



TREE OF LIFE

Christian Fellowship

“for Healing, Obedience, & Peace on Earth” (H.O.P.E.)



Epiphany II | 18 Jan 2026

“Like Sheep Among Wolves”

Matthew 9:18—10:42

✠ The Way of Jesus Liturgy ✠

Invocation

Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth, ♦ **you created us to serve and protect your creation.** ♦ But we selfishly destroy the balance of your creation ♦ **by choosing our own “good” and making Civilization.** ♦ So you send your Son Jesus to embody the Way of the Lamb, ♦ **so we will die with him to Civilization’s Way of arrogance, fear, and violence.** ♦ And also be reborn with him through your Holy Spirit ♦ **to care for all of your creation by following Jesus’s Way of faith, hope, and love.**

Processional Song — LSB 932 “Jesus Sat With His Disciples”

- ♫ *Jesus sat with his disciples on a mountain and he said, “Blessed are the poor and hungry, Heaven’s Kingdom gives them bread. Blessed are the meek and humble, all of the earth they will own. Yes, the merciful are blessed, mercy to them will be shown.”* ♫
- ♫ *“Blessed are God’s sons and daughters, making peace where there is strife. Blessed are the persecuted, who faithfully lose their life. Their reward comes from the Father, as his love comes from above—so be glad to share my suff’ring and rejoice to know my love.”*
- ♫ *“Love your enemies who hurt you, turn your other cheek in trust. Speak well of those who abuse you, pray for those who hate you most. Your Father has shown you mercy, so forgiveness you must learn. What you give and do to others, you will receive in return.”*
- ♫ *“Do not worry about your life, or give in to anxious fear. Do not store up for tomorrow, for it will all disappear. Your Father has you in his hands, he treasures your every hair. He will be with you through all life, everything is in his care.”* ♫

Epiphany Litany

Our world that is living in darkness ♦ **has now seen a great light.**
This light has come to the nations ♦ **who all live in the shadow of death.**
Jesus has come to awaken us ♦ **to the presence of his Kingdom.**

Prayer of the Day

Jesus says, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there with them.”
(the Christ candle is lit to remind us that Jesus is coming among us)

♫ *The people that in darkness sat, a glorious light will see. The light has shined on them who are, held in death’s slavery. Held in death’s slavery. ♫ For unto us a child is born, to us a Son is giv’n. And on his shoulder ever rests, all pow’r in earth and heav’n. All pow’r in earth and heav’n. ♫ (LSB 412)*

The Lord Jesus be with you. ♦ **And also with you.** ♦ Let us pray. Heavenly Father, help us to trust in you so deeply that we can become loving sheep in a world full of greedy wolves. In the name of Jesus, your Son, our Lord. ✠ **Amen.**

† Baptism — The Way of Faith †

Surrendering to the Creator

Jesus says, “If you hold onto your life, ♦ **you will destroy it.** ♦ But if you let go of your life, ♦ **you will save it.** ♦ You must be born again through water and the Spirit ♦ **to enter the Creator’s Kingdom.”** ♦ Father, Son, & Holy Spirit ♦ **I surrender to you**

all of my † mind, all of my † heart, and all of my † body and † soul.

(we make the sign of the cross—touching forehead, heart, and shoulders)

Father, into your hands ♦ **I commit my spirit.** ♦ Father, not my will, ♦ **but your will be done.** ♪ *Take my life and all my heart, take my whole soul ev'ry part. Take my mouth and let it be, filled with your truth and mercy.* ♪ *Take my hands and let them love, with compassion from above. Take my feet and let them go, on the Way that Jesus showed.* ♪ *Take my money and fam'ly, give me faith and set me free. Take my life and teach me how to love all creation now.* ♪ (LSB 783)

Listening to the Creator

Jesus says, “Come to me, all of you who are tired and burdened. Learn from me and practice my teachings and you will find rest for your souls. Those who listen will live.”

♪ *Listen to what Jesus teaches, listen to him every day. Listen as you walk and follow, listen also as you pray. Listen to him every moment, listen with an open mind. Listen to find peace and patience, listen so you will be kind.* ♪ (LSB 770)

Remembering the Saints & Martyrs — Sebastian

Father, we give you thanks for the great cloud of saints and witnesses who have gone before us and have embodied the Way of Jesus. Today we remember Sebastian who joined the Roman army to be an insider who could help those being martyred for their Christian faith. When he was found out he refused to recant his faith and persisted in converting others to Jesus. He was tied to a tree and shot with arrows, but miraculously survived. When he returned to the Emperor in 288 AD to show him that he was still alive, the Emperor killed him. Help us learn from his faith and example, † **Amen.**

Chanted Psalm — Psalm 9



♪ *I will give thanks to the Lord with | all my heart,
* For you will rebuke and destroy | the nations,
The rebellious will come to an end | in ruins,
* and you will uproot the cities and will destroy | their memory.
The Lord will be a stronghold for | the oppressed
* and for those who trust in him instead of armies | and rulers.
For the wicked are destroyed by | their own works,
* but the needy will not be forgotten | by the Lord.* ♪

Law & Prophets — Isaiah 9:1-7

The Prophets reading comes from Isaiah 9. ♦ **Blessed are the ears that listen.**
We do not live on bread alone, ♦ **but on every word from the Lord.**

Epistle — 1 Corinthians 7:17-31

The Epistle reading comes from 1 Corinthians 7. ♦ **Blessed are the ears that listen.**
We do not live on bread alone, ♦ **but on every word from the Lord.**

† Holy Gospel † Matthew 10:16-22

We stand for the word of Jesus. ♪ *Praise the one who breaks the darkness with a*

liberating light. Praise the one who frees the pris'ners, turning blindness into sight. Praise the one who preached the Gospel, healing ev'ry dread disease, calming storms, and feeding thousands with the very bread of peace. ♪ (tune: LSB 849)

The holy Gospel comes from Matthew 10. ♦ **Blessed are those who listen to Jesus.** If you have ears to hear, then listen! ♦ **Lord Jesus, help us to practice your Word.**

Message

† Repentance — The Way of Hope †

Confronting Our Past

Jesus says, “I know everything you do. Pay attention and remove the log from your own eye. I have called you out of Civilization. Repent, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!”

(silence for reflection)

For prostituting ourselves with the false lovers of self, family, and nation,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to love you with every thought, word, and deed.**

For trusting the technology and works of human hands, especially money,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to trust in your power alone.**

For being double-minded hypocrites who misrepresent your name,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to obediently live as your children.**

For overworking and not protecting land, animals, and each other,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to live in restful peace with all creation.**

For not respecting those you send to guide us and teach us,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to listen to our fathers and mothers in Christ.**

For being violent to our bodies and your creation,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to love all creation, including our enemies.**

For degrading ourselves and others with our sexuality,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to keep our sexuality within marriage.**

For trying to possess and control your creation,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to share everything we have.**

For not being vulnerable and honest with others,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to be truthful in all situations.**

For competing with others and desiring more than we need,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to be content in all circumstances.**

Father, turn us back to walking in your Spirit. ♪ *Lord Father we have wandered and hidden from your face. Rescue your whole creation with your almighty grace. From trust in wealth and weapons and blindness to your Way, save us and all creation with your own hands, we pray.* ♪ (LSB 449) Jesus says, “I discipline those I love. If you love your self, family, or nation more than me, you cannot be my disciple. Come out of Civilization, my people, so you will not share in its sicknesses. Not one stone will be left standing, it will all be torn down.” Will you turn away from Civilization’s Way of arrogance, fear, and violence and reaffirm your Baptism into Jesus’s Way of faith, hope, and love? ♦ **Yes, I renounce Civilization’s Way and pledge to follow Jesus.** ♦ Jesus says, “Put your sword away. If you live by the sword, you will die by the sword. But if you forgive others, your heavenly Father will forgive you.” Will you release all debts and grudges that you hold against anyone—including every member of this church? ♦

Yes, I forgive all those who have hurt me, frustrated me, or owe me anything. ♦
Jesus says, “Your sins are forgiven. Get up and walk. Go and sin no more.” † **Amen.**

Song of the Day — **“Don't Fear, Little Flock” (tune: LSB 802)**

- ♫ **“Don't fear, little flock!” Jesus lovingly told, While fear, greed and hatred might seem now to hold. “For it is your Father's good pleasure to give.” God offers a kingdom—a new way to live.** ♪
- ♫ **So sell your possessions, share with the needy, God's treasure is despised by all the greedy. Make purses that nothing on earth can destroy, which consist of sharing, compassion, and joy.** ♪
- ♫ **Don't fear, little flock, don't be in a hurry, Light lamps for God's kingdom, and do not worry, When powerful people cause suffering and hurt. Never stop your praying; O Church, stay alert!** ♪
- ♫ **Don't fear, little flock, keep loving your neighbor, God gives us the kingdom, calls us to labor, In ways that are fearless and loving and bold. Help children who need you and cherish the old.** ♪
- ♫ **In this world of suffering beyond all measure, God gives us the kingdom; God gives us treasure. In this world of lying and violence and strife, God gives us the Way and the Truth and the Life.** ♪

Waiting on the Creator

♫ **Our Father, bring your Rule and will to earth. Give what we need for worry-free rebirth. Bring peace among us and forgive us too, as we forgive and love in all we do.**
♫ **Protect us from all things that will mislead. Keep us from selfishness, violence, and greed. We place our lives into your hands this day. Teach us to listen and to walk your Way. Amen.** ♪ (LSB 637)

(incense is lit to symbolize our prayers ascending to God and as its
smell fills this space we are reminded of his presence among us)

Jesus says, “Learn from the birds. They do not store up for tomorrow and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Do not fear or worry about tomorrow. Seek only your Father’s Kingdom and he will give you everything you need.”

*In peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♫ **Lord have mercy.** ♫* Father, set us apart from Civilization in all our thoughts, words, and deeds. Take charge of our lives and all those in authority. Use everything that happens to bring your good judgment and healing upon all creation. *In peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♫ **Lord have mercy.** ♫* Father, provide for us, protect us, and heal our brokenness. Especially this day we remember Charlene Sargent, John Espino, Bill Mellott, Cebra Sims, and those we name in our hearts... Father, give us exactly what we need this day and teach us to be content with that. *In peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♫ **Lord have mercy.** ♫* Father, forgive us and free us from all that enslaves us. Help us to walk away from our anxieties, traumas, and addictions to Civilization’s Way, so we may walk in Jesus’s Way. Empower us to love and forgive everyone, even our enemies, in the way you have loved and forgiven us. *In peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♫ **Lord have mercy.** ♫* Father, humble us and remind us that we have no strength apart from you. Stay with us in difficult times and save us from our selfishness. Comfort us in the certain hope that all your creation and children will be renewed and raised from the dead. *In peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♫ **Lord***

have mercy. ♪ Father, help us to let go and surrender everything into your loving hands, trusting that you work all things for the good of those who love you. ♦ **Our Father in Heaven, may your name be holy, may your Kingdom come, and may your will be done—on Earth as in Heaven. Give us this day what we need for today. Forgive us in the same way that we forgive others. Do not abandon us when we are tempted, but pull us away from what is evil. For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours—now and forever.** † Amen.

† Communion — The Way of Love †

Sharing the Lord's Peace

Jesus says, “Make peace with each other ♦ **before you come to the Lord's altar.** By this all people will know that you are my disciples: ♦ **if you love each other.**”

Offering & Musical Offering

Jesus says, “Do not store up things on earth. To be my disciple you must give up everything you own. Sell your possessions and give to the poor.” We offer all we have to the Lord, while also offering gifts to support this communion.

Pledge of Allegiance

♪ *We come before you, Lord, to bow. We lay our lives at your feet now. All things are yours, we own nothing! Our lives are in your hands this day. Give what we need, O Lord, we pray. Please protect us, provide for us! Watch over us, ever with us, always love us!* ♪ (LSB 816) Jesus says, “If you pledge your allegiance to me before others, then I will pledge my allegiance to you before my heavenly Father.”

♦ **I pledge allegiance to one God, the all-powerful Father, who is the Creator of Heaven and Earth, of all things visible and invisible.**

♦ **I pledge allegiance to one Lord, Jesus Christ, who is God's only Son. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He loved and he suffered. Under Pontius Pilate, he was crucified, died, and was buried. On the third day he was raised from the dead. He ascended to heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. He is coming to judge the living and the dead. His Kingdom will not end.**

♦ **I pledge allegiance to the Holy Spirit, who is the giver of life, the holy universal Church, the communion of saints, the baptism for forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life in the age to come.** † Amen.

Thanksgiving — Εὐχαριστία

Let us give thanks to our Creator! ♦ **It is right to give him thanks and praise!**

Father, we praise and thank you, ♦ **for you provide, protect, love, and renew us and all creation!** ♦ We are grateful for all that you give, especially for... Father, we thank you for marrying yourself to us and uniting Heaven and Earth, Spirit and Flesh, and Christ and the Church through your Son Jesus! ♪ *Let all creation be humble and rejoice in awe and fear. We give thanks to our Lord Jesus who brings heaven to us here. He is giving himself to us and his presence has come near.* ♪ (tune: LSB 621)

† Words of Our Lord Jesus †

On the night before our Lord Jesus was crucified, he revealed his Way of rescuing all creation from the Way of Civilization. Before supper, Jesus humbly washed the feet of his students and enemies. Jesus said, ♦ **“Follow my example. Love each other, even your enemies, in the same way I have loved you.”** ♦ During supper, Jesus then took the bread and broke it. He gave it to them, saying, “This is my body which is being given for you. Do the same for each other in my memory.” After supper, Jesus then took the cup and gave thanks. He said, “This is my blood of the covenant which is being shed for you, for the forgiveness of your sin. Do the same for each other in my memory.” ♪ ***Oh come Lord Jesus come and dine and give yourself through bread and wine. Feed us so we may have new birth, and bring your rule ov'r all the earth. Come now, come now! Our Lord Jesus and bring your healing love to us!*** ♪ (LSB 357)

Sharing the Bread & Wine

Jesus says, “I am the bread of life. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood is united with me and will be raised from the dead.” As we feed on the Bread of Heaven ♦ **we are made members of Christ’s Body.** ♦ We no longer live for ourselves ♦ **but Christ lives within us.** ♦ We invite all Baptized members of the holy universal Church, who give their undivided allegiance to Jesus and are at peace with their brothers and sisters in Christ, to join us ♦ **as the Creator’s Lamb mysteriously gives himself to us in, with, and under this bread, wine, and communion.** ♪ ***We fall down now before you, Jesus you are the Lord. We lay our crowns before you, and put down all our swords. We give you all of our lives, we will hold nothing back. For you gave us everything, there is nothing we lack. You are the true Lamb of God, you gave your life for all. Teach us now to live like lambs, to trust you as we fall.*** ♪ (LSB 941)

Song — “If God Himself Be for Me” (tune: LSB 644)

- ♪ ***If God Himself be for me, I may a host defy; For when I pray, before me My foes, confounded, fly. If Christ, the head and master, Befriend me from above, What foe or what disaster Can drive me from His love?*** ♪
- ♪ ***Who clings with resolution To Him whom Satan hates Must look for persecution; For him the burden waits Of mock'ry, shame, and losses Heaped on his blameless head; A thousand plagues and crosses Will be his daily bread.*** ♪
- ♪ ***From me this is not hidden, Yet am I not afraid; I leave my cares, as bidden, To whom my vows were paid. Though life from me be taken And ev'rything I own, I trust in You unshaken And cleave to You alone.*** ♪
- ♪ ***No danger, thirst, or hunger, No pain or poverty, No earthly tyrant's anger Shall ever vanquish me. Though earth should break asunder, My fortress You shall be; No fire or sword or thunder Shall sever You from me.*** ♪
- ♪ ***No angel and no gladness, No throne, no pomp, no show, No love, no hate, no sadness, No pain, no depth of woe, No scheming, no contrivance, No subtle thing or great Shall draw me from Your guidance Nor from You separate.*** ♪

Ἀγάπη Feast & Text Discussion

Jesus says, “Do you love me? Then feed my sheep.” We now move to our Bible study room to continue devoting ourselves ♦ **“to the Apostles’ teaching, to communion**

with each other, to the sharing of bread, and to prayer.”

Sent to “Do the Same in My Memory”

Christ Jesus, you are the Lamb, who has laid down your body and blood for us, ♦ **help us to be lambs who do the same for each other in your memory.** † Amen.

Jesus says, “Go and live this truth: ♦ **The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!** ♦ Heal the sick, raise the dead, ♦ **cleanse the unclean, and cast out evil spirits.** ♦ Freely you have received from the Creator, ♦ **now freely you must give.** ♦ I am sending you like lambs among wolves, ♦ **but do not fear, take up your cross and follow me.”**

♫ *Hail to the Lord’s anointed, he is God’s very son! Hail, in the time appointed, his reign on earth begun! He comes to break oppression, to set the captives free, to take away transgression and rule in equity. ♫ He comes with healing speedy, to those who suffer wrong, to help the poor and needy, and bid the weak be strong: to give them songs for sighing, their darkness turn to light, their souls condemned and dying, are precious in his sight. ♫ (LSB 398)*

Blessing

Jesus says, “Blessed are you in your poverty and suffering, for you are in the Creator’s Kingdom. Blessed are you in your humility, for you will inherit the earth. Blessed are you when you are merciful and peaceful, for you will find mercy and peace.” † **Amen.**

* Faith & Film: “The Woodsman” (Jan 19, 26) | “The Chosen” Season 5 (Feb 2, 16, 23, Mar 2, 9, 16, 23, 30)

* Growing in H.O.P.E.: Wednesdays @ DG (5:30 pm food/fellowship, 6:00 pm study)

Questions & Conversations:

Jan 21 — “Biblical Interpretation”

Jan 28 — “Violence in the Old Testament”

Feb 4 — “The End Times”

* Game Night: First Fridays @ DG (6 pm, BYOB), Feb 6, Mar 6

Weekly Calendar | January 18 - 25, 2026

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| Sun, Jan 18 | 9:30 am | Liturgy & Αγάπη Feast Matthew 9:18—10:42 |
| Mon, Jan 19 | 6:00 pm | Faith & Film |
| Wed, Jan 21 | 6:00 pm | Growing in H.O.P.E. |
| Sat, Jan 24 | 7-9 am | Breakfast & Devotion |
| Sun, Jan 25 | 9:30 am | Liturgy & Αγάπη Feast Matthew 11:1—12:45 |

Tree of Life Christian Fellowship (722 Reynolds Ave) — www.TreeofLifeKC.com

Luke Kammrath, Pastor — luke.kammrath@gmail.com (913) 303-0977

Marie Sasnett, Financial Deacon — marie.stlukes@gmail.com

Marsha Oyer, Music — arbpe@sbcglobal.net

Disciple Garden (DG): 3200 N 10th Street, Kansas City, KS 66104

Donate Online Through Venmo: @StLukes-Church

