

RIVER OF LIFE



7 JANUARY 2024



RIVER OF LIFE LUTHERAN | refreshing truth for all people

725 S. Estrella Pkwy (Suite 120) Goodyear, Arizona 85338

The Festival of the Epiphany of Our Lord

OUR PASTOR

Pastor Lincoln Albrecht (623) 312.8650

pastor@azriveroflife.com

WELCOME TO RIVER OF LIFE

Thank you for joining us this morning. In our worship service, God's children—you & I—gather together before God to be strengthened through God's Word. In response to God's message of love to us, we offer God our worship and praise.

The worship folder you're holding has the entire Order of Service. If you have questions, feel free to ask one of our ushers or anyone near you. The unfamiliar can be intimidating—let us help you. We want you to be comfortable & comforted here.

Restrooms are located in the front corner for your convenience.

God wants everyone to worship together. We recognize that public worship is a learning process for children. Parents, if you feel like you need a moment, there is a room in the back of the worship area where you can see, hear, and participate in worship without being heard.

OUR FOCUS FOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING

The Divine Service guides our worship as we receive God's grace in Word and Sacrament and respond with praise, prayer, and thanksgiving. The star is a prominent symbol of the Christmas season. We make star-shaped cookies. We hang lighted stars outside our homes. We often adorn the tops of our Christmas trees with stars. But the star is really an Epiphany symbol. The star is important because it led wise men to see the Savior of nations. On Epiphany, we rejoice in God's grace to all his people. This morning we celebrate that grace. In our readings and hymns, we see how the grace of God moves men to travel long distances to see the Christ-child in the flesh. Finally, we respond with thanksgiving and praise for the many mercies God has extended to us. Like the wise men, we have seen its light and have come to worship Jesus the Christ

OPENING HYMN

Angels from the Realms of Glory | 80



1 An - gels from the realms of glo - ry, Wing your flight o'er
2 Shep-herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, Watch - ing o'er your
3 Ma - gi, leave your con - tem - pla - tions; Brigh - ter vi - sions
4 Saints be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, Watch - ing long in



all the earth; Once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry;
flocks by night, God with us is now re - sid - ing—
beam a - far. Seek the great de - sire of na - tions;
hope and fear, Sud - den - ly the Lord, de - scend - ing,



Now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
Yon - der shines the in - fant light. Come and wor - ship,
You have seen the Sav - ior's star.
In his tem - ple shall ap - pear.



come and wor - ship, Wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.

The Gathering

INVOCATION

Minister: In the name of the Father and of the Son ✚ and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS OF SINS

M: Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

**P: Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.
For faithless worrying and selfish pride,
For sins of habit and sins of choice,
For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,
You should cast me away from your presence forever.
O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.**

M: On this holy day, dear Father, we rejoice to hear the good news of great joy that a Savior has been born for us. For fulfilling your prophecies and in the fullness of time sending your Son to be our Savior, we give you our heartfelt thanks and praise. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son **+** and of the Holy Spirit.

P: Amen.

Praise & Prayer¹

M: The heavens declare the glory of God.

P: The skies proclaim the work of his hands.

M: Day after day they pour forth speech.

P: Night after night they reveal knowledge.

M: They have no speech, they use no words.

P: No sound is heard from them.

M: Yet their voice goes out into all the earth.

P: Their words to the ends of the world.

M: The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul.

P: The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

¹ Today's dialogue of praise is from **Psalm 19**.

M: The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart.

P: The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

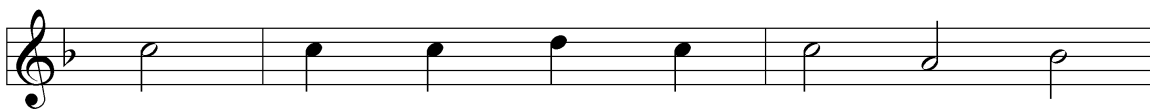
M: The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.

P: The decrees of the Lord are firm, and all of them are righteous.

M: May these words of our mouths and this meditation of our hearts be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

SONG OF PRAISE

A Great and Mighty Wonder | **36 (1-3)**



1 A great and might - y won - der, A
2 The Word be - comes in - car - nate And
3 While thus they sing your mon - arch, Those



glo - rious mys - ter - y: A vir - gin bears an
yet re - mains on high, And cher - u - bim sing
bright an - gel - ic bands, Re - joice, O vales and



in - fant Who veils his de - i - ty.
an - thems To shep - herds from the sky.
moun - tains, And o - ceans, clap your hands.

Refrain



Re - peat the hymn a - gain: "To God on high be



glo - ry And peace on earth to men."

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Lord God, by the leading of a star you once made known to the nations your one and only Son. Guide us, also, who know him now by faith, to come at last to the perfect joy of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

P: **Amen.**

The Word

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Numbers 24

¹⁵ Then he spoke his message:

“The prophecy of Balaam son of Beor,
the prophecy of one whose eye sees clearly,
¹⁶ the prophecy of one who hears the words of God,
who has knowledge from the Most High,
who sees a vision from the Almighty,
who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened:
¹⁷ “I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not near.
A star will come out of Jacob;
a scepter will rise out of Israel.

VERSE OF THE DAY

Matthew 2:2

M: Alleluia. Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?

P: **We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him. Alleluia.**

SONG OF PRAISE

The Star Proclaims the King Is Here | **91 (1-2, 5)**



1 The star pro-claims the King is here; but, Her - od,
2 The east - ern Ma - gi saw from far and fol - lowed
5 All glo - ry un - to Je - sus be and praise for



why this sense - less fear? For he who came from heav - en's
on his guid - ing star, and, led by light, to Light they
his e - piph - a - ny, whom with the Fa - ther we a -



throne does not de - sire an earth - ly crown.
pressed and by their gifts their God con - fessed.
dore and Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more.

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Romans 11

¹³ I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry ¹⁴ in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ²⁸ ...As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, ²⁹ for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. ³⁰ Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. ³² For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 2

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

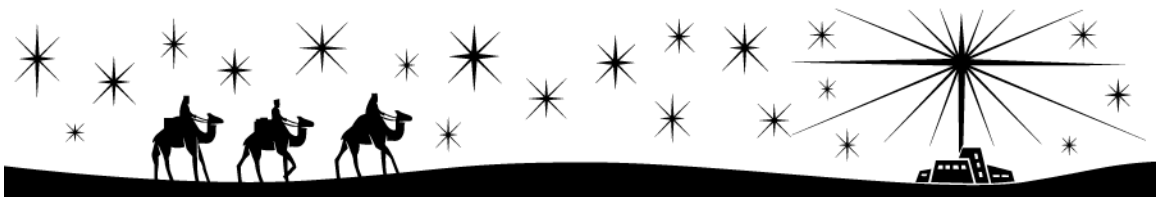
³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.

⁴ When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶ “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.



HYMN OF THE DAY

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise | **82 (1-4)**



1 Songs of thank - ful - ness and praise, Je - sus, Lord, to
 2 Man - i - fest at Jor - dan's stream, Proph - et, Priest, and
 3 Man - i - fest in mak - ing whole Pal - sied limbs and
 4 Sun and moon shall dark - ened be; Stars shall fall, the
 5 Grant us grace to see you, Lord, Mir - rored in your



you we raise, Man - i - fest - ed by the star
 King su - preme, And at Ca - na, Wed - ding Guest,
 faint - ing soul; Man - i - fest in val - iant fight,
 heav'ns shall flee. Christ will then like light - ning shine;
 ho - ly Word. May our lives and all we do



To the Ma - gi from a - far, Branch of roy - al
 In your God - head man - i - fest; Man - i - fest in
 Quell - ing all the dev - il's might; Man - i - fest in
 All will see his glo - rious sign. All will then the
 Im - i - tate and hon - or you That we all like



Da - vid's stem, In your birth at Beth - le - hem.
 pow'r di - vine, Chang - ing wa - ter in - to wine.
 gra - cious will, Ev - er bring - ing good from ill.
 trum - pet hear; All will see the judge ap - pear.
 you may be At your great e - piph - a - ny



An - thems be to you ad - dressed, God in man made man - i - fest.
 An - thems be to you ad - dressed, God in man made man - i - fest.
 An - thems be to you ad - dressed, God in man made man - i - fest.
 You by all will be con - fessed, God in man made man - i - fest.
 And may praise you, ev - er blest, God in man made man - i - fest.

Our Response to God's Word

M: In Christ, you have heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation.

P: We believe in Christ and trust in the truth he has revealed to us in his Word.

M: Living and serving together in trust and hope, we confess our common faith.

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 fully 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 in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy Christian 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.

THANK OFFERING



God's people respond with thankful hearts. The people of River of Life have joined to offer God the first-fruits of all he has given us. Our offerings support God's work in this community and the world. If you are a visitor with us, thank you for joining us today. Please do not feel obligated to support our ministry, but we ask that you do take time to fill out a digital connect card (azriveroflife.com/connect) so we can thank you for joining us. Thank you & God bless you!

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God and Mary's son, in the fullness of time you came into our world to save us from sin and death.

P: You ushered in the day of grace so long foretold.

M: Beloved Son of the Father, revered by the Magi, you came preaching and teaching, healing and comforting, forgiving and encouraging.

P: You brought the light of life to those walking in darkness.

M: Prince of Peace, shine like a beacon for our world. Let the good news of salvation be heard in the remotest corners of the earth. Open our own lips to speak your name to those around us who still live without faith or hope.

P: Move us and our missionaries to flood the world with your Gospel light.

M: Lord of the Church, let your peace rule our hearts that we may use our gifts to serve you and each other in willing gratitude and joy. Watch over our loved ones, that they may rejoice in your salvation. Strengthen the faith of the sick and the disheartened. Give hope to the despairing. Comfort the mourning.

P: Be gracious to all. Lead us to reflect your love in everything we say and do.

M: We know your mercy because we have seen your Son through the eyes of faith. Confident in the surpassing greatness of your mercy, we pray. Amen.

Prayer of Preparation: Lord God, Heavenly Father, You called me by name and declared that I was Your child through the washing of my Baptism. I desire, now, to receive the true body and blood of my Savior, Jesus Christ, in this Holy Meal. Continue to grant me grace, that I may stand before You and the body of believers and faithfully speak of the hope that is mine through Your life, death, and resurrection. Strengthen me. Grant me the forgiveness of sins and the ability to do that which pleases you; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

M: Everyone ought to examine their hearts before partaking of the Lord's Supper.

P: I confessed my transgressions to the Lord and he forgave the guilt of my sin.

M: Everyone ought to recognize the true body and blood of the Lord in this Supper.

P: The bread that we break and the cup that we bless are a participation in the body and blood of Christ.

M: Those partaking of the Lord's Supper are to be united in fellowship as one body.

P: Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Sanctus | **DS II 557**



1 O ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of pow'r and
2 Ho - san - na in the high - est! How tru - ly blest is



might, Your glo - ry, earth and heav - en In
he Who in God's name is com - ing To



count - less ways re - cite. Ho - san - na! Come and
set his peo - ple free! He comes to bring sal -



save us, Lord God of hosts on high, And
va - tion And with his blood out - poured, De -



in your grace and mer - cy Re - ceive our fer - vent cry.
liv - er us from bond - age—Ho - san - na, might - y Lord!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

M: Blessed are you, O Lord of heaven and earth. We praise and thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, and we remember the great acts of love through which he has ransomed us from sin, death, and the devil's power.

By his incarnation, he became one with us.

By his perfect life, he fulfilled your holy will.

By his innocent death, he overcame hell.

By his rising from the grave, he opened heaven.

Invited by your grace and instructed by your Word, we approach your table with repentant and joyful hearts. Strengthen us through Christ's body and blood, and preserve us in the true faith until we feast with him and all his ransomed people in glory everlasting, in whose name we pray:

P: 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take and eat. This is my ✙ body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it all of you; this is my ✙ blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

SACRAMENTAL BLESSING

M: The peace of the LORD be with you always.

P: Amen.

LAMB OF GOD

Agnus Dei | DS II



Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,
you take a - way the sin of the world;
grant us your peace. A - men.

DISTRIBUTION



At River of Life, we believe that in the Lord's Supper, along with the bread & wine, we miraculously receive the real body & blood of Christ for the full forgiveness of sins. Scripture directs believers in preparation and reception: **"A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself."** (1 Cor. 11:29)

This meal is also an expression of unity with one another: **"Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf."** (1 Cor. 10:17) Therefore we ask that if you are not familiar with our teachings, please speak with Pastor Albrecht before taking the Lord's Supper. Thank you.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

As with Gladness Men of Old | 83



1 As with glad - ness men of old Did the guid - ing
2 As with joy - ful steps they sped, Sav - ior, to your
3 As they of - fered gifts most rare At your cra - dle,
4 Ho - ly Je - sus, ev - 'ry day Keep us in the
5 In the heav'n - ly coun - try bright Need they no cre -



star be - hold, As with joy they hailed its light,
low - ly bed, There to bend the knee be - fore
rude and bare, So may we with ho - ly joy,
nar - row way; And, when earth - ly things are past,
a - ted light; You its light, its joy, its crown,



Lead - ing on - ward, beam - ing bright, So, most gra - cious
You whom heav'n and earth a - dore, So may we with
Pure and free from sin's al - loy, All our cost - liest
Bring our ran - somed souls at last Where they need no
You its sun which goes not down. There for - ev - er



Lord, may we Ev - er - more your fol - lowers be.
will - ing feet Ev - er seek your mer - cy seat.
treas - ures bring, Christ, to you, our heav'n - ly King.
star to guide, Where no clouds your glo - ry hide.
may we sing Al - le - lu - ias to our King!

DISTRIBUTION HYMN



1 What child is this who, laid to rest,
 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate
 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh;



On Mar - y's lap is sleep - - ing?
 Where ox - en now are feed - - - ing?
 Come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet With an - thems sweet
 Good Chris - tians, fear; For sin - ners here
 The King of kings Sal - va - tion brings;



While shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
 The si - lent Word is plead - ing.
 Let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the King, Whom
 Nails, spear shall pierce him through; The
 Raise, raise the song on high; The



shep - herds guard and an - gels sing.
 cross he'll bear for me, for you.
 vir - gin sings her lul - la - by.



Haste, haste to bring him laud,
 Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born,



The babe, the Son of Mar - y!
 The babe, the Son of Mar - y!
 The babe, the Son of Mar - y!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

M: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

P: Amen.

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

Feed Your Children, God Most Holy | 616



Feed your chil - dren, God most ho - ly; Com - fort



sin - ners poor and low - ly. Je - sus, bread of life from



heav - en, Bless the food you here have giv - en.



As these gifts the bod - y nour - ish, May our souls



in gra - ces flour - ish Till with saints in heav'n - ly



splen - dor At your feast due thanks we ren - der.

BLESSING

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another.
Serve the Lord with gladness. The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

P: Amen.

SONG OF DEPARTURE

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise | **82 (5)**



5 Grant us grace to see you, Lord, Mir - rored in your



ho - ly Word. May our lives and all we do



Im - i - tate and hon - or you That we all like



you may be At your great e - piph - ā - ny



And may praise you, ev - er blest, God in man made man-i - fest.



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US THIS MORNING

We recognize how busy this world and your life can be. Thank you for setting aside a Sunday morning to be with us in God's house. Stick around for a bite to eat and a refreshing drink. One of life's greatest pleasures is meeting new people and growing lasting relationships. We'd love to get to know you better.

INTERESTED IN JOINING RIVER OF LIFE?

Would you like to learn what the Lutheran church believes and teaches? Are you interested in joining our church, or going through a refresher class? We would love to meet with you and study God's Word. If you're interested, speak with Pastor Albrecht.

MEN OF HIS WORD

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20TH (8 AM-4 PM)

Men of His Word is an annual one-day men's conference that helps equip Christian men to embrace God's role for them within their family, congregation, and community. Men, if you'd like to learn how to tackle difficult social issues, go to menofhisword.org and register today.

PASTOR ALBRECHT RETURNED HIS CALL TO LAMB OF GOD

Last week, Pastor Albrecht announced that he returned the call to Lamb of God in West Lafayette, Indiana, and will be remaining here to shepherd this flock. We ask that you keep God's people at Lamb of God in your prayers as they wait for the Lord to lead the right man to serve them.

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Hymn #80 **Angels from the Realms of Glory** Text: James Montgomery, 1771-1854, abr., alt.

Hymn #91 **The Star Proclaims the King Is Here** Text: Coelius Sedulius, 5th century, abr.; tr. John M. Neale, 1818-66, alt.

Hymn #83 **As with Gladness Men of Old** Text: William C. Dix, 1837-98, alt.

Hymn #82 **Songs of Thankfulness and Praise** Text: Christopher Wordsworth, 1807-85, alt.

Hymn #67 **What Child Is This** Text: William C. Dix, 1837-98, alt.

Hymn #616 **Feed Your Children, God Most Holy** Text: Johann Heermann, 1585-1647; tr. *The Lutheran Hymnal*, St. Louis, 1941, alt.

RIVER OF LIFE

Certainty & Hope In The Coming Days

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- Jan. 7** (10:20 am) Christmas Clean Up
- Jan. 11** (10am-Noon) RiverKids!
- Jan. 11** (4:30 pm) Church Council Meeting
- Jan. 14** (9:00 am) Worship: **Enduring Joy:
The Joy of Belonging**
- Jan. 14** (10:20 am) Congregational Long-Range Planning
- Jan. 21** (9:00 am) Worship (w/ Lord's Supper):
Enduring Joy: The Joy of Real Reconciliation
- Jan. 21** (10:20 am) Family Bible Study: **Immanuel:
Breaks Bread With Sinners**
- Jan. 28** (9:00 am) Worship: **Enduring Joy:
The Joy of Refuge**
- Jan. 28** (10:20 am) Family Bible Study: **Immanuel:
Breaks Bread With Sinners**

CONNECTING WITH RIVER OF LIFE

Videos of recent worship services and audio recordings of weekly sermons are available online. Check out our website or our Facebook page.

AZRiverOfLife.com facebook.com/AzRiverOfLife

refreshing truth for you