

Saint Thomas Lutheran Church
Second Sunday After Epiphany - Service for Dr. Martin Luther King Day
January 18, 2026

Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Gathering Prayer

We gather today to celebrate Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus is a light unto the nations. Let us come and see, as we follow him in the pursuit of justice and peace for all people! **Amen.**

Confession and Forgiveness with excerpts from *Letter from Birmingham Jail*

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

On this day, we confess we have not always done our part to ensure that all of your children are treated with equity and fairness.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

We confess that we dwell in moderation.

Make us more devoted to justice than order.

We confess that we prefer negative peace
and the absence of tension.

**Make us pursue positive peace
and the presence of justice.**

We confess that we strive to set a comfortable timetable
for our siblings' liberation.

**Make us seize the fierce urgency of now,
that all may live in freedom.**

We confess that our shallow understanding
and lukewarm acceptance of our neighbors' calls for justice
have fallen short of your commandment
to love God and neighbor as ourselves.

**Let us arise in the power of the Holy Spirit,
committed to nonviolent, direct action, alongside our
siblings of color, for the sake of Christ. Amen.**

Beloveds, hear this good news!

God, who is an extremist for love, forgives us all our sin.
Sent out to love our enemies, let us bless those who curse us,
do good to those who hate us,
and pray for those who spitefully use and persecute us.

In the name of the † one God, triune and eternal, we say,
Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God.
Amen!

Thanksgiving for Baptism

In the name of the Father,
and of the † Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,
we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness.
Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.
We give you thanks, O God,
for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters
and by your Word you created the world,
calling forth life in which you took delight.

Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family.
Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom.
At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit.
By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons,
making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life,
and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ.
Shower us with your Spirit,
and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.

To you be given honor and praise
through Jesus Christ our Lord
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.
Amen.

Gathering Song *Arise, Your Light Has Come!* (ELW 314)

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 (ELW p. 138)

Canticle of Praise (ELW p. 140)

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Holy God, our strength and our redeemer, by your Spirit hold us forever, that through your grace we may worship you and faithfully serve you, follow you and joyfully find you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Word

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

First Reading: Isaiah 49:1-7

A reading from Isaiah.

- ¹ Listen to me, O coastlands;
pay attention, you peoples from far away!
The Lord called me before I was born;
while I was in my mother's womb he named me.
- ² He made my mouth like a sharp sword;
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow;
in his quiver he hid me away.
- ³ And he said to me, "You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified."
- ⁴ But I said, "I have labored in vain;
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my cause is with the Lord
and my reward with my God."
- ⁵ And now the Lord says,
who formed me in the womb to be his servant,
to bring Jacob back to him,
and that Israel might be gathered to him,
for I am honored in the sight of the Lord,
and my God has become my strength—
- ⁶ he says,
"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to restore the survivors of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

⁷ Thus says the Lord,
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,
the slave of rulers,
“Kings shall see and stand up;
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves,
because of the Lord, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 40:1-11

¹ I waited patiently up- | on the Lord,
who stooped to me and | heard my cry.

² **The Lord lifted me out of the desolate pit, out of the | miry clay,
and set my feet upon a high cliff, making my | footing sure.**

³ The Lord put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise | to our God;
many shall see, and stand in awe, and put their trust | in the Lord.

⁴ **Happy are they who trust | in the Lord!**

They do not turn to enemies or to those who | follow lies. R

⁵ Great are the wonders you have done, O Lord my God! In your plans for us, none
can be com- | pared with you!

Oh, that I could make them known and tell them! But they are more than | I can
count.

⁶ **Sacrifice and offering you do | not desire;
you have opened my ears: burnt-offering and sin-offering you have | not
required. R**

⁷ And so I said, “Here I | am; I come.
In the scroll of the book it is writ- | ten of me:

⁸ **“I love to do your will, | O my God;
your law is | deep within me.”**”

⁹ I proclaimed righteousness in the | great assembly;
I have not restrained my lips, O | Lord, you know.

¹⁰ **I have not hidden your righteousness in my heart; I have spoken of your
faithfulness and | your deliverance;**

I have not concealed your steadfast love and truth from the | great assembly.

¹¹ You are the Lord; do not withhold your compas- | sion from me;
may your steadfast love and your truth continually | keep me safe. **R**

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

¹ Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

² To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind ⁶ just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸ He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the partnership of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation (ELW p. 142)

Gospel: John 1:29-42

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²⁹ [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” ³⁰ This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’ ³¹ I myself did not know him, but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.” ³² And John testified, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’” ³⁴ And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Chosen One.”

³⁵ The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by he exclaimed, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” ³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” ³⁹ He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon. ⁴⁰ One of the two who

heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). ⁴² He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon - Pastor Mary Metzger

Hymn of the Day *Jesus Calls Us; o'er the Tumult* (ELW 696)

Creed

**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.**

Prayers of Intercession with excerpts from *I Have a Dream*

As we follow Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

God of the dreamer, may the church rise up and live out our baptismal promise to work for justice and peace in all the world. May we be a great beckoning light of hope to all people who have been seared in the flames of withering injustice.

Lord, listen to your children praying . . .

God of the dreamer, help us to seek environmental justice in all the countries of your world. Where people of color have disproportionately borne the brunt of our

sinfulness against creation, let us work toward equitable access to safe and healthy neighborhoods for all.

Lord, listen to your children praying . . .

God of the dreamer, bless every nation with leaders after your own heart. Cause us to notice those who are still languishing in the corners of our society, or who are exiles in their own lands.

Lord, listen to your children praying . . .

God of the dreamer, we know that all humans are impacted by the grievous sin of racism. May we each enjoy the riches of freedom and the security of justice. Kindle within us the fierce urgency of now, that we may walk together upon the sunlit paths of racial justice.

Lord, listen to your children praying . . .

God of the dreamer, we give thanks for the life and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We pray for all who grieve the untimely death of a loved one due to murder, police brutality, gun violence, or any other miscarriage of justice. May we cling tenaciously to the promise that in the kingdom of God, every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, the crooked places will be made straight, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

Lord, listen to your children praying . . .

All these things we ask in full confidence, as we cry out prophetically:

Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last! Amen.

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offering *Create in Me a Clean Heart (Capers)* (ELW 185)

Offering Prayer

God of majesty,
no eye has seen, no ear has 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 reign of God come near,
Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

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 Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Preface

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 their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy, Holy (ELW p. 144)

Thanksgiving at the Table

Blessed are you, O holy God:

you are the Life and Light of all.

By your powerful word you created all things.

Through the prophets you called your people to be a light to the nations.

Blessed are you for Jesus, your Son.

He is your Light, shining in our darkness
and revealing to us your mercy and might.

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

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Remembering, therefore,
his preaching and healing,
his dying and rising,
and his promise to come again,
we await that day when all the universe
will rejoice in your holy and life-giving light.
By your Spirit bless us and this meal,
that, refreshed with this heavenly food,
we may be light for the world,
revealing the brilliance of your Son.
Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever.
Amen

Lord's Prayer

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

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Invitation to Communion

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

Communion

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.
Amen.

Communion Song *Lamb of God* (ELW p. 146)

Prayer after Communion

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.
Amen.

Sending

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

Blessing with excerpts from *I Have Been to the Mountaintop*

May the † triune God enable us to work tirelessly,
make sacrifices, and never give up until all people are free.
As we hear the words of God's prophet:
Rise up with greater readiness.
Stand with greater determination.
Move on in these powerful days.
And do God's will,
trusting that together we will get to the promised land!
And all God's people say,
Amen!

Sending Song *We Are Marching in the Light: Siyahamba* (ELW 866)

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve.
Thanks be to God!

From sundaysandseasons.com.

Copyright © 2026 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.