

Mount Pleasant Lutheran Church

“Growing Relationships with God, Each Other, and Our Neighbors in the Way of Jesus”



Third Sunday after Epiphany
Saturday, January 24, 2026, 4:00 PM
Sunday, January 25, 2026, 9:00 AM

Welcome...There's a place for you here!

Welcome to the Lord's Table

All Christians, regardless of church membership or affiliation, are invited to the Lord's Table to share Holy Communion. You may come forward through the center aisle to share communion around the table and then return to your seat through the side aisles. You may also share communion while remaining in your seat. Bread and cups prepared in advance are available from baskets at the top of the ramps, or you may let an usher know to have those who are serving at the table come to serve you.

Bread, wheat wafers, or gluten-free wafers are available, as well as alcoholic wine (lighter color) or nonalcoholic grape juice (darker color). Paper towel-lined baskets are provided for empty cups at the end of the first pew and at the top of the ramps. Those who are not partaking may also come forward to receive a verbal blessing.

Welcome to all God's children

During the service, the youngest children of God are invited to come forward for a message especially for them. "Busy bags" are hung along the wall in the sanctuary for use during services. Toys and books are also found in and near the glass-enclosed room at the end of the gallery seating. Children of all ages are welcome to share holy communion with a grownup's guidance.

You'll find a changing table in the restroom near the top of the spiral staircase in the entryway. Another changing table is located just outside the glass-enclosed room. An unstaffed nursery is located at the bottom of the spiral staircase in the entryway, as a place for a grownup to stay with their child.

Restrooms in the entryway are single-occupant and gender-inclusive. They are located in two cubes made of mirrors, one on either side of the entryway.

Sunday services are livestreamed, and some worshipers may be seen in the broadcast. Those seated behind the ramps will not be seen on camera.

(thank you for silencing your phone as you worship)

PRELUDE

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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.

Amen.

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

Mighty God, lover of justice,

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.

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.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG

“All Are Welcome”

ELW 641 vs 1,2, 4

LITANY OF WELCOME (based on MPLC's Welcome Statement)

We are called by Jesus to love God and one another,

to practice generous hospitality,

and to serve all

unconditionally.

We fully welcome all people to join us,

embracing their race, their culture,

their ethnicity, their age,

their gender identity and expression,

their sexual orientation, their physical abilities,

their mental abilities, their socioeconomic position,

their family status, their background,

and wherever they are in their faith journey.

Each of us is a unique and beloved child of God,

And all of us are welcome here.

We accept and openly affirm one another just as we are.

We commit ourselves to the work of racial equality and social and economic justice.

We invite all people to join us as we joyfully and inclusively . . .

love and serve God and our community, because we are all one in Christ Jesus. Amen!

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE (Sun.)

FIRST READING: **Isaiah 9:1-4**

A reading from Isaiah:

¹ There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time [the LORD] brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

³ You have multiplied exultation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴ For the yoke of their burden
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: **Psalm 27: 1, 4-9** (*read responsively*)

¹ The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

⁴ **One thing I ask of the LORD; one thing I seek;
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life;
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek God in the temple.**

⁵ For in the day of trouble God will give me shelter,
hide me in the hidden places of the sanctuary, and raise me high upon a rock.

⁶ **Even now my head is lifted up above my enemies who surround me.
Therefore I will offer sacrifice in the sanctuary, sacrifices of rejoicing;
I will sing and make music to the LORD.**

⁷ Hear my voice, O LORD, when I call;
have mercy on me and answer me.

⁸ **My heart speaks your message— “Seek my face.”**

Your face, O LORD, I will seek.

⁹ Hide not your face from me, turn not away from your servant in anger.
Cast me not away—you have been my helper;
forsake me not, O God of my salvation.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

A reading from First Corinthians:

¹⁰ Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you but that you be knit together in the same mind and the same purpose. ¹¹ For it has been made clear to me by Chloe’s people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. ¹² What I mean is that each of you says, “I belong to Paul,” or “I belong to Apollos,” or “I belong to Cephas,” or “I belong to Christ.” ¹³ Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶ I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else. ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel—and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power. ¹⁸ For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Now the Feast

Congregation:

Al-le-lu - ia, al-le-lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we
go? You have the words of e - ter - nal
life. Al - le - lu - ia!

Optional Repeat

GOSPEL: Matthew 4:12-23

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹² Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³ He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴ so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵ “Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles—

¹⁶ the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.”

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

¹⁸ As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishers. ¹⁹ And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people.” ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

²³ Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

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

SERMON: Pastor Nathan Pratt

HYMN OF THE DAY “Will You Come and Follow Me” ELW 798 vs 1-4

SONG FOR PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (*sing twice before and once after prayers*) “In Silence We Wait”
(ACS 998)

HOLY COMMUNION

Now the Feast

Presider: *Congregation:*



The Lord be with you. And al-so with you.

Presider: *Congregation:*



Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Presider: *Congregation:*



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is



right to give God thanks and praise.

It is our duty and delight we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and



might; heav - en and earth are filled with your



glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is the one who comes in your name. Ho -



san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Blessed are you, O God, creator of heaven and earth. . .

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit in this meal, and make us one in this community of faith and with your people throughout the world. Glory and praise to you, O God, Author of life, Word made flesh, Power of the Most High, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

**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

DISTRIBUTION *(see inside of bulletin cover for communion directions)*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING OF PRAYER SHAWLS

BLESSING

SENDING SONG "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light" ELW 815

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Today's Worship Leaders

Preacher: Pastor Nathan Pratt; Presider: Pastor Beth Ann Stone
Musician: Michael Becker; Minister of Music: Dimitri Shapovalov
Sun. Greeter: Chuck & Peggy Svoboda
Sat. Reader: Kathy Behm; Sun. Reader: Carol Wiechers
Sun. Communion Assistants: John Berge, Amy Obernberger
Coffee Hour Refreshments: Maxine Silvius, Becky Thorn
Video Producer: Fritz Obernberger

Worship Leaders for 1/31& 2/1:

Sun. Greeter: Donna Braaten
Sat. Reader: *One needed*; Sun. Reader: Cherise Hart
Sun. Communion Assistants: Joe Maier, Kassie Maier
Coffee Hour Refreshments: Teresa Jacobs, Sonja Wilson
Video Producer: Becky Litwin

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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"In Silence We Wait" text and music by Susan Masters © 2009 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission under One License #A-711523.

THIS WEEK AT MPLC: Jan. 25 – Feb. 1

Sun. Jan 25

- 9:00 AM:** Worship (Sanctuary)
- 10:15 AM:** Coffee Hour (Fellowship)
- 10:15 AM:** Sunday School (Education Level)
- 10:20 AM:** Adult Education (Mygatts)
- 10:20 AM:** Prayer Shawl Ministry (Conference)
- 11:30 AM:** MPLC Book Club (Conference)

Mon. Jan 26

- 5:30 PM:** Movie Night (Fellowship)

Tues. Jan 7

- 11:00 AM:** Chair Yoga (Fellowship)
- 6:30 PM:** Bell Choir (Sanctuary)

Wed. Jan 28

- 11:00 AM:** Wednesday AM Bible Study (Mygatts)
- 6:30 PM:** Confirmation (Mygatts)
- 7:00 PM:** Adult Choir (Choir Room)

Sat. Jan 31

- 4:00 PM:** Worship (Sanctuary)

Sun. Feb 1

- 9:00 AM:** Worship (Sanctuary)
- 10:15 AM:** Coffee Hour (Fellowship)
- 10:15 AM:** Sunday School (Education Level)
- 10:20 AM:** Adult Education (Mygatts)
- 1:30 PM:** Community Meal Prep (MPLC Kitchen)
- 4:00 PM:** Community Meal (Living Faith)



”Practicing Faith” Blog: Caring for Creation by John Berge

*Sharing the stories of how MPLC folks practice their
faith*

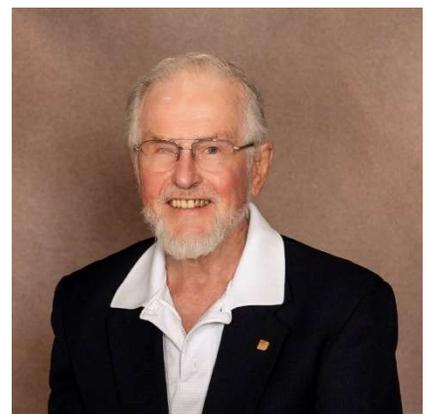
For most of my adult life, I have been opposed to (and appalled by) the excessive use of single-use, disposable items such as the thin plastic bags that every store seems to have adopted. I bring reusable bags to the grocery store — not only the large tote bags, but the small ones from the produce section. I bring reusable metal flatware to picnics to avoid those plastic ones that are usually thrown away after a single use. I return the bags that the newspaper comes in so that the deliverer can use them again. I never use disposable water bottles on the golf course or when hiking. Please excuse my boasting, but I am trying to make a point.

But some time ago I realized that our congregation switched to single-use, disposable communion cups made of polystyrene which cannot be hygienically cleaned for reuse like the previous glass ones. I thought at least these could be recycled. It was a bit of a job to find a recycler; the city refused them and so did most of the other recyclers I contacted. I finally found one in Milwaukee which, although they normally only take pre-consumer plastic waste, agreed to take our communion cups if they were scrupulously cleaned and dried. I have been doing that for years now, even though the water use and time are both uneconomical and possibly unecological. “It’s the thought that counts” and possibly a noble gesture in caring for God’s creation and our health. By the way, it takes about three communion cups to match one grocery bag.

Plastics, whether bags or cups, thrown in the trash and then a landfill will slowly break down and become microscopic particles that can end up in the water table and in our bodies and those of our grandchildren and heirs to our single usage.

In a sense, my concern about where our plastics end up is an atonement for my first job after getting my degree in chemistry. I was one of the first people employed by DuPont to develop the process for manufacturing Dacron® polyethylene terephthalic ester fiber, the same plastic compound marked #1 for recycling. These fibers can break down in landfills to form microplastic particles similarly to those plastic bags and communion cups, but fortunately, only after many, many uses (wearings).

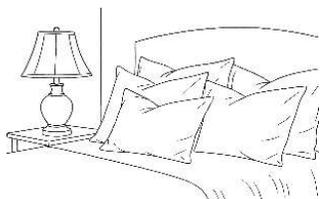
John has been a passionate advocate for creation care for many decades. Previously, he penned a monthly newsletter column for MPLC that highlighted ways to be better stewards of the earth we inhabit. If you share his passion, talk to John about ways you could collaborate!



MPLC STAFF DIRECTORY

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Business Manager Jessica Sexton	jessica@mplc.us
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Council President Kim Haigh	khaigh@acosta.com

We are called by Jesus to **love God and one another**, to practice generous hospitality, and to serve all unconditionally. We fully welcome you to join us, embracing your race, culture, ethnicity, age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, physical abilities, mental abilities, socioeconomic position, family status, background, and wherever you are in your faith journey. You are a unique and beloved child of God and are welcome here. You are accepted and openly affirmed just as you are. We commit ourselves to undertaking the work of racial equality and social and economic justice. We invite you to join us as we joyfully and inclusively love and serve God and our community, as **we are all one in Christ Jesus.**



Now Collecting Pillows and Lamps for Feather-a-Nest (through Feb. 15)

In this season of light, you're invited to help share the light with people leaving shelters for stable housing through our mission partner, Feather-A-Nest.

Throughout the season after Epiphany (until Feb. 15) we are collecting new pillows and new or used/working lamps for donation to their ministry.

Donated pillows may be placed in the rolling cart in the entryway next to the front door. Donated lamps may be placed in the "planter" in the sanctuary (long counter between the ramps and the pews) as a reminder of that Christ is light for all people. Thank you for helping our neighbors!

Mount Pleasant Lutheran Church
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