



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



Epiphany 6 - Conflict of Kingdoms

February 15, 2026

10:30 Holy Communion

Even though Jesus brought words of grace and acts of love not everyone was happy with him. His ways threatened the ways of many. How do we live having a God that we cannot fully understand, cannot fully predict, and cannot ever confine? How do we live with certainty yet still be open to the ways of our God who is both our savior and our judge?

Welcome to worship today!

If you are visiting with us we invite you to sign the Guest Book in the back of the sanctuary.

Large print bulletins are available on the usher's stand.

The Zoom feed for this service is available in the nursery.

† GATHERING †

Prelude and Announcements

Gathering Hymn We are a Chosen People of God
For music please turn to Hymn 79 in the Songbook binder

Refrain

**We are a chosen people of God;
called into light and gathered in love;
redeemed and held by the holy one.
We are a chosen people of God.**

**1. Look around you and see
people in your neighborhood;
endless variety
God has created good.
We're a part of it all, chosen and called. *Refrain***

**2. Look around you and see
the blessing given us;
earth, sky, and sea;
they're all placed in our trust.
We're a part of it all, chosen and called. *Refrain***

**3. Look around you and see
not all is going right.
In this mystery;
We're called to be a light.
We're a part of it all, chosen and called. *Refrain***

Text and music: David Lee Brown, Larry Olson, Karol Baer; copyright 1990 Dakota Road Music, used by permission

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, the Creator of heaven and earth,
the Word who spoke life into being, the Wind stirring the waters.

C: Amen.

P: Let us turn in confession to the one who knows us completely.

Silence for reflection and self-examination

P: Mighty God, lover of justice,

**C: you call us to life in community,
but we have served our own interests at the expense of our
neighbors.**

**We have sown deceit where honesty was needed.
We say the right words, but our hearts are far from you.
Turn us to seek your face.
Knit us together and give us the mind of Christ, that we may do
justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God.
Amen.**

P: The former things have passed away, and new things God now declares: Like a spring of water that never fails, God covers you in the righteousness of Christ, and forgives your sin in Jesus' name. May the Spirit give you strength to live for others, and bless you with the gift of peace.
C: Amen.

Hymn of Praise Now the Feast and Celebration
(For music turn to Hymn 789 in the Blue Hymnal)
Refrain

**Now the feast and celebration,
all of creation sings for joy
to the God of life and love and freedom
praise and glory forevermore!**

- 1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once slain,
whose blood has freed and united us
to be one great people of God.** *Refrain*
- 2. Power and riches, wisdom and might,
all honor and glory to Christ forever.** *Refrain*
- 3. For God has come to dwell with us,
to make us people of God;
to make all things new.** *Refrain*

Text and music: Marty Haugen; Copyright 1990 GIA Publications Inc.

Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray.

Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

† WORD †

First Reading Isaiah 32:15-18

B: A spirit from on high is poured out on us,
and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,
and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.

¹⁶Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,
and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.

¹⁷The effect of righteousness will be peace,
and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.

¹⁸My people will abide in a peaceful habitation,
in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Scripture Poetry Psalm 130 (*read responsively*)

D: From the depths I call to you

C: Lord, hear my cry.

**Catch the sound of my voice
raised up, pleading.**

D: If you record our sins,
Lord, who could survive?

**C: But because you forgive
we stand in awe.**

D: I trust in God's word,
I trust in the Lord.

**C: More than sentries for dawn
I watch for the Lord.**

D: More than sentries for dawn
let Israel watch.

**C: The Lord will bring mercy
and grant full pardon.**

**The Lord will free Israel
from all its sins.**

Second Reading Matthew 11:20 – 12:50

E: ²⁰Then [Jesus] began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done, because they did not repent. ²¹“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²But I tell you, on the day of judgment it will be

more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ²³And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to Hades. For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴But I tell you that on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for you.”

A: At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; ²⁶yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ²⁸“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

B: At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. ²When the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, “Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath.” ³He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴He entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him or his companions to eat, but only for the priests. ⁵Or have you not read in the law that on the sabbath the priests in the temple break the sabbath and yet are guiltless? ⁶I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. ⁷But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. ⁸For the Son of Man is lord of the sabbath.”

D: He left that place and entered their synagogue; ¹⁰a man was there with a withered hand, and they asked him, “Is it lawful to cure on the sabbath?” so that they might accuse him. ¹¹He said to them, “Suppose one of you has only one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath; will you not lay hold of it and lift it out? ¹²How much more valuable is a human being than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath.” ¹³Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and it was restored, as sound as the other. ¹⁴But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

E: When Jesus became aware of this, he departed. Many crowds followed him, and he cured all of them, ¹⁶and he ordered them not to make him known. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁸“Here is my servant, whom I have chosen,
my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased.

I will put my Spirit upon him,
and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.

¹⁹He will not wrangle or cry aloud,
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.

²⁰He will not break a bruised reed
or quench a smoldering wick
until he brings justice to victory.

²¹And in his name the Gentiles will hope.”

A: Then they brought to him a demoniac who was blind and mute; and he cured him, so that the one who had been mute could speak and see.

²³All the crowds were amazed and said, “Can this be the Son of David?”

²⁴But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, that this fellow casts out the demons.” ²⁵He knew what they were thinking and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. ²⁶If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own exorcists cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

²⁸But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. ²⁹Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his property, without first tying up the strong man? Then indeed the house can be plundered. ³⁰Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. ³¹Therefore I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³²Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

B: “Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵The good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and the evil person brings evil things out of an evil treasure. ³⁶I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter; ³⁷for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

D: Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.” ³⁹But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and

condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here! ⁴²The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!

E: “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but it finds none. ⁴⁴Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ When it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So will it be also with this evil generation.”

A: While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷Someone told him, “Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.” ⁴⁸But to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” ⁴⁹And pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Children’s Sermon

Sermon

Hymn of the Day Lord of the Dance
(for music, see Hymn 24 in the Songbook)

**1. I danced in the morning when the world was begun
and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun
and I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth;
at Bethlehem I had my birth.**

Refrain:

**Dance, dance wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance said he.
“And I’ll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I’ll lead you all in the dance,” said he.**

**2. I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee,
and they would not dance and they wouldn’t follow me.**

**I danced for the fishermen and James and John;
They came with me and the dance went on. *Refrain***

**3. I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame;
the holy people said it was a shame;
they whipped and they stripped and they hung me on high,
they left me there on the cross to die. *Refrain***

**4. I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black;
it's hard to dance with the devil on your back.
They buried my body and they thought I'd gone,
but I am the dance and I still go on. *Refrain***

**5. They cut me down and I leapt up high;
I am the life that will never, never die,
And I'll live in you if you live in me,
for I am the Lord of the dance, said he. *Refrain***

Text: Sydney Carter. Music: American Folk Tune. Copyright 1963 Stainer and Bell, Ltd. (Admin. by Hope Publishing Company)

Apostles' Creed

P: We confirm our faith with the Apostles' Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, 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, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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.

Peace

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: We share that peace with one another.

The congregation may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

Offertory and Gathering of Prayers and Offerings

You are invited to write a prayer concern on the small blank slip of paper in your worship bulletin. This slip will be collected by the ushers in the offering plates. The concerns raised will be prayed for later in the service.

Hymn of Thanksgiving Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful Lord

For music turn to page 35 in the Blue Hymnal

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

Offertory Prayer

P: Let us pray: God of majesty,

C: no eye has seen, nor ear heard what you have prepared for those who love you, yet in this meal you reveal the wideness of your mercy. Use what we have gathered to feed us with the kingdom of God come near, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

P: With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

Issues raised by the congregation are lifted in prayer.

The prayer concludes:

P: Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C: Amen.

† MEAL †

Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

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

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations; in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son, and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join in their unending hymn:

(Isaiah 6:3, spoken)

**C: Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
Heaven 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.**

P: In the night in which he was handed over our Lord Jesus took bread, 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."

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C: 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

P: Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Come to the table; taste and see.

Communion Distribution

Welcome to the Lord's Supper! All who are baptized are invited to receive communion. We use wheat bread and wine for communion. If you would prefer a gluten free wafer instead of bread please tell the communion assistant. Also, if

you prefer grape juice to wine, it is available pre-filled in the individual glasses. As we commune together everyone is invited to sing the following hymns:

Lamb of God (Page 39 of the Blue Hymnal)

460 *Now the Silence (Red Hymnal)*

461 *All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly (Red Hymnal)*

Communion Blessing *After all have communed the pastor will say:*

P: The body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

A: Let us pray:

Radiant God, we have seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. In the sacrament of his body and blood you have drawn us to your heart. Send us from this table with delight, that our lives may reflect the beauty of your love, and bear witness to all we have seen and heard, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

‡ SENDING ‡

Blessing

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

C: Amen.

Sending Hymn *God Be with You Till We Meet Again*

(For music see Hymn 536 in the Red Hymnal)

**1. God be with you till we meet again;
by good counsels guide, uphold you,
with a shepherd's care enfold you;
God be with you till we meet again.**

Refrain

**Till we meet, till we meet,
till we meet at Jesus' feet;
till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again**

2. **God be with you till we meet again;
holy wings securely hide you,
daily manna still provide you;
God be with you till we meet again. *Refrain***

3. **God be with you till we meet again;
when life's perils thick confound you,
put unailing arms around you;
God be with you till we meet again. *Refrain***

Text: Jeremiah E. Rankin, 1828-1904; Music: William G. Tomer, 1833-1896

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: God's Work. Our Hands.

Worship assistants TODAY:

Greeters and Ushers	Helen Crown
Acolyte	Elijah Young
Altar Care	Linda Thompson
Communion Assistant	Sue Kaufmann
Counters	Greg and Mary Zuege
Coffee Hour	

Worship assistants for next Sunday, February 22

Greeters and Ushers	Linda Flood
Acolyte	Thomas Bullwinkle
Counters	Burdie Gillern and Janice Lockwood
Coffee Hour	

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St. John's Lutheran Church
888 County Road 9, Victor, NY 14564
stjohnsvictor.com (585) 924-5192
The Rev. Jonathan Deibler, Pastor
Dongwon Shin, Pianist