

Church of the Divine Love

THE SECOND AFTER CHRISTMAS DAY

JANUARY 4, 2026 10:15 A.M.

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

A Morning Prayer (on facing page)

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn (see hymn board for all hymns)

Opening Acclamation page 355

Gloria page 356

Collect for 1 Epiphany page 214

First Lesson: **Jeremiah 31:7-14** (pages 679 in the Bible)

Psalm 84 page 707

Second Lesson: **Ephesians 3:1-12** (page 1018)

Gradual Hymn

Gospel: **Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23** (page 836)

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

The Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form IV page 388

The Confession page 393

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer A	page 361
Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	
The Lord's Prayer	page 364
The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer	page 337
The Communion of the People - All baptized Christians, regardless age, are welcome to receive Communion.	
Communion Hymn	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer for Peace	page 815
Prayer for the Parish	page 817
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833

Sermon Sunday January 4th, 2026

Jeremiah 31: 7-14; Psalm 84; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, today's gospel is the part of the Christmas story we often forget, turn away from, and don't talk about. Have you ever seen a Christmas card depicting King Herod? Me either. And who would want their child or grandchild to play King Herod in the children's Christmas pageant? It's the part of the story that describes the tyranny, abuse of power, cruelty, and violence of the world into which Jesus is born. And it's personified by King Herod.

With the birth of Jesus God entrusts God's self to humanity. God becomes one of us and lives among us. God comes to us as we are. The world does not get cleaned up, sanitized, and made presentable for the birth of Jesus. The Christmas story is not one of preparing the nursery, painting the walls, and making it look cute. It is a story that reveals the truth about God and humanity. That God comes to us as a newborn offers us a new beginning. It also reminds us that the divine life is vulnerable, fragile, and needs to be cared for and protected. There is nothing sentimental or romantic about Matthew's version of the Christmas story. It's reality life. Before we can celebrate the Epiphany light, the arrival of the wise men and the manifestation of the

Christ to the world, we must first remember and acknowledge the darkness of our world. That's what the reordering of the story does for us. Today's story reminds us that Herod is real, not only in Jesus' time but in ours as well. I don't know if the slaughter of the innocents happened the way Matthew describes it but I know it is a true story. It has been lived in every age throughout history. I don't know if Herod really killed all those babies but I know that the Herod's of this world will always seek to destroy life, that which is holy and sacred.

Herod is in the news every day. You won't see or hear his name but you'll recognize him. He's not hard to miss. He's in some of our families and relationships. He's in some of our own words, actions, and choices. Herod is our indifference that prevents compassion, our hate and anger that destroy love, our busyness and distractions that deny presence, our violence and anxiety that defeat peace, our inhumanity that negates our creation in the image and likeness of God, and our politics when it is narrow, self-serving, discriminatory, and exclusive. Our world and sometimes our lives are full of Herod's. Today's gospel will not let us deny Herod's existence. That doesn't, however, mean that all is lost. It means that the world of Herod is the world into which Jesus is born. The world of Herod is the world in which Jesus puts our lives back together. The world of Herod is the world in which Jesus reveals God is with us and for us. To see Herod before the wise men invites us to move from the darkness of today's gospel to the light of tomorrow's Epiphany. Herod's darkness is not the final reality. Darkness will not prevail. That means, however, that each of us, just like Joseph, has both the opportunity and the responsibility to guard the divine life and protect that which is holy and sacred. That life, that holiness, that sacredness is not only about Jesus it's also about you and me. It's about our lives and our relationships. It's about people we know and people we've never met. It's about the infinite ways in which the divine life is entrusted to all of us. This divine life is the gift of God for the people of God.

Look at your life. Where do you see holiness? What's sacred? In what ways is God entrusting himself to you? Don't give me soft, vague, and mushy answers like love, peace, or happiness. I don't want that. I want names. I want places. I want events. I'm not trying to limit or restrict God's holiness and presence. I'm trying to get us to see the flesh and blood God born on Christmas, an embodied God, a God that comes to us in ways as unique as are each of our lives. So be specific. God is. God comes to us in very tangible ways. Where is God showing up in your life? How? In or by whom? Call them by name. Picture their faces. Return to the places.

Perhaps it's in your marriage, your husband or wife, and the life you have created together. Maybe it's the child or grandchild God has entrusted to you. Maybe it's the holiness of a best friend. Maybe it's an early morning cup of coffee and the silence of divine presence. Maybe it's in reading the scriptures. Maybe you experience the liturgy as the joining of heaven to earth

and earth to heaven. For many it will be the beauty of nature: a sunrise in which you offer yourself to God, a sunset in which you give thanks for your life and those you love, or a starry sky and the realization that everything you see speaks of God. For some of you the ordinary routine of work becomes the place in which your life and God's life intersect. Maybe studying is a way in which God entrusts himself to you. You read, think, question, pray, and your eyes open to a new way of seeing. It might be your prayer group, shared intimacy, and the experience that wherever two or three are gathered Christ is there. For some it will be your passion for the poor, feeding the hungry, speaking out for justice, or visiting the sick or dying. I know many of you experience the sacredness of your work around this parish; preparing and setting up for the liturgy, fixing meals for the sick or grieving, working in the office, caring for the building.

Every one of you could add to my list. There are thousands and thousands of ways in which God offers his life to us, entrusting us with that which is holy and sacred. With each gift God says, here, this is yours. Care for it. Guard and protect it. Nurture it. I trust this to you. I have no one else. You are Joseph. You are the one to do this. So how do we care for and protect that life, beauty, and holiness in a world of Herod's? It has to begin with waking up to the presence of God in our lives. Isn't that what Joseph did? Isn't that what he always does? He did it before Jesus was born and he does it again today. Before Jesus was born Joseph had decided to quietly dismiss Mary. It was a matter of life and death. But a dream and an awakening would reveal that Mary's child was of the Icon of St. Joseph and Jesus Holy Spirit so he took Mary as his wife and named the child Jesus. Today Joseph has another dream and another awakening, and again it is a matter of life and death. "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt...; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him."

When it comes to the holy life of God with us, Emmanuel, Jesus, it is always a matter of life and death; the child's, each other's, our own. God has entrusted his Son to each one of us in a variety of ways. Just like Joseph we stand in the middle between Jesus and Herod, between life and death, between the life-giver and the life-taker. No one gets to ride the fence, however. We can't stay in the middle. Each one of us chooses. Day by day, minute by minute, we choose. Over and over again we choose. Will we get up and take the child and his mother or will we sleep through and miss what God is doing in our lives? What will it be for you? For me? What are we choosing? Are we nurturing and growing the life of Christ within us? How are we caring for the sacred pieces and parts of our lives? How are we creating a home for Jesus?

This year, it is vital for us to remember our place in God's created order. We are not just passive observers but active participants in His redemptive work. We are called to honor creation, to care for the earth, and to acknowledge our interconnectedness with all living things. As we look out into the world, let us be stewards of God's creation, fulfilling our divine mandate with

respect and love for what He has made. I think it's very clear that whenever a year passes, time passes and I just wanted to quickly remind you of what this year should be for all of us. First of all, a new year gives an opportunity to redefine our priorities, a new year gives us an opportunity to redefine our purpose. Are we still on course for what we were born to do? A new year gives us opportunity to redefine our life's vision, do we know exactly what we want to do for the next 20 years. Are we still in line with our clear vision for our lives? A new year also gives opportunity for us to reestablish worthwhile goals. You can establish goals that waste your time because they don't take you toward your vision. A new year also gives us opportunity to bury the past and to move into a future that we haven't created yet. So, please get over it, leave all the baggage you had in 2025, lose yourself, cut off all the weight, get rid of stuff that has been distracting you and forget the past. That's what a new year does, it's a powerful change.

Don't be too anxious or distracted by Herod. Remember, neither God nor Joseph dealt directly with Herod. They didn't give Herod time, attention, or effort. Maybe we shouldn't either. That doesn't mean we deny or ignore the Herod's of our lives. It means, rather, that we gain more by nurturing, feeding, and growing the divine life. It means that our work is to cultivate deep relationships, a life of prayer, and love for all people. It means that in the end holiness always wins. Happy New Year to all of you and be happy! **Amen.**

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS DAY	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST RITE II
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS
	11:15 AM	VESTRY MEETING
MONDAY	8:00 PM	AA MEETING
TUESDAY	6:00 PM	BIBLE STUDY
WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON MEETING
THURSDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP
SATURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP
1 EPIPHANY/THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Jess Berbeck	
Coffee Hour	Nolans	

SUPPORT THE FOOD BANK, DROP OFF IN THE KITCHEN

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Loving God, comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation. Especially we remember before you:

Barbara Curran	Betty Curley	Martin
Bob Curley	Steve Curley	Joseph
Chris Dickson	John Roccoo	Deb P.
John Mulligan	Marjorie Guerrier	Bobby
Scottie Credendino	Michael	Ryan
Sister Eddie	Bernie Walther	Celeste
Beverly Noel	Phil Ryder	Warren
Anthony Paribello	Jonathan	Del
Donna Amundsen	Kate Jones	Jan
Shannon & Family	Vincent & Barbara	Sandy
Mary & Family	Wendy	James

Gladys Hadija

Sophia

Aidan

Michael & Family

Brooke & Kylee

Mo

Michelle & Family

Christopher

Annie

Timothy Treasure

Donna A.

Aika

Moises Parra

Misael Varas

Jay

Donny

All people and countries suffering from violence, hatred and natural disaster.

The homeless and food insecure.

Help us speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them.

Bring us, with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen.

To add or make changes to the prayer list during the week,

email Janet Croft at jmc220@optonline.net.

Morning Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You For allowing us to see a brand -new day. For this, we give You Praise! Lord, we lift up our concerns, worries, and burdens before You, knowing that You are with us in every step of the way. Fill us with Your peace that surpasses all understanding, calming our hearts and reassuring us of Your unfailing presence. Deliver us from the evil one and keep us safe from all harm, known and unknown. In the precious name of Jesus. Amen

Hymn to be sung during the consecration:

Father, I adore you, lay my life before you, How I love you.

(Repeat twice with 2nd verse starting with Jesus, and 3rd verse starting with Spirit)

Prayer for Peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn
but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love:
So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that
all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince
of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominions
and glory, now and forever. Amen

Morning Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You For allowing us to see a brand -new day. For this, we give You Praise! Lord, we lift up our concerns, worries, and burdens before You, knowing that You are with us in every step of the way. Fill us with Your peace that surpasses all understanding, calming our hearts and reassuring us of Your unfailing presence. Deliver us from the evil one and keep us safe from all harm, known and unknown. In the precious name of Jesus. Amen

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