



**February 6, 2022**

**Welcome!**

We are glad to have you join us in the worship of Our Lord.

**Please sign the guest book at the back of the sanctuary.**

**Mask wearing is required.**

**Today's Altar Representatives**

Pastor: .....Rev. Peter Kuritz  
Greeters/Ushers: Phil Newlander  
Lector: ..... Ben Mroz III  
Music: ..... Molly Finkbiner

**Faith Lutheran Church**

550 Rt. 940 PO Box 228 |  
Blakeslee, PA 18610  
Office 570-646-0309

**Email:**

faithoffice@faithlutheranblakeslee.org

**Website:**

www.faithlutheranblakeslee.org

**Facebook:**

https://www.facebook.com/Faith-Lutheran-Church-Blakeslee-PA-1721550018126312

# *Fifth Sunday after Epiphany*

## **PRELUDE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### Meetings

**AA Meeting** – Tuesday and Friday at 12 pm and Thursday at 10 am.

**Choir:** Rehearsals are canceled until further notice.

**Boomwhackers, Bells and Chimes:** Wednesday, at 5:00 p.m. and Sunday School soon after practice.

**Faithful Community Quilters:** Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month from 10 am to 3 pm.

**Finance Committee:** Tuesday at 7 pm via Zoom.

**Church Council:** Thursday at 7 pm

**Bible Study:** Each Sunday morning at 7:30 am. For the month of February, the bible study will be via Zoom.

**Meeting ID:** 828 9686 5240

**Passcode:** 83sQGd

### **Lenten Bible Studies**

We will be studying Adam Hamilton's THE WALK which can be found on Amazon or in the Christian Bookstore site. Each week during Lent, we will be walking through chapters to understand our own relationship to the risen Lord!

Lenten Dates: **March 9, 16, 30, and April 6**

There will be Soup Super at 6:15 pm and Lenten Study at 7:00 pm. For reservation, and volunteering to bake bread and soup, the sign-up sheets are on the table in the back of the church.

**Property Update:** Final work in multi-purpose room on Wednesday at 9:00 am.

**Souper Bowl:** The field is up! This year's players are TOMEC's Food Pantry Patriots vs Monroe County Panthers. Oh, but wait! TOMEC has asked Faith Lutheran Church to join now **till February 13<sup>th</sup>** to help fundraise by donating \$100 for goal posts, \$20 for helmets, \$10 for jerseys, \$5 for pants, and \$1 for shoes. Join Faith and tackle head-on.

**Usher and Lector Volunteers** needed, please contact Jacquie Halko or call the church to sign up.

**Bulletin Sponsors and Flower Donations:** New 2022 Bulletin located in the foyer table entrance of the church. In-house bulletin for \$10 and \$20 towards silk flowers or you may bring your own fresh flowers.

**Stewardship Snippet:** Luke 5:5,6 –*Simon answered Jesus, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets."* When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. Jesus's instructions make no sense to Simon, but following them leads him to make an enormous catch of fish. Steward/disciples often find that God's guidance leads to greater abundance. When have you seen this in your life?

(Please stand as you are able.)

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who creates us, redeems us, and calls us by name.  
**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God, **we confess that we have sinned against you and your beloved children. We have turned our faces away from your glory when it did not appear as we expected. We have rejected your word when it made us confront ourselves. We have failed to show hospitality to those you called us to welcome. Accept our repentance for the things we have done and the things we have left undone. For the sake of Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us and lead us, that we may bathe in the glory of your Son born among us, and reflect your love for all creation. Amen.**

Rejoice in this good news: In † Christ Jesus, your sins are forgiven. You are descendants of the Most High, adopted into the household of Christ, and inheritors of eternal life. Live as freed and forgiven children of God. **Amen.**

## ENTRANCE HYMN: “*Here I Am, Lord*” WOVS 752

1 "I, the Lord of sea and sky,  
I have heard my people cry.  
All who dwell in dark and sin  
my hand will save.  
I, who made the stars of night,  
I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear my light to them?  
Whom shall I send?"

3 "I, the Lord of wind and flame,  
I will tend the poor and lame.  
I will set a feast for them.  
My hand will save.  
Finest bread I will provide  
till their hearts be satisfied.  
I will give my life to them.  
Whom shall I send?"

2 "I, the Lord of snow and rain,  
I have borne my people's pain.  
I have wept for love of them.  
They turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone,  
give them hearts for love alone.  
I will speak my word to them.  
Whom shall I send?"

### *Refrain*

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.  
I will hold your people in my heart.

Text: Daniel L. Schutte, b. 1946. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE # A-726919. All rights reserved.

## 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.**

## **KYRIE**

*In Peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.***

*For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.***

*For the peace of the whole world, for the well being of the Church of God.*

*and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord have mercy.***

*For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.*

***Lord, have mercy. Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. Amen.***

## **HYMN OF PRAISE: This is the feast...**

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia.

**Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.**

**Power and riches and wisdom and strength, and honor and blessing and glory are his.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia. Sing with all the people of God and join**

**in the hymn of all creation: Blessing and honor and glory and might be to God and the**

**Lamb forever. Amen. This is the feast of victory for our God, for the Lamb who was slain**

**has begun his reign. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Most holy God, the earth is filled with your glory, and before you angels and saints stand in awe. Enlarge our vision to see your power at work in the world, and by your grace make us heralds of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

*(Please be seated)*

## **FIRST LESSON:**

The First Lesson is from **Isaiah 6:1-8 [9-13]** (NRSV)

<sup>1</sup>In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup>Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. <sup>3</sup>And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;  
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

<sup>4</sup>The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup>And I said: “Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”

<sup>6</sup>Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. <sup>7</sup>The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: “Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.” <sup>8</sup>Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!” <sup>9</sup>And he said, “Go and say to this people: ‘Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking, but do not understand.’” <sup>10</sup>Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed.”

<sup>11</sup>Then I said, “How long, O Lord?” And he said: “Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is utterly desolate; <sup>12</sup>until the Lord sends everyone far away, and vast is the emptiness in the midst of the land.

<sup>13</sup>Even if a tenth part remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak whose stump remains standing when it is felled.” The holy seed is its stump.

Word of God, Word of Life, **Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM: Psalm 138**

<sup>1</sup>I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing your praise.

<sup>2</sup>**I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name,  
because of your steadfast love and faithfulness;  
for you have glorified your name and your word above all things.**

<sup>3</sup>When I called, you answered me; you increased my strength within me.

<sup>4</sup>**All the rulers of the earth will praise you, O Lord,  
when they have heard the words of your mouth.**

<sup>5</sup>They will sing of the ways of the Lord, that great is the glory of the Lord.

<sup>6</sup>**The Lord is high, yet cares for the lowly, perceiving the haughty from afar.**

<sup>7</sup>Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe;  
you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right hand shall save me.

<sup>8</sup>**You will make good your purpose for me; O Lord, your steadfast love endures forever;  
do not abandon the works of your hands.**

### **SECOND LESSON:**

The Second Lesson is from **1 Corinthians 15:1-11** (NRSV)

<sup>1</sup>Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, <sup>2</sup>through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

<sup>3</sup>For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, <sup>4</sup>and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, <sup>5</sup>and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup>Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. <sup>7</sup>Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup>Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. <sup>9</sup>For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup>But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. <sup>11</sup>Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God!**

*(Please stand as you are able)*

**VERSE / GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: “Alleluia”**

*Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.*

**GOSPEL**

The Holy Gospel according to **Luke 5:1-11** (NRSV). **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, <sup>2</sup> he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup> He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. <sup>4</sup> When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” <sup>5</sup> Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.” <sup>6</sup> When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. <sup>7</sup> So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup> But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” <sup>9</sup> For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; <sup>10</sup> and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” <sup>11</sup> When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

*(Please be seated)*

**CHILDREN’S MESSAGE**

**SERMON**

**HYMN OF THE DAY: “You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore” WOV 784**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1     You have come down to the lakeshore<br>seeking neither the wise nor the wealthy,<br>but only asking for me to follow.                | 4. You who have fished other waters;<br>you, the longing of souls that are yearning:<br>O loving Friend, you have come to call me.  |
| 2     You know full well what I have, Lord:<br>neither treasure nor weapons for conquest,<br>just these my fish nets and will for working. | <i>Refrain</i><br>Sweet Lord, you have looked into my eyes;<br>kindly smiling, you've called out my name.<br>On the sand I have abandoned my small<br>boat; now with you, I will seek other seas. |
| 3     You need my hands, my exhaustion,<br>working love for the rest of the weary--<br>a love that's willing to go on loving.              |   |

Text: Cesáreo Gabaráin, 1936-1991; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946

English text © 1979 Cesáreo Gabaráin, OCP Publications. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE # A-726919. All rights reserved.

## APOSTLES CREED

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.**

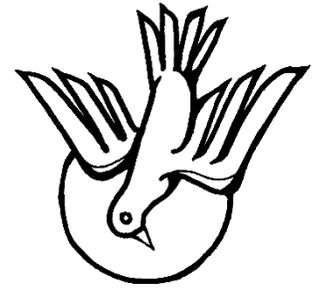
**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen**



## PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance; so we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made. *A brief silence.*

Equip your church to proclaim the good news that we have first received: the forgiveness and grace shown to us through Jesus Christ. Send us out as apostles, sharing the hope of your salvation with a waiting world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Holy are you, O God of hosts. Heaven and earth are filled with your glory. Reveal your splendor in fiery sunsets and in deep blue twilights. Teach us to recognize you in the beauty of our natural world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Soften the hearts of rulers and governments that they perceive and tend to the needs of their people. Remove corruption and the impulse toward violence. Protect first responders and military personnel who risk their lives in service of others. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your steadfast love endures forever; do not abandon those who look to you for hope and healing. Bless doctors, nurses, social workers, therapists, and all caregivers. Draw near to those who are scared, sick, or in pain. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

The disciples received help from partners as they brought in an abundant catch of fish. So strengthen this congregation's partnerships with community organizations and ministries. Multiply our shared efforts and bring joy to our relationships. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

### PRAYER LIST

*Jason R., Robert F., RC, Mike and Brenda G., Rich, Erik C, Sabrina, Jason R., Tracey E., Drew D., Margery B, Barbara M, Kevin D, Sherry K, Walt D, Adam C. and Family, Megan, Jim, Roberta R., Judi O'D, Diana, Wolcott, Dawn, Jeanine, Allen B., Tom and Valerie M., Ed, the congregation of St. Paul of Albrightsville.*

We give thanks for our ancestors in faith who boldly answered your call. By their example give us courage to live in faith and to proclaim your mercy until the day that you gather us into your glory. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

### **THE PEACE**

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

*(Please share Christ's peace in social and acceptable ways.)*

*(Please be seated)*

**OFFERING Music: "You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore" by Cesáreo Gabaráin**

Played by Molly Finkbiner

*(Please stand as you are able)*

**OFFERTORY SONG: "Let the Vineyards" (during Communion Sundays)**

**Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.**

**Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,  
that we may be fed with the bread of life.**

**Gather the hopes and dreams of all; unite them with the prayers we offer.**

**Grace our table with your presence, and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.**

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Blessed are you, O God, Sovereign of the universe. You offer us new beginnings and guide us on our journey. Lead us to your table, nourish us with this heavenly food, and prepare us to carry your love to a hungry world, in the name of Christ our light. **Amen.**

### **DIALOGUE**

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 Lords our God.

**It is right to give him 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, through Christ our Lord Sharing our life, he lives among us to reveal your glory and love, that our darkness should give way to his own brilliant light. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might: Heav'n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

## **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father: Endless is your mercy and eternal your reign. You have filled all creation with light and life; heaven and earth are full of your glory. Through Abraham you promised to bless all nations. You rescued Israel, your chosen people.

Through the prophets you renewed your promise; and, at this end of all the ages, you sent your Son, who in words and deeds proclaimed your kingdom and was obedient to your will, even to giving his life. 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. For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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

Therefore, gracious Father, with this bread and cup we remember the life our Lord offered for us. And, believing the witness of his resurrection, we await his coming in power to share with us the great and promised feast.

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, the spirit of our Lord and of his resurrection, that we who receive the Lord's body and blood may live to the praise of your glory and receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

**Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.**

Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place, and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

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

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Come to God's table. There is a place for you and enough for all.

*(Please be seated)*

*(If you would like please take a couple of moments and prepare your communion elements by lifting both films back halfway or however comfortable.)*

## LAMB OF GOD

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.**

“The body of Christ.... Given for you.”      “The blood of Christ.... Shed for you.”

*(After all have communed—please stand as you are able)*

## COMMUNION BLESSING

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

## SONG AFTER COMMUNION

**Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell everyone what he has done.**

**Let everyone who seeks the Lord rejoice and proudly bear his name.**

**He recalls his promises and leads his people forth in joy  
with shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We give you thanks, gracious God, for we have feasted on the abundance of your house.  
Send us to bring good news and to proclaim your favor to all, strengthened with the richness of  
your grace in your Son, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## BLESSING

God, who leads you in pathways of righteousness, who rejoices over you, and who calls you by  
name, ✠ bless your going out and your coming in, today and forever. **Amen.**

## SENDING HYMN: “Will You Come and Follow Me” *Insert ELW 798*

1      "Will you come and follow me  
if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know  
and never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown,  
will you let my name be known,  
will you let my life be grown  
in you and you in me?

3      "Will you let the blinded see  
if I but call your name?  
Will you set the pris'ners free  
and never be the same?  
Will you kiss the leper clean,  
and do such as this unseen,  
and admit to what I mean  
in you and you in me?

2      "Will you leave yourself behind  
if I but call your name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind  
and never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare,  
should your life attract or scare?  
Will you let me answer pray'r  
in you and you in me?

(Continue on to next page)

4 "Will you love the you you hide  
if I but call your name?  
Will you quell the fear inside  
and never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you've found  
to reshape the world around,  
through my sight and touch and sound  
in you and you in me?"

5 Lord, your summons echoes true  
when you but call my name.  
Let me turn and follow you  
and never be the same.  
In your company I'll go  
where your love and footsteps show.  
Thus I'll move and live and grow  
in you and you in me.

Text: John L. Bell, b. 1949. © 1987 Iona Community, GIA Publications, Inc. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE # A-726919. All rights reserved.

**DISMISSAL:** Go with Christ into a weary world. Share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**

### **Copyright Acknowledgements**

#### **Preludes:**

Prelude, Op. 28, No. 6 *Assai lento*, by Frederic Chopin. © Public Domain.

Prelude, Op. 28, No. 7 *Andante*, by Frederic Chopin. © Public Domain.

**Gathering and Postlude:** "Here I Am, Lord" Text and Music by Daniel L. Schutte, b. 1946. © 1981 OCP Publications, Inc. #5514. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE # A-726919. All rights reserved.

**Hymn of the Day and Offering Music:** "You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore" Text and music by Cesáreo Gabaráin. © 1979, OCP Publications. #6905. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE # A-726919. All rights reserved.

**Sending:** "Will You Come and Follow Me" Text and music by John L. Bell, b. 1949. © 1987 Iona Community, admin. GIA Publications, Inc. #G9247098. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE # A-726919. All rights reserved.

**Kyrie:** – In Peace Let Us Pray, Lutheran Book of Worship. #AF2019204. Tune and text © 1978 Augsburg Fortress. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE # A-726919. All rights reserved.

**Hymn of Praise:** This is the Feast, Lutheran Book of Worship. Tune and text © 1978 Augsburg Fortress. #99187. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE # A-726919. All rights reserved.

**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia Lord to Whom Shall We Go, Lutheran Book of Worship. #63981. Text and tune © 1978 Augsburg Fortress. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE # A-726919. All rights reserved.

**The Great Thanksgiving:** The Great Thanksgiving, Lutheran Book of Worship. Tune and text © 1978, Augsburg Fortress. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE # A-726919. All rights reserved.

**Preface:** Holy, Holy, Holy, Lutheran Book of Worship. Tune and text © 1978, Augsburg Fortress. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE # A-726919. All rights reserved.

**Lamb of God:** Lamb of God, Lutheran Book of Worship. LBW Settings 1-3, ELW Settings 3-5. #AF2019222. Tune and text © 1978, Augsburg Fortress. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE # A-726919. All rights reserved.

## Scripture Reading: Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13)

*Never let the presence of a storm make you doubt the presence of God.*

—*Craig Groeschel*

---

**Y**ou might not be lonely during the long winter months, but it is quite possible that you have friends who are.

The Bible says that we are not alone — not you, me or your friends. God is with us, and as we were reminded recently during Advent, God entered our human experience as a baby in the manger, known as “Immanuel,” meaning “God with us.”

King David experienced the closeness of God throughout his life. In his well-known Psalm 23, he writes, “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff — they comfort me,” verse 4. These words may be a reference to David’s loneliness in his early days as regent of Israel. In another psalm he writes, “The LORD is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit,” (Psalm 34:18).

For many people, especially those who are homebound or living in a life care center, one of the most distressing parts of the pandemic has been dealing with loneliness.

Visiting rules in many places have changed since the early days of the crisis in 2020. Even so, psychologists say that some of the most effective tools for helping people cope are pets, mindfulness and laughter therapy.

Believe it or not, robotic dogs have been used to combat loneliness in residents of care centers and hospitals. Yes! “Some of the most effective interventions in these settings involved weekly visits from an interactive robotic dog, which has proven to be as effective as a real dog in alleviating loneliness,” according to one study of the subject.

But even better than a robot dog, or a real dog, are other therapies that include laughter, educational activities, some types of meditation and strategies to develop friendships.

A strong faith is a critical component to easing loneliness and often helps us to perceive the support that we had forgotten we had all along!

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart; / Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art;  
/ Thou my best Thought, by day or by night, / Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light. Amen.*  
(from the hymn, “Be Thou My Vision,” att. to Dallan Forgaill)


**Daily Bible Readings**

- Sunday:** Exodus 1-4
- Monday:** Exodus 5-7
- Tuesday:** Exodus 8-10
- Wednesday:** Exodus 11-13
- Thursday:** Exodus 14-17
- Friday:** Exodus 18-20
- Saturday:** Psalms 13-15

**VERSE TO REMEMBER**

*The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."*

—Psalm 14:1 (NIV)

# MYSTERY PERSON!

**Directions:** The purpose of this exercise is to discover the identity of a well-known biblical person. To do so, you must assign a number value to each letter of the alphabet, assuming that **M equals 1**. A word and number chart for you to fill in has been provided for your convenience. Complete each of the clues and then write your answer in the space below.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
												1													

**First Clue:** 22-19 26-23-10-19-18 23-2 7-13-6-23-15 15-2-18 17-23-26-23-17-23-15

---

20-3-6 20-3-9-6-8-19-19-2 13-19-15-6-7.

---

**Second Clue:** 8-23-8-9-7 15-2-18 16-15-6-2-15-16-15-7 11-19-6-19 22-23-7

---

20-6-23-19-2-18-7.

---

**Third Clue:** 22-19 11-6-3-8-19 8-22-19 16-3-3-25 3-20 21-15-26-15-8-23-

WHO IS THIS PERSON?

Answer (spelled backward): luaP.