

# Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

Epiphany Sunday

Sunday, January 4, 2026

9:30 AM



**130 S. Lone Oak Dr. Leesburg, FL 34748**

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**We welcome all who worship with us. If you are a guest, we are especially glad that you have chosen to worship with us today. Our worship is always enhanced by new faces and voices. If you are already a part of our church family, welcome home.**

The feast of Epiphany (“manifestation”) concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God’s glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God’s love to all people.

## **Participating in Today’s Service:**

**Pastor:** Pastor Lynn M. Fonfara

**Music Director:** Len Cremisio

**After Worship Secretary:** Gayle Bloom *(In order to assist the Pastor, if you need the Pastor to contact someone or address something)*

### **Assistant Ministers**

**Reader:** Kathy Bush

**Crucifer:**

**Assisting Minister:** Patricia Bressler

**Ushers:** Crystal Kirkpatrick, Byron Kirkpatrick, John Kelly, Craig Carlson

## **Prelude:**

## **WELCOME AND WORSHIP ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **PREPARE FOR WORSHIP**

## **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,  
Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty Savior,  
Prince of Peace.

**Amen.**

Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness,  
let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Reconciling God,  
**we yearn for your presence to transform  
our grief, pain, and despair.  
We confess that we have not always prepared  
room in our hearts for your love;  
we have not always recognized  
your presence among us;  
we have not always embraced your message of peace.  
We cry out, weary with the burden of violence,  
oppression, and fear.  
We confess our failure to make room  
for those seeking refuge;  
our participation in violent systems  
that harm your innocent ones;  
our reluctance to embody your good news.  
Be born in us today  
and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation.  
Amen.**

God's grace upon grace flows over you.

✝ Christ's presence redeems the whole creation.

Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!

**Amen.**

**ENTRANCE HYMN: ELW 303 "Brightest and Best of the Stars"**

## **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 157 Kyrie**

**HYMN OF PRAISE: ELW 828 "Alleluia! Voices Raise"**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

## **WORD**

### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 60:1-6**

*Jerusalem is assured that nations will make a pilgrimage to her because the light of God's presence is in her midst. The bountiful food of the sea and the profits of international trade will come streaming to Jerusalem and thereby declare God's praise.*

- <sup>1</sup> Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
- <sup>2</sup> For darkness shall cover the earth  
and thick darkness the peoples,  
but the LORD will arise upon you,  
and his glory will appear over you.
- <sup>3</sup> Nations shall come to your light  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
- <sup>4</sup> Lift up your eyes and look around;  
they all gather together; they come to you;  
your sons shall come from far away,  
and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms.
- <sup>5</sup> Then you shall see and be radiant;  
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,  
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you;  
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
- <sup>6</sup> A multitude of camels shall cover you,  
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
all those from Sheba shall come.  
They shall bring gold and frankincense  
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM: Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14



Psalm 72:11

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- <sup>1</sup> Give the king your jus- | tice, O God,  
and your righteousness to | the king's son;  
<sup>2</sup> **that he may rule your | people righteously  
and the | poor with justice;**  
<sup>3</sup> that the mountains may bring prosperity | to the people,  
and the | hills, in righteousness.  
<sup>4</sup> **Let him defend the needy a- | mong the people,  
rescue the poor, and crush | the oppressor. R**  
<sup>5</sup> May he live as long as the sun and | moon endure,  
from one generation | to another.  
<sup>6</sup> **Let him come down like rain upon | the mown field,  
like showers that wa- | ter the earth.**  
<sup>7</sup> In his time may the | righteous flourish;  
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon  
shall | be no more.  
<sup>10</sup> **May the kings of Tarshish and of the | isles pay tribute,  
and the kings of Sheba and Seba | offer gifts. R**  
<sup>11</sup> May all kings bow | down before him,  
and all the nations | do him service.  
<sup>12</sup> **For the king delivers the poor who cry out | in distress,  
the oppressed, and those who | have no helper.**  
<sup>13</sup> He has compassion on the low- | ly and poor,  
and preserves the lives | of the needy.  
<sup>14</sup> **From oppression and violence he re- | deems their  
lives,  
and precious is their blood | in his sight. R**

## SECOND READING: Ephesians 3:1-12

*What had been hidden from previous generations is now made known through the gospel ministry of Paul and others. In Christ both Jews and Gentiles participate in the richness of God's promised salvation.*

<sup>1</sup> This is the reason that I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you gentiles, <sup>2</sup> for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you <sup>3</sup> and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, <sup>4</sup> a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. <sup>5</sup> In former generations this mystery was not made known to

humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: <sup>6</sup> that is, the gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

<sup>7</sup> Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. <sup>8</sup> Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ <sup>9</sup> and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, <sup>10</sup> so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. <sup>11</sup> This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, <sup>12</sup> in whom we have access in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: ELW pg. 518 "We Eat the Bread of Teaching"** *(Refrain only)*

**GOSPEL: Matthew 2:1-12**

*God's promise shines bright in the night as magi follow a star to honor a new king. Strangers from a faraway land, they welcome the long-awaited messiah of Israel.*

The holy gospel according to Matthew

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage." <sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, <sup>4</sup> and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.' "

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> Then he sent

them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." <sup>9</sup> When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup> On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

*The gospel concludes:*

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

*The assembly is seated.*

*Silence for reflection follows the sermon.*

**HYMN OF THE DAY: ELW 815 "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"**

## **NICENE CREED**

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## **BRIEF ORDER FOR HEALING**

*The congregation is seated*

### **Introduction:**

**P:** Our Lord Jesus healed many as a sign of the reign of God come near and sent the disciples to continue this work of healing—with prayer, the laying on of hands, and anointing. In the name of Christ, the great healer and reconciler of the world, we now entrust to God all who are in need of healing

### **Prayer:**

Mighty God, your Son Jesus brought healing and wholeness to all. Bring your healing presence now to all who are sick or in pain. Grant hope to all who are discouraged or in despair. In your great mercy, hear us, O God. **Amen**

### **Laying on of Hands:**

**P:** Sisters and brothers, I invite you to come and receive a sign of healing and wholeness in the name of the triune God.

*You are invited to come forward if you wish to do so.*

**P:** in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, be strengthened and filled with God's grace, that you may know the healing power of the Spirit.

**C AMEN.**

*When all have returned to their seats, the Assisting Minister continues*

## **A: Let us Pray.**

Living God, through the laying on of hands and anointing, grant comfort in suffering to all who are in need of healing. When they are afraid, give them courage; when afflicted, give them patience; when dejected, give them hope; and when alone, assure them of the support of your holy people. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

## **C: AMEN.**

## **Blessing:**

**P:** Almighty God, who is a strong tower to all, to whom all things in Heaven and on Earth bow and obey, be now and evermore your sure defense, and help you to know that the name given to us for health and salvation is the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Hear Us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

## **PEACE**

*The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other.*

*The peace of Christ be with you always.*

**And also with you.**

*The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say, "Peace be with you," or similar words.*

*The assembly is seated.*

## **MEAL**

## **OFFERING**

*An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.*

Deuteronomy 16:17

Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord, your God, which he has given you.

## **OFFERTORY: ACS 1056 "God Bless to Us Our Bread"**

## **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

*After the table is set, the assisting minister leads in prayer. Please stand at the invitation to pray:*

God of glory,  
great are your wonders among us  
and many are the blessings you bestow.  
Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world,  
that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace,  
through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

## **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

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....

...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**SANCTUS: ELW pg. 153 "Holy, holy, holy"**

## **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

*The Presiding minister leads the Eucharistic Prayer*

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

... We look with hope for his coming.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

... Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

*At the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer, all say:*

... Now and forever. **Amen.**

## **\*THE LORDS PRAYER (Spoken)**

*(Those who wish may hold hands as a sign of Christian unity).*

**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. Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Here is life. God is with us.

Come, receive what God has promised.

**LAMB OF GOD: ELW 195 "Lamb of God"**

## **DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION**

*All Baptized Christians are welcome to commune. Those who do not wish to commune are invited to come forward to receive a blessing (fold your arms over your chest).*

*The Body is available as bread or gluten-free Host.*

*The Blood is available as wine (large chalices) or non-alcoholic juice (small chalice).*

*When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say:*

*The body of Christ, given for you.*

*The blood of Christ, shed for you.*

*The appropriate response is:*

*Amen.*

*During the distribution, please pray silently or join in singing.*

**HYMN: ELW 300 "The First Noel"**

**CHOIR: "Beyond the Moon and Stars"**

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

*Please remain seated:*

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table.

May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts  
the mystery of your presence.

Move us to discover the wonders of your love  
in the everyday moments of our lives,  
through Christ born in us.

**Amen.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **SENDING**

### **BLESSING**

The triune God,  
glorious Mystery,  
holy Incarnate One,  
abiding Comforter,

✝ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.

**Amen.**

**SENDING HYMN: ELW 671 "Shine, Jesus, Shine"**

## **DISMISSAL**

Glory to God in the highest!

**And peace to God's people on earth!**

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **POSTLUDE: Voluntary**

***The end of Worship –  
The beginning of Christian Ministry.***

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Pastor Lynn M. Fonfara	c. 352-249-8533
Evelyn Rollins, Administrator	c. 352-787-3223
Leonard Cremisio, Music Director	c. 352-638-3695

**Altar Care:** Crystal & Byron Kirkpatrick,  
Craig Carlson

**After Worship Sec.: 9:30 a.m** Gayle Bloom *(In order to assist the Pastor, if you need the Pastor to contact someone or address something)*

**Counters:** Jeanne Talts

**Greeters:** 9:30 a.m.

**Fellowship:** John and Janet Braun

**Communion Wine:** For January is given to the Glory of God.

**Altar Flowers:** For January is given to the Glory of God.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS!

## THIS WEEKS CALENDAR

Sun.	1/4	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Worship / Brief Order For Healing
Mon.	1/5	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Bible Study
Tues.	1/6	10:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
		10:30 a.m.	WELCA Board Meeting
Wed.	1/7	10:00 a.m.	Call Committee Meeting
		4:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Fri.	1/9	8:30 a.m.	Joining Hands in Food Ministry

## NEXT WEEKS CALENDAR

Sun.	1/11	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Worship
Mon.	1/12	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Bible Study
Tues.	1/13	9:00 a.m.	Mary Martha Circle
		10:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
Wed.	1/14	10:00 a.m.	Call Committee Meeting
		4:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Thurs.	1/15	9:30 a.m.	Ruth Circle

Attendance for Sunday, December 28, 2025: 55

## BIRTHDAYS

Margi Geiger	January 4 <sup>th</sup>
Bob Pierce	January 4 <sup>th</sup>
Bess King	January 9 <sup>th</sup>
Jean Talts	January 10 <sup>th</sup>
Dennis Marcotte	January 10 <sup>th</sup>
Chris Russell	January 10 <sup>th</sup>

## BIBLE STUDIES

Developing Disciples Bible Study will not be meeting until further notice.



### Zoom Bible Study

The group has chosen a new study topic based on a video series from The Great Courses, called ***Sacred Texts of the World*** . We will spend January and February exploring the sacred writings (other than our familiar Bible) that have shaped the identities, beliefs and actions of large segments of humanity. Our leader will be Dr. Grant Hardy, Professor of History and Religious Studies at the University of North

Carolina, Asheville. We will watch a 30-minute video lecture and discuss what we have learned. **This topic starts January 5 at 7pm.** Contact the church office for the Zoom meeting link.

**Interested in Leading a Bible Study?** We are looking for individuals who feel called to lead a Bible Study group. If you have a passion for scripture and a desire to help others grow in their faith, we encourage you to consider this opportunity. If you're interested or would like more information, please speak with Christine Carlson.

## **WE NEED VOLUNTEERS.....**

We need **volunteers for Assisting Ministers, Crucifers and Readers!!!** If you would like to try it but need a little more information, please contact the church office. Thank you.



### **Help Host Our After-Worship Gatherings!**

We're looking for volunteers to provide light refreshments—such as snacks, coffee, and juice—after worship on Sundays. It's a great way to extend our fellowship and hospitality. **If you'd like to help, please enter your name on the kitchen counter sign-up sheet or contact the church office.** Thank you!



**Prayer List Update.** Please take a moment to review the Prayer List located on the podium in the Gathering Hall. If you would like to add or remove a name from the list, please reach out to Christine or call the Church Office. **Your help in keeping our Prayer List current is greatly appreciated.**



### **Save the Date: Annual Congregational Meeting**

Please plan to join us for our **Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 25th, following the service.** Your presence and participation are important, and all are encouraged to attend.



### **Gloria Dei Instant Church Directory Update:**

It has been three years since our directory was last updated, and we're ready to refresh both information and photos. We also want to be sure our newer members are included.

On January 4th and on January 11th after the church service we will have a section of our fellowship area set aside to take photos and for members to fill out the needed form which will then be entered into the online instant church directory. If the information that is currently in the Instant Church Directory is accurate, but you would still like your photo updated, we are happy to take a new photo.

If you do not yet have access to the Instant Church Directory, printed instructions for Android and Apple devices are available on the information desk by the entry door.

We look forward to seeing our members who want to update their photo and/or their current information in the directory and we especially look forward to adding our newer members on January 4 or January 11 after church service. If you have questions or are having difficulty setting up the Instant Church Directory app on your device, give either one of us a call.

Dick Healy, 352-223-4800  
Linda Steege, 815-222-6195

## Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future

### Strategic Planning Team

Change is an inevitable part of life, and our congregation cannot avoid it. As we look toward the future, we find ourselves at an important moment—one of embracing what is new while still holding fast to the rich heritage that has shaped us. This is not a choice between two competing paths, but a call to walk forward with a firm foundation under our feet. We honor our past not by preserving things as they were, but by continuing the mission they began.

This is where embracing the future comes in. It is about recognizing that God meets us where we are, whether that is in our church building or on a screen for those who cannot be with us in person. It is about being willing to adapt our methods without sacrificing our core beliefs. The foundation of our faith is not in our customs and methods, but in Jesus.

We do this by trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit that has sustained our church for so long is still at work, calling us to new and creative expressions of that faith.

#### **As we move forward together, let us:**

☐ **Tell our story:** ....Recall and celebrate the ways God has worked in our midst, using our legacy not as a barrier but as a guide.

☐ **Invest in new generations and new people:** ....Honor our legacy by faithfully stewarding the resources God has given us and investing in those who may not yet know Jesus Christ.

☐ **Practice “traditioned innovation”:** ....Root our innovations in our rich traditions, allowing some forms to die so that new, life-giving ones can emerge ***“Gathering in Christ, Sharing His Love.”***

The future is not a departure from who we are, but a continuation of the meaningful work that has always defined us. By honoring the past and embracing the future, we can ensure that our church remains a beacon of faith, a place of community, and a testament to God’s unchanging love for generations to come.

The new Strategic Planning Team has been meeting for several months studying congregational trends in general and specifically at GDLC, area demographics, cultural developments, church health, and growth strategies used by other churches and has adopted a purpose statement we will use to guide us moving forward:

***"To facilitate a responsive strategic planning process that equips our church to navigate change, innovate in ministry, and faithfully adapt to the evolving needs of our community, ensuring the long-term health and effectiveness of our mission and vision."***

In the next few months, you will hear from our team about how we can strengthen our congregation to both warmly greet and creatively partner with our new pastor to make disciples for Christ.

The following Team Members will be happy to answer any specific questions you might have about this process:

Rev. Nancy Vogel, Team Leader

Bill Birdsall, Council Liaison

Richard Healy, Bob Pierce, Joel Weinhardt, Art Zerbel

