wrong, and it does not see that the neighbor is being taken advantage of - "First come, first served," and "Every man must look out for himself," and all that. God's purpose here is to destroy all the roots and causes of our injuries to our neighbors. Therefore, coveting is prohibited. But what a challenge this is in our lives. We're always wanting more than God has given. We're always desiring that which belongs to another. Take a few moments and reflect on the covetousness of your heart.*

*(Pause for silent reflection.)*

*Pastor: When we use these Ten Commandments and their explanations to reflect on our past year and look ahead to the next, we find that we are truly sinful and that we need to confess these sins to God, our heavenly Father.*

*O almighty God, merciful Father,*

**People: I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

*Pastor: Having confessed our sins together, we now hear the Epistle, from Romans, chapter 8:*

*“If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

*Nothing, not even our sin when it’s acknowledged and confessed, can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. As Paul says, God gave up His Son for us all. He died and rose again. He has ascended and is now interceding at His Father’s right hand. In this same Jesus Christ, in the forgiveness that comes through Him alone, we are more than conquerors.*

*In this way, we can enter the New Year, not dragging our burdens of sin with us, but free through Him who gives us strength.*

*With this in mind, receive the absolution of your sins: Upon this, your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

**People: Amen.**

Hymn: #810 “O God of God, O Light of Light”

\* (stand) The Collect for New Year’s Eve

*Pastor: The Lord be with you.*

**People: And also with you.**

*Pastor: Let us pray. Eternal God, we commit to Your mercy and forgiveness the year that is ending and commend to Your blessing and love the times yet to come. In the new year, abide among us with Your Holy Spirit that we may always trust in the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

**People: Amen**

The Old Testament Lesson for New Year’s Eve:  
Isaiah 30:15-17

*(In repentance and forgiveness you will be saved.)*

<sup>Isa 30:15</sup> This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it. <sup>Isa 30:16</sup> You said, ‘No, we will flee on horses.’

Therefore you will flee! You said, ‘We will ride off on swift horses.’ Therefore your pursuers will be swift! <sup>Isa 30:17</sup> A thousand will flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five you will all flee away, till you are left like a flagstaff on a mountaintop, like a banner on a hill.”

*Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.*

**People: Thanks be to God.** (with bells ringing)

\* (stand) The Psalm of the Day: Psalm 90:1-12  
(*The LORD is our abiding source of strength and comfort.*)

*LORD, You have been our dwelling place*

**in all generations.**

*Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world,*

**from everlasting to everlasting You are God.**

*You return man to dust*

**and say, "Return, O children of man!"**

*For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past,*

**or as a watch in the night.**

*You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream,*

**like grass that is renewed in the morning:**

*in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;*

**in the evening it fades and withers.**

*For we are brought to an end by Your anger;*

**by Your wrath we are dismayed.**

*You have set our iniquities before You,*

**our secret sins in the light of Your presence.**

*For all our days pass away under Your wrath;*

**we bring our years to an end like a sigh.**

*The years of our life are seventy,*

**or even by reason of strength eighty;**

*yet their span is but toil and trouble;*

**they are soon gone, and we fly away.**

*Who considers the power of Your anger,*

**and Your wrath according to the fear of You?**

*So teach us to number our days*

**that we may get a heart of wisdom.**

*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.**

The Epistle Lesson for New Year’s Eve:

Romans 8:31b-39

(*We are more than conquerors through Him.*)

If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>Ro 8:32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? <sup>Ro 8:33</sup> Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. <sup>Ro 8:34</sup> Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. <sup>Ro 8:35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

<sup>Ro 8:36</sup> As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

<sup>Ro 8:37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>Ro 8:38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>Ro 8:39</sup> neither height

nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.*

**People: Thanks be to God.** (with bells ringing)

\* (stand) The Gradual and Verse

*Pastor: The steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him.*

**People: Alleluia. Alleluia.**

*Pastor: Teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.*

**People: Satisfy us in the morning with Your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.**

*Pastor: The steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him.*

**People: Alleluia. Alleluia.** (Psalm 103:7a Psalm 90:12, 14)

\* (stand) The Holy Gospel for New Year's Eve:

Luke 12:35-40

*(Be ready for the Son of Man.)*

Lk 12:35 "Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, Lk 12:36 like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. Lk 12:37 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. Lk 12:38 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the

second or third watch of the night. Lk 12:39 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. Lk 12:40 You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

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

**People: Praise to You, O Christ.** (with bells ringing)

The Hymn of the Day: #733

"Our God, Our Help in Ages Past"

\* (stand) We Believe, Teach and Confess:

The Nicene Creed

(Please see inside back cover of *Lutheran Service Book*)

The Offering

(If you have not already done so, please register your attendance with the Friendship Form at this time and pass it down and back your pew, taking note of the names of those worshipping with you.)

\* (stand) The Offertory

LSB #370, "What Child Is This?")

**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!**

\* (stand) The Responsive Prayer

*Pastor: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs:*

*We pray for the whole Church, that the message of salvation may joyfully be proclaimed throughout the world and the light of the Gospel may shine brightly everywhere. Lord, in Your mercy*

**People: hear our prayer.**

*Pastor: We pray for the nations of the world, asking that in the New Year there may be harmony among all peoples and expanding peace, security, and well-being in every place. Lord, in Your mercy*

**People: hear our prayer.**

*Pastor: We pray for our families and everyone in them. May the light of Christ enlighten the homes of the faithful, and may families dwell together in love and unity. Lord, in Your mercy*

**People: hear our prayer.**

*People: We pray for all who serve us through their callings, enlightening the pathways of our lives. Especially we remember those in church vocations both locally and abroad, asking that the coming Year of Our Lord may be one in which their vocations bring them joy and fulfillment. We also remember the military forces of our nation, those deployed both at home and abroad, whose efforts serve to defend our nation in challenging times and who guarantee our safety in times of peace. Lord, in Your mercy*

**People: hear our prayer.**

*Pastor: We pray for those with special concerns and needs at the turning of the year: those who are hospitalized, those who sorrow, the unemployed and under-employed, the chronically ill and shut-in, and all others whose needs for God's special mercies are known to us at this time. May we find meaning for*

*our lives in assisting those who need the care and compassion that we can offer. Lord, in Your mercy*

**People: hear our prayer.**

*Pastor: Merciful God, we bless You for having placed into our lives faithful Christian people to guide us. As one year closes and another begins, we remember those no longer among us on earth, but who now rejoice in the glorious light of Your heavenly kingdom. Lead us to follow in their way, blessed Redeemer, that we may rejoice together eternally at Your throne. Lord, in Your mercy*

**People: hear our prayer.**

(Here special intercessions may be made. Each petition concludes:  
*Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.*)

*Pastor: God and Father of all, Father of Jesus, the Son of the virgin Mary, Father of Him whose very name cries "Savior," we pray to You: receive our prayers as we trust in Your mercy today, tomorrow, and forever.*

**People: Amen.**

\* (stand) **The Order of Holy Communion**

*Pastor: The Lord be with you.*

**People: And also with you.**

*Pastor: Lift up your hearts.*

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

*Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

**People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

*Pastor: It is truly good, right and salutary that we should give thanks to You, gracious Lord. You are the source of our life and the ruler of time.*

**People:** In the mystery of the Word made flesh you have given us a new revelation of your glory that, seeing you in the person of your Son, we may be drawn to the love of those things which are not seen.

*Pastor: Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify your glorious name, evermore praising you and singing:*

*(LW # 50, "Angels from the Realms of Glory")*

**All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son,  
Evermore your voices raising To th' eternal Three in One.  
Come and worship, come and worship,  
Worship Christ, the newborn king.**

*Pastor: Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth, for you have had mercy on us children of men and given your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. We give you thanks for the redemption you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send your Holy Spirit into our hearts that He may establish in us a living faith and prepare us joyfully to remember our Redeemer and receive him who comes to us in his body and blood.*

**People: Amen.**

*Pastor: Hear us as we pray in his name and as He has taught us:*

**(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  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

\* (stand) The Words of Institution

*Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: Take, eat; this is my (+) body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.  
In the same way also he took the cup after supper, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying: Drink of it, all of you; this is my (+) blood of the new testament, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink, in remembrance of me.*

*Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.*

**People: And also with you.**

**The Communion Invitation and Distribution**

*Pastor: As the Scriptures say, "Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of heaven." Come, for everything is now ready.*

*(The white wine in each tray is "non-alcoholic" wine.)*

*(Children coming forward for a blessing are asked to keep their hands below the communion rail in order to eliminate any confusion for those who are distributing.)*

*(We strongly encourage all those communicants who intend to come to the Sacrament today to prepare for receiving the Lord's gracious gifts with the "Christian Questions" found on pages 329-30 of our worship and hymn book, *Lutheran Service Book*.)*

(Following Holy Scripture, we urge all those communicants who would come to the Lord's Table today to celebrate Holy Communion to examine your hearts to see that you: repent of your sins; believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; affirm the real presence of Christ's true body and blood in/with/under the bread and wine; and, desire to live your life in accordance with the will of God.)

\* (stand) **The Common Dismissal**

*Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord strengthen and preserve you steadfast in the true faith unto life everlasting. Go in peace.*

**People: Amen.**

\* (stand) **The Prayer of Thanksgiving**

*Pastor: Lord, we thank You that once again You have been with us as we have gathered in your house and at your table. We thank You that, of your mercy, You have strengthened us with the very body and blood of your only Son for the forgiveness of our sin. Bless our lives with your abiding presence and bring us at last to your eternal kingdom. We ask this for Jesus' sake.*

**People: Amen.**

\* (stand) **The Blessing of Our God**

*Pastor: 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 (Numbers 6:24).*

**People: Amen.**

Closing Hymn: #878 "Abide with Me" (vs. 1,2,5,6)

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*"This is the week that the Lord has made.*

*Let us rejoice and be glad in it!"*

Sun	12/31	7:00 p.m. - New Year's Eve Worship - H/C
Mon	1/01	8:00 p.m. - Church Office Closed
Tues	1/02	5:00 p.m. - NO Confirmation Class
Wed	1/03	9:30 a.m. - Ladies' Bible Study 6:00 p.m. - <b>NO LifeLight</b> Bible Study
Fri	1/05	6:00 p.m. - "First Friday" night at the movies
Sun	1/07	8:15 a.m. - Handbell Choir Practice 9:15 a.m. - Sunday School/Bible Class 10:30 a.m. - Divine Service 11:45 a.m. - "First Sunday of the Month" Potluck

**"C'MON, (B)RING THOSE BELLS!"** Nothing quite says Christmas like bells, so, . . . c'mon, bring those bells (or use the ones *we* brought) and ring those bells throughout this entire Christmas season - that is, right up until next Sunday, the celebration (1/4) of the day of the Epiphany of our Lord (1/6), when the Church season changes. Bring one of your favorite bells from home to worship or borrow one of ours when you get here. Then, whenever the Spirit moves you (in our hymns and carols, throughout our liturgy, but especially after each reading of God's Holy Word), give thanks for each reminder of the fact that Jesus is our Word made flesh. Bring your bell - *ring* your bell, that is - in joy and praise to God . . . for Christmas.