

**"My House shall be a house of prayer for All People."
(Isaiah 56:7)**

**Founded: 10/31/1983. Now in our Forty-second year of
Ministry.**

**MISSION: Love God, Love your neighbor, and make disciples
of every person everywhere. (Matthew 22:37-39; Matthew 28:19)**

Rev. Br. Shawn F. Benedict, O.S.B, Appointed Pastor

We extend a special welcome to our visitors.
You are as welcome here as Jesus Christ Himself.
In Romans 15:7 the Scriptures exhort us to:
"Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you,
for the glory of God" (NABRE – 2011)

Participate in some or all parts of this worship event as you are comfortable.
We are building a wonderful Christ-centered Community here, and we invite you to share in
our Joy! After the Worship Service, please join us for refreshments and sharing.

Today is 2-1-26, Epiphany WK 4, Black History Month Wk I, Year A
Ray Of Hope Church teaches the same Christian Faith of ancient ecumenical consensus.
St. Vincent of Lerins, a fifth-century monk and theologian, described it as
"what has been believed always, everywhere, and by all."
Scientific Discovery, Academic Knowledge, the Holy Scriptures, and Spirituality are Universal
and Unified. (Br. Benedict 8-6-23)

Scripture Readings for this worship event:

First Reading: Zephaniah 2:1-3, 3:12-13 NRSV First Testament pg. 875

Response: Psalm 146:6c-7,8-9a, 9b-10

Second Reading: 1 Cor. 1:26-31 NRSV 2nd Test. pg. 166

Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12a, Second Testament pg. 4

***We use the term 1st for the "Old" Testament and 2nd for the "New" Testament. The NRSV Bible 1st Testament numbers are found in the front portion, and the 2nd Testament numbers are found in the later portion. If this confuses you, ask someone around you to assist you. Thank you.**

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CALL TO WORSHIP

Visit and greet one another until the bell rings.

Bell's 1st ring. As our bell rings, please find your seat and pray silently for the next few minutes. Please refrain from conversations as these disturb those trying to pray.

Our St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi bell at Ray Of Hope Church, 380 W. 1st St. in Elmira, NY, is a gift from Michael Quinnell of Syracuse, NY, given in September 2005. The bell rings out 39 joyful rings, in contrast to tolling the bell in single rings. The 39 joyful rings honor the 39 lashes Jesus endured, and we now celebrate victory and gratitude for our Salvation. "The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes, we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5) We ring the bell before worship and Bible Enrichment sessions. Listen carefully and see if you can hear all 39 rings.



WE GATHER TO PRAISE THE LORD AND GIVE THANKS

+ Pastoral Welcome

Veronica Floyd: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____, __(State)_____. Good morning. Welcome to Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the faith community founded in Central New York and now all across the World through the Internet, where everyone is welcome. This church is your Spiritual Service Station, and Faith Repair Shop, where our Loving Creating God is C.E.O., the owner of record is Jesus, the Christ, and the Operations Manager is The Holy Spirit. Our Congregation is a franchise location of the Body Of Christ, the Church. The Members and Friends are the working staff here today to facilitate your worship experience. Today is February 1, 2026, the Fourth Sunday in the Season of Epiphany, and the first

Sunday of Black History Month. We announce all instructions, pages, and song numbers and use a psalm response verse to assist people with various stages of visual impairment.

To all who are online or may view this recording later, to facilitate your participation, please look for today's bulletin, Order of Worship, and the Music Supplement on Facebook Live by right-clicking the "Featured Links" icon. On Zoom, look in the Chat window for two document icons. On our website, look at the large gold box labeled SUNDAY WORSHIP INFORMATION at www.rayofhopechurch.com. The Zoom link is also posted on the webpage.

Lisa Frost: Hello. My name is _____. I am in_(city) _____, _(State)_____. Good morning, and welcome. (** Reader, please remember to look at the people and smile.**) We invite you to participate in as many or as few parts of this worship event as you feel comfortable. To people watching online, you may receive Holy Communion with us during this worship event. To participate in Communion, please bring to your table 1) a cup with some wine or grape juice, 2) a small piece of bread, cracker, or matzo on a plate, and 3) a second cup with some water and a side napkin. We will use these in the second half of the worship service. Now, gather all these items, and we will start shortly.



ALL PEOPLE HAVE RECEIVED SALVATION AS A FREE GIFT FROM GOD, ARE ETERNALLY SECURE IN GOD'S LOVE AND ARE BY MODERN TERMS, "SAVED." ALL LGBTQSIA2ss+ persons of every sexual orientation and every gender expression are SAVED and are called to live out the fullness of who they are so that God may be praised. Ray Of Hope Church, Inc. officially took this position on September 18, 2011 and changed the By-laws to secure this position. (www.rayofhopechurch.com/faith.htm) (www.rayofhopechurch.com/purpose.htm)

(The Congregation amended this By-law on September 18, 2011, and used to read: We believe that Salvation is available to all who call on the Name of Jesus Christ, and are re-born into the Life of Christ.)([Article 10 STATEMENT OF FAITH 10.01 Short Form Statement Lines 1140 – 1143](#))



Bell's 2nd ring will announce the start of the worship event.

Katrina Lourdiane: (**PLEASE wait for the second bells to ring, and remember to look up at the people and smile.**) Good morning, my name is Katrina Lourdiane. Thank you for choosing to spend time with us today. In Romans, Chapter 15, verse 7, the Scriptures instruct us to:

ALL: "Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God." (NABRE)

Katrina Lourdiane: You are as welcome here as Christ Jesus himself. (** Reader, please remember to look at the people and smile.**) Show the glory of God by introducing yourself and welcoming the **SAINTS** around you. To be extra careful, we observe COVID-19 safety protocols by waving across the room and into the camera for the Internet.

Pastor: Good Morning, **SAINTS!** I ask you, in whose Name are we meeting?

ALL: We meet in the name of **God our Creator living in us, Christ Jesus Our Lord and Saviour living in us, and in the name of the Holy Spirit living in us.** Amen

Brother: Together we pray Psalm 116:1 and 2:

ALL: Alleluia! I love the LORD; He hears my cry.

The Lord listens to my voice whenever I reach out for help.

I am thankful, Alleluia.

Brother: The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, God's love, and the Holy Spirit's fellowship is with you. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

ALL: And also with you, praise the Lord.



Brother: Welcome to **Our Lord's** Spiritual Service Station and Faith Repair Shop. We promise to do our best to help one another worship God in Christ, through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit. At Ray Of Hope, we embrace a free-thinking standard, meaning, in part, that what you believe is between you and God. You are welcome here from any faith tradition, and even if you have no faith at all. God will take care of the relationship between God and you. We are here to welcome, love, and affirm all of who you are.

Today is 2-1-26, Epiphany WK 4, Year A, and the first week of Black History Month. Is there a Proclamation today?

Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)

"The vision of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History is to be the premier Black Heritage learned society with a strong network of national and international branches and partners whose diverse and inclusive membership will continue the Woodson legacy." (Source: asalh.org/about-us/) "The founders of Black History Month" (Source: <https://asalh.org/black-history-month/about/>)

Ray Of Hope Church officially began on 10/31/1983.

Ray Of Hope Church officially began on Reformation Day, October 31, 1983, the vigil of the Feast of All Saints. October

The first public worship event in the Southern Tier was held on Saturday, September 14, 1996, The Feast of the Triumph Of The Cross. September 14, 2025, was the twenty-ninth anniversary of the first worship event. We are in our 30th year of ministry in the Southern Tier.

Sunday, June 1, 2025, was the twenty-second anniversary of the opening of the Elmira Chapel. We are in our 23rd year at 380 W. First Street, Elmira, NY.



Colby Dense: We begin to worship God in the beauty of holiness, spirit, and truth. (Psalm 96:9; John 4:23-24)

ALL: Together, we give God thanks and praise.

Colby Dense: Our first song today is "Lift Every Voice and Sing" from the Glory and Praise hymnal, number 561. The music is also in the electronic Music Edition, the words are below. Please rise as you are able for our first song, Lift Every Voice and Sing.

FIRST SONG: WORDS ONLY Lift Every Voice And Sing. Onelicense song #85147 Words and Music © OCP Glory and Praise Second Edition # 561 Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-741278

TEXT ONLY

Lift Every Voice and Sing

J. Rosamond Johnson

1. Lift every voice and sing,
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song
full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;
Sing a song
full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun
Of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

2. Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chast'ning rod,

Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our people sighed?
We have come
over a way that with tears has been watered;
We have come,
treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the bright gleam of our bright star is cast.

3. God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who hast by the might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet
stray from the places, our God, where we met thee;
Lest our hearts,
drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee;
Shadowed beneath thy hand,
May we forever stand,
True to our God, true to our native land.

Text: 66 10 66 10 14 14 66 10; James W. Johnson, 1871–1938. Music: J. Rosamond Johnson, 1873–1954. **Lift Every Voice And Sing**. Onelicense song #85147 Words and Music © OCP Glory and Praise Second Edition # 561 Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-741278

+ The Candle Of Hope

Kaiden Rae Benedict: Please be seated. We light our Candle Of Hope to celebrate the Truth Jesus promises us. Jesus said: (John 5:25 and Titus 2:13)

ALL: "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." (John 11:25, 26)

Kaiden Rae Benedict: Please look over and watch as the Candle of Hope is lit. When the flame flickers, we pray our proclamation of Faith.

Kaiden Rae Benedict: Together:
ALL: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Kaiden Rae Benedict: Ray Of Hope started in part to form a Church with an intentional ministry to persons affected by and infected with HIV and AIDS. It is forty-three years later, and still, some churches, religions, and, yes, even some countries continue rejecting the sick, lonely, and dying people with HIV and AIDS who deserve comfort and spiritual guidance. The World Health Organization reported nearly 40 million people were living with HIV globally in 2023. The United Nations AIDS, UNAIDS organization, reported 40.8 million people in 2024, and we are confident the number will be rising in 2026.



Therefore, to keep HIV and AIDS in the conscious prayers of people, we continue to read aloud over **110,000** names sewn into over 50,000 panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilt at the National AIDS Memorial. Scroll the page to see the panels on block 175.



These are the names on Block # 176

- Tom Harris (1)
- Scott Oatman (2)
- J. Robert Charpenier (3)
- Jim Dawson (4)
- Fred Reeves (5)
- Hugh Ryan (6)
- Gary Epperly (7)
- Scott Cleaver (8)

(source: <https://www.aidsmemorial.org/interactive-aids-quilt>)

Katrina Lourdiane: In silent prayer, we also remember the names of family and friends who have preceded us in death. (**pause for silent prayer.**)

May this candle's flame help bring to mind the Joy and happiness known in life, the comfort offered by the Holy Spirit in our loss, and the promise of the "Blessed Hope" we have in the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

ALL: Amen

(National AIDS Memorial website where you can visit over 48,000 panels and over 110,000 names on the Quilt virtually:

<https://www.aidsmemorial.org/interactive-aids-quilt>)

Katrina Lourdiane: Our second song is "Glorify The Lord" words and music by Sandra Crouch. As of today, we do not have music for this song. The text is below and in the Electronic Music Edition. Please rise as you are able to sing, "Glorify The Lord."

Glorify The Lord

Words and Music by Sandra Crouch

Chorus

Glorify the Lord
Praise His holy name
Let the trumpet sound
Let the bells ring
We've been redeemed
By the blood of the Lamb
Come on and praise His holy name
Ev'rybody sing
God is holy and He's worthy
And we worship we worship Him

Sandra Crouch. © 1985 Bud John Songs, Inc.; Sanabella Music. CCLI Song#15544. Used with permission through our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121 and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.



WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS

+ Confession and Forgiveness of our sins, our failures.

Ed Askins: Please be seated. (wait) Now, Ray Of Hope Church provides another service: Christ is truly present among us and forgives our sins through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit. In silent prayer, we consider our relationship with God and others, confess faults, sins, and failures to Christ, who is present in this room and our bodies, and receive His immediate forgiveness.

Marcus: Filled with the Holy Spirit, we are called to embrace people of every ethnicity. Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

Marcus: With Christ living in us, we are called to share and promote the equality and dignity of every person. Christ, have mercy.

ALL: Christ, have mercy.

Marcus: The Holy Spirit is here to direct us toward God, and to enable us to put our Faith into action. For the times we have failed to share this good news openly, we pray, Lord, have mercy.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

Ian McLaughlin: We pray for forgiveness and renewal together.

ALL: Lord Jesus, hear our confession, and receive our sins. Touch our hearts and shape our desires so that we will seek your Will daily in our lives. Send your Holy Spirit now to heal the wounds in our memories. Inform our conscience with the fire of your divine love so we will follow you without reservation. Draw us closer to you with your gentle voice and loving arms. We accept your forgiveness and restoration, in the Name of God, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Amen and Alleluia.

Marcus: The Lord has heard our confession and has granted forgiveness, and so we declare together:

ALL: The faith community of Ray Of Hope Church openly declares the forgiveness of all your confessed sins in the Name of Jesus Christ. He forgives you, we forgive you, and God rejoices over your restoration in Christ. Amen.

Kaiden Benedict: The Church now provides the service of praising God together in thanksgiving. Please rise as you are able as we sing "The Gloria."

WORDS ONLY HERE. MUSIC SCROLL DOWN

"The Gloria"

From "Music for Worship"

© Words and Music: Gaude! Liturgical Arts 7/25/19 - 1/21/24 Br. Shawn F. Benedict, O.S.B. Dedication: Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc. 40th Anniversary.

Refrain:

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to all people on earth.
Glory to God in the highest.
We give you thanks and praise. Alleluia!
We give you thanks and praise.

Verse 1:

You are the One God,
Sovereign of the Universe,
Only Holy God, we worship You,
we give You thanks,
we praise You for Your great glory!

Refrain:

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to all people on earth.
Glory to God in the highest.
We give you thanks and praise. Alleluia!
We give you thanks and praise.

Verse 2:

Lord, Jesus Christ;
The Only Begotten Son of God
You are Lord God, Lamb of God,
You take away the sin of the world;
Have mercy on us;
You are seated at the right hand of God;
receive our prayer.

Refrain:

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to all people on earth.
Glory to God in the highest.
We give you thanks and praise. Alleluia!
We give you thanks and praise.

Verse 3:

For You alone are the Holy One.
You alone are the Lord of all,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
With the Holy Spirit in the Glory of God.
In the Holy Spirit, in the Holy unity of God.

Refrain:

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to all people on earth.
Glory to God in the highest.
We give you thanks and praise. Alleluia!
We give you thanks and praise.

Verse 4:

Amen; We give you thanks and praise.
Amen; We give you thanks and praise.
Amen; We give you thanks and praise.
Amen.

From "Music for Worship" © Words and Music: Gaude! Liturgical Arts 7/25/19 - 1/21/24 Br.
Shawn F. Benedict, O.S.B.

Dedication: Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc. 40th Anniversary.

Dedication:
Ray Of Hope Church
Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.
40th Anniversary

The Gloria

"Music for Worship"

Words and Music
Gaude! Liturgical Arts
7/25/19-1/21/24
Br. Shawn F. Benedict, O.S.B.

Refrain

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and

4
peace to all peo - ple on earth — Glo - ry to God in the high - est —

8
We give you thanks — and praise. Al - le - lu — ia

10
We give you thanks — and praise.

12 **Verse 1**

You are the One God, Sov - ereign of the Un - i - verse, On - ly

16
Ho - ly God, — we wor - ship You, — we

18
give you thanks, we praise You for Your great glo - ry!

21 **Refrain**

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, — and peace to all peo - ple on earth —

25
Glo - ry to God in the high - est — We give you thanks — and

2

28

praise. Al-le-lu_ia We give you thanks_ and praise.

31 **Verse 2**

Lord, Jes - us Christ; The On - ly Be - got - ten

34

Son of God, You are Lord God,

36

Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the world; Have mer - cy on

41

us; You are sea-ted at the right hand of God; re - ceive our prayer.

46 **Refrain**

Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to all peo-ple on_ earth_

50

Glo - ry to God in the high - est_ We give you thanks_ and

53

praise. Al-le-lu_ia We give you thanks_ and praise.

56 **Verse 3**

For You a-lone are the Ho - ly One You a - lone are the Lord of all,

61


You a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, With the Ho - ly

66



Spi-rit in the glo - ry of God. In the Ho - ly Spi-rit, in the

71



Ho - ly un - i - ty of God.

75 Refrain




Glo-ry to God in the high-est, - and peace to all peo-ple on_ earth_

79



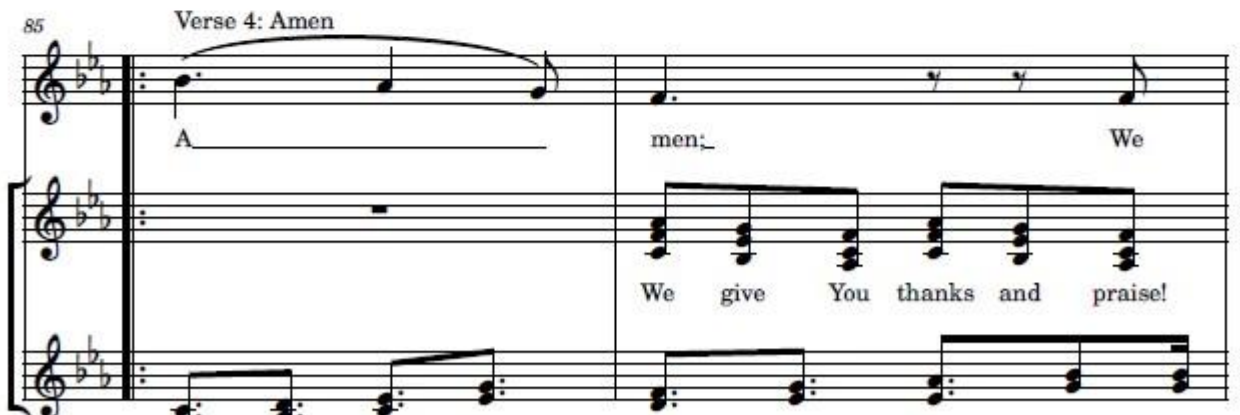
Glo-ry to God in the high-est_ We give you thanks_ and praise. Al-le-lu_ia

83



We give you thanks and praise.

85 Verse 4: Amen



A_ men_ We

We give You thanks and praise!

Lord we praise You, Lord we bless You, We

4

87

give You thanks and praise!

We give You thanks and praise!

give You thnks, We give You praise We give You thnaks and praise

89

A men

A men. Al - le - lu - ia.

Lord we praise You, Lord we bless You men. Al - le - lu - ia.

Wayne Harris: Please remain standing for the opening prayer.

+ Opening Prayer

Wayne Harris: The Lord is with you, Alleluia!

ALL: And also with you, Alleluia!

Wayne Harris: Together, we lift up our hearts.

ALL: We lift them up to the Lord.

Wayne Harris: We make this exhortation together:

ALL: Let us keep the Scriptures in mind and meditate upon them day and night, persevering in prayer, always on the watch. Let us beg the Lord to give us real knowledge of what we read and to show us not only how to understand it but how to put it into practice, so that we may deserve to obtain spiritual grace, enlightened by the law of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord, whose power and glory will endure throughout the ages. Amen

Wayne Harris: Saint Origen, who lived from 185 – 254 A.D., wrote this prayer. His prayer is our prayer on this day. Please be seated now and listen with all your heart, soul, and mind as we open the Word of God.



THE SERVICE OF THE WORD OF GOD

+ First Reading

Ed Askins: Hello. My name is

_____, and I am in the City of _____ in the State of _____.

The first reading on this, the fourth Sunday of Epiphany, is from the Book of Zephaniah: chapter 2, verses 1-3, and chapter 3, verses 12-13. You will find this on page 875 in the front of the NRSV Bible. I will be reading from the ©2007 Inclusive Bible. Here begins the reading:

^{2:1} Humble yourselves, you shameless nations,
be humble, ² before you are driven away to disappear like fodder,
before the burning anger of YHWH comes upon you,

before the day of YHWH's anger comes upon you.

³ Seek YHWH,
all you living humbly on the land,
you who obey God's laws!
Seek integrity, seek humility,
that perhaps you may find security
on the day of the anger of YHWH.

^{3:12} In your midst I will leave
a humble and lowly people,
and they will find refuge in the name of YHWH.

¹³ Those left in Israel will do no wrong and tell no lies;
no words of deceit will pass their lips;
they will graze and lie down to rest
with no one to terrify them.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord!

ALL: Thanks be to God!

(Zephaniah, chapter 2, verses 1- 3, and chapter 3, verses 12-13. Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation (p. 352-353 location 22759, 22807) Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Kindle Edition. The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation Page 356, 357. Copyright © 2007 by Priests for Equality. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. To Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc., September 4, 2024. Please accept this correspondence as authorization and permission to use the cited material at no charge. Please do use appropriate citation and referencing protocols. The Rights & Permissions Team, Globe Pequot International Sales, Marketing & Rights, Part of the Globe Pequot Publishing Group Representing the Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, now part of Bloomsbury.)

+ Psalm:

Lisa Frost: (Introduction only if needed.) Hello. My name is _____
and I am in the City of _____ in the State of _____.

The Psalm today is 146:6-10 with selected verses. Our response is: "The Lord is kind to the humble of heart."

R: The Lord is kind to the humble of heart.
It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever,

⁷ who is just to those who are oppressed.
It is God who gives bread to the hungry,
the LORD, who sets prisoners free,

R: The Lord is kind to the humble of heart.

⁸ the LORD who gives sight to the blind,
who raises up those who are bowed down,
⁹ the LORD, who protects the stranger
and upholds the widow and orphan.

R: The Lord is kind to the humble of heart.

^{8c} It is the LORD who loves the just
^{9c} but thwarts the path of the wicked.
The LORD will reign for ever,
Zion's God, from age to age.
Alleluia!

R: The Lord is kind to the humble of heart.

Give praise to the Living God.

To God's Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

To the Spirit who reigns in our hearts.

Both now, and forever. Amen.

Psalm 146, verses 1-10. Praise of God's faithfulness (inclusive language - 1993) Psalm (145)146 ©1963, 1986, 1993 The Grail (England). Onelicense Song #54629. All rights reserved. Published through exclusive license agreement by G. I. A. Publications, Inc. Used with Onelicense Print Permission and Streaming License A-741278. Doxology by Br. Shawn Benedict.

+ Second Reading

Veronica Floyd: **** **If an introduction is needed:****** Hello. My name is _____, and I am in the City of _____ in the State of _____.

The second reading is in the Book of First Corinthians, chapter 1, verses 26-31. You will find this on page 166 in the back of the NRSV Bible, the second testament. I will be reading from the ©2007 Inclusive Bible. Here begins the reading:

²⁶ Consider your calling, sisters and brothers. Not many of you were wise

by human standards, not many were influential, and surely not many were well-born.²⁷ God chose those whom the world considers foolish to shame the wise, and singled out the weak of this world to shame the strong.²⁸ The world's lowborn and despised, those who count for nothing, were chosen by God to reduce to nothing those who were something.²⁹ In this way no one should boast before God.³⁰ God has given you life in Christ Jesus and has made Jesus our wisdom, our justice, our sanctification and our redemption.³¹ This is just as it is written, "Let the one who would boast, boast in our God."

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord!

ALL: Thanks be to God!

(1 Corinthians, chapter 1, verses 26-31. Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation (p. 740-741 location 46153) Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Kindle Edition. The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation Page 744 Copyright © 2007 by Priests for Equality. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. To Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc., September 4, 2024. Please accept this correspondence as authorization and permission to use the cited material at no charge. Please do use appropriate citation and referencing protocols. The Rights & Permissions Team, Globe Pequot International Sales, Marketing & Rights, Part of the Globe Pequot Publishing Group Representing the Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, now part of Bloomsbury.)

+ The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

Reader: We sing an acclamation before and one after the Reading of the Gospel. Please rise as you are able for the Gospel Acclamation.

Gospel Acclamation

We Love Your Word!

To my friends in Christ at Ray Of Hope Church "Music for Worship" Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts
October 31, 1993
Revised 8/2013

We love Your Word, O Lord for it set us free. We know the truth, O Lord; We are Yours e - ter - nal - ly. So we stand to hear Your Word. We praise You for Your Word. Al-le - lu - a! for Your Word. It heals our hearts, souls and minds. For Your Word, Al - le - lu - ia! Thank You Je - sus!

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Reader: The Gospel reading is Matthew 5:1-12 on page 4 of the second testament in the NRSV Bible. I will read the ©2021 Updated NRSV Bible.

Reader: Truly present among us, the Lord is with you.
ALL: And also with you.

Reader: A reading of the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.
ALL: Glory to you, O Lord. May the Word of God be in our (+) minds that we will understand it, on our (+) lips that we will speak it, and in our (+) hearts that we will love it.

Reader: The Gospel reading is Matthew 5:1-12 on page 4 of the second testament in the NRSV Bible. I will be reading from the ©2007 Inclusive Bible. Here begins the reading:

^{5:1} When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the mountainside, and after he sat down and the disciples had gathered around, ² Jesus began to teach them:

³ "Blessed are those who are poor in spirit:

the kindom of heaven is theirs.

⁴ Blessed are those who are mourning:
they will be consoled.

⁵ Blessed are those who are gentle:
they will inherit the land.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice:
they will have their fill.

⁷ Blessed are those who show mercy to others:
they will be shown mercy.

⁸ Blessed are those whose hearts are clean:
they will see God.

⁹ Blessed are those who work for peace:
they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted
because of their struggle for justice:
the kindom of heaven is theirs.

¹¹ "You are fortunate when others insult you and persecute you, and utter every kind of slander against you because of me.

¹² Be glad and rejoice, for your reward in heaven is great; they persecuted the prophets before you in the very same way.

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord!

ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

(Matthew, chapter 5, verses 1-12. Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation (p. 643 location 40162) Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Kindle Edition. The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation Page 646 Copyright © 2007 by Priests for Equality. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. To Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc., September 4, 2024. Please accept this correspondence as authorization and permission to use the cited material at no charge. Please do use appropriate citation and referencing protocols. The Rights & Permissions Team, Globe Pequot International Sales, Marketing & Rights, Part of the Globe Pequot Publishing Group Representing the Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, now part of Bloomsbury.)

Gospel Acclamation

To my friends in Christ
at Ray Of Hope Church
for the 1996 New Year,
The Year of The Holy Spirit!

"Music For Worship"

Music by: Gaudel Liturgical Arts
December 31, 1995

Glo-ry to the One God! Glo-ry to our Sa - vior Je - sds the
Christ! And, to the Ho - ly Spi - rit, for - ev - er You're Our God!
You brought us out of dark - ness, in - to Your mar - ve - lous Light! Your Word is our
joy! For this we give You glo - ry, both now and ev - er more!
For - ev - er we are Yours! For - ev - er we are Yours!

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+ Sermon



Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.

The LGBTQSIAN2ss+ Pride Activities, and Social Events Center of Elmira, NY.



The only Church in Central New York founded and fostered by the GLBTQSIAN2ss+ community for 43 years. October 31, 2025 - 42nd Anniversary now in our 43rd year in Ministry.

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and God's grace toward me has not been in vain.

1 Cor. 15:10

2 Corinthians 4:5-6 ⁵ For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves (workers, servants, assistants) for Jesus's sake. ⁶ For it is the God who said, "Light will shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. (NRSVUE)

RED for Martyrs; dry martyr, wet martyr. People feel crushed under the weight of massive firings across the United States, a result of the new President and his Administration. ****Good news: Federal Judges ordered the Executive Administration to reinstate all Federal Employees who have been fired since the start of this Administration.**
(Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/13/politics/judge-opm-probationary-employees-fired-hearing/index.html>)

=====SERMON NOTES: Brother =====

Sermon notes 2-1-26 Epiphany Wk IV, Black History Month Week I Year A

The History Channel website: <https://www.history.com/articles/black-history-month>
87 videos!

Equal Justice Initiative January 29 at 10:31 AM

Texas executed 21-year-old Tommy Lee Walker seventy years ago, who was wrongfully convicted for the rape and murder of a white woman. Last week, he was formally exonerated by the Dallas County Commissioners Court.

EJL.ORG
Texas Executed an Innocent Man, Court Declares

89 reactions 7 comments 64 shares

Like Comment Share

January 28, 2026

"Texas Executed an Innocent Man, Court Declares" (https://eji.org/news/texas-executed-an-innocent-man-court-declares/?fbclid=IwY2xjawPraZdleHRuA2FibQlxMQBzcnRiBmFwcF9pZBAvMjlwMzkyNzg4MjAwODkyAAAEwV6GB_uaudEtI0eorOZUXi5ApUjVXhoR0LHLU5PdrGnmlQRr5vEDmame33mY_aem_8VskOqtrIX_06SLYdXL6rQ_) [Equal Justice Initiative](https://eji.org)

From Veronica

Audre Lorde: A celebrated poet and activist, Lorde was a fierce advocate for civil rights, feminism, and LGBTQ rights. Her work emphasized the intersectionality of race, gender, and sexuality.

A self-described "black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet," Audre Lorde dedicated both her life and her creative talent to confronting and addressing injustices of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia. Lorde was born in New York City to West Indian immigrant parents.

She attended Catholic schools before graduating from Hunter High School and published her first poem in *Seventeen* magazine while still a student there.

She was a librarian in the New York public schools throughout the 1960s. She had two children with her husband, Edwin Rollins, a white, gay man, before they divorced in 1970. In 1972, Lorde met her long-time partner, Frances Clayton.

She was central to many liberation movements and activist circles, including second-wave feminism, civil rights and Black cultural movements, and struggles for LGBTQ equality. In particular, Lorde's poetry is known for the power of its call for social and racial justice, as well as its depictions of queer experience and sexuality.

Ruth Charlotte Ellis (July 23, 1899 – October 5, 2000) was an African-American LGBT rights activist and the one of the oldest surviving open lesbians at the age of 101. She is recognized as one of the first out lesbians. She dedicated her life to helping homeless LGBTQ youth. The Ruth Ellis Center in Detroit honors her legacy and commitment to social justice.

Ellis lived with Babe Franklin mostly in the period prior to the Civil Rights Movement and the national Gay liberation movement, during which black queer people in Detroit were often excluded from white queer spaces. Ellis and Franklin's house was known in the African-American community as the "gay spot, a central location for gay and lesbian parties, particularly as a refuge for African-American gays and lesbians. Ellis often supported those who needed books, food, or assistance with college tuition.

Her advocacy for Detroit's Black LGBTQ+ community, and the opening up of her home as a place of respite and rejoice, indeed laid the groundwork for our modern-day concepts of "safe spaces," and "chosen family."

Ellis and Franklin were together for over 30 years before separating. In 1971, Ellis and Franklin's home in Detroit was demolished^[16] in an urban renewal^[17] construction project. The Ruth Ellis center in Detroit honors her legacy and commitment to social justice. It is one of only four agencies in the United States dedicated to homeless LGBT youth and young adults. Among their services are a drop-in center, supportive housing programs, and an integrated Health and Wellness Center that provides medical and mental health care.^[1] The center had its grand opening in September of 2000, and the 101-year-old Ellis attended the event and spoke: "It's been a miracle to me to see my name on a building, the Ruth Ellis Center, that's taking care of young people. I hope you have plenty of success and I hope you get grants that will help you go further and further.

Angela Davis: A political activist and scholar, Davis has been a prominent figure in the civil rights movement and has advocated for prison reform and LGBTQ rights.

Here are some impactful quotes by Angela Davis that encapsulate her philosophy and activism:

1. **"I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept."**

- This quote emphasizes the importance of taking action against injustices rather than passively accepting them.
2. **"You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time."**
 - Davis encourages continuous effort in striving for change and transformation in society.
 3. **"Freedom is a constant struggle."**
 - Davis reminds us that the fight for freedom and justice is ongoing and requires persistent effort.
 4. **"Justice is indivisible. You can't decide who gets civil rights and who doesn't."**
 - This quote reflects her belief in universal justice and equality for all.
 5. **"Radical simply means 'grasping things at the root.'"**
 - This quote defines radicalism as a deep understanding and addressing of the fundamental issues in society.
 6. **"The future is not a gift; it is an achievement."**
 - Davis stresses that creating a better future requires active participation and effort. These quotes not only reflect Angela Davis's insights on social justice and equality but also serve as a source of inspiration for those engaged in activism and the fight against oppression.

These females represent just a fraction of the many Black LGBTQ figures who have made significant contributions to society. Their legacies continue to inspire and empower future generations in the ongoing fight for equality and justice.

The 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, known as the "Six Triple Eight" was a groundbreaking unit of predominantly black women in the U.S. Army during World War II tasked with managing postal services for troops in Europe.

The 6888th was established in 1944, becoming the only all-Black, all-female unit sent overseas during the war. It was led by **Major Charity Adams**, who was the first African American woman to receive a commission in the Women's Army Corps (WAC). The battalion consisted of **855 women** who were trained to handle postal services, addressing a significant backlog of mail that had accumulated due to the war.

Mission and Operations

The battalion's primary mission was to sort and deliver mail to U.S. soldiers in the European Theater of Operations. Upon their arrival in Birmingham, England, in February

1945, they encountered a staggering backlog of **17 million pieces of mail**. The women of the 6888th worked tirelessly, often in challenging conditions, to clear this backlog. They developed an efficient system to manage the mail, which included creating a card index to track recipients with similar names.

Challenges Faced

The 6888th faced numerous challenges, including harsh working conditions in cold, dark warehouses and the threat of enemy attacks. Despite these difficulties, they maintained high morale and camaraderie. The unit worked seven days a week, processing an estimated **65,000 pieces of mail per shift**, ultimately serving over **four million military and civilian personnel**.

Legacy and Impact

The contributions of the 6888th Battalion were significant not only for military operations but also for the representation of Black women in the armed forces. Their motto, "**No Mail, Low Morale**," underscored the importance of communication for troop morale. The battalion's efforts helped to improve the efficiency of mail delivery during a critical time in the war, and they paved the way for future generations of women in the military.

Recognition

In recent years, the 6888th has received increased recognition for its historical significance, including discussions about their contributions in various media and educational platforms. Their story highlights the vital roles that women, particularly women of color, played in the military during World War II.

The 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion remains a powerful symbol of resilience and dedication, representing the often-overlooked contributions of Black women in the U.S. military history.

*)- CONTINUING REVELATION * * * **Keeping Watch** * * * On Sunday, January 19, 2024, I wrote the following in the bulletin. Finally, a hopeful thought to close with: on Friday, January 17, 2025, President Biden announced the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution is the law of the land because all of the required votes of the States have been received. The American Bar Association agrees that all requirements have been met. The National Archivist, Colleen Shogan, only has to certify and publish the 28th Amendment.

(Source:[https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2025/01/17/statement-from-president-joe-biden-on-the-equal-rights-amendment/#:~:text=The%20American%20Bar%20Association%20\(ABA,Constitution%20as%20the%2028th%20Amendment.\)](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2025/01/17/statement-from-president-joe-biden-on-the-equal-rights-amendment/#:~:text=The%20American%20Bar%20Association%20(ABA,Constitution%20as%20the%2028th%20Amendment.))) NPR story on the ERA

<https://www.npr.org/2025/01/17/nx-s1-5264378/biden-era-national-archivist-constitution>



*****OPEN MICROPHONE *****

=====
Katrina Lourdiane: Today, we are adding a sermon selection. Please turn in the Notebook to number 109 or in the Electronic Music Edition to "May The Lord God Bless You Real Good." Please rise as you are able to sing, "May The Lord God Bless You Real Good" by the late Rev. James Cleveland.

SERMON SELECTION:

May The Lord God Bless You Real Good

Words and Music by Rev. James Cleveland

Chorus

May the Lord God bless you real good
May the Lord God bless you real good
He woke me up this morning
Started me on my way
May the Lord God bless you real good

Bridge

Real good real good
May the Lord God bless you real good
Real good real good
May the Lord God bless you real good
Send Your blessing
Send Your blessing

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INTERCESSORY PRAYERS




(Visit our moving prayers page [Right Click Here.](#))

Veronica Floyd: Worship is our primary activity as a church. We are grateful to all the people over the last forty-two years of ministry who have given their help and assistance so that Ray Of Hope is here in 2024. Thank you to everyone who has contributed with your gifts "seen and unseen," may God bless you.

We are an independent organization founded and funded by anyone who appreciates what we offer. Your support is one way to give God thanks and praise for this unique ministry for all people. There are many convenient ways



to participate with your donation, including this QR Code , this link in the bulletin: [Donate to Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ](#); other live links on [our website](#), the envelopes and donation box next to the door, always available in the Chapel. Checks sent in the mail are also accepted. [Right-Click Here](#) for our contact information, including our street address. We always say, "Give what you can, but never give your last."

Katrina Lourdine: As we set the Table of the Lord here in the chapel and in your homes, we are going to sing: "Arise Shine." The music is available in the Notebook, number 17, and the electronic Music Edition, and the words are below. Please sing along as we set the Table of the Lord.

OFFERTORY SONG TEXT ONLY: Notebook to number 17, **Arise, Shine** by Words and Music by Steven Urspringer and Jay Robinson, ©1983 Priesthood Publications. CCLI Song #13797. Used with permission through our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121 and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.

Arise Shine

Verse

Arise shine
For thy light is come
Arise shine
For thy light is come

Chorus

And the glory of the Lord is risen
The glory of the Lord is come
The glory of the Lord is risen upon thee

Arise, Shine by Words and Music by Steven Urspringer and Jay Robinson
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21787152.

Ed Askins: (**You may improvise a prayer or use this one.) God, we bless you and praise you for all the gifts we have received to support this ministry. We thank you for those who can give financially and by sharing their skills, prayers, talents, volunteering, and other forms of support. We bless you, Lord, for those who could not give at this time, and we pray that all their needs will be met. We dedicate all this to the Name of Jesus, Amen. Please rise as you are able **to sing and pray**
the conclusion of the Service of the Word with the Doxology.

(We sing **The Doxology here.**)

ALL: Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures here below. Praise God above ye heavenly hosts. Praise God the Son and Holy Ghost. Amen._



WE CELEBRATE THE SACRED MEAL OF CHRIST

Pastor or?: Blessed are you, Lord, God of all Creation. Through your goodness, we have this Bread, which the Earth has given us, and human hands have lovingly made. Now, through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, this Bread will become for us the Bread From Heaven (Exodus 16:2, Psalm 78:24, John 6:32, 41,50,58), the Bread of the Angels (Psalm 78:25), the Bread of God (John 6:33), the Living Bread (John 6:51), the Bread Of Life (John 6:35, 48, 58), the Bread of the New Covenant (John 6:32, 49, 50,51, 58), the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the very Body Of Christ (John 6:52-56, 1Corinthians 10:16).

ALL: Blessed be God forever.

Kaiden: Please set down your Bread. For those at home, pour your wine or grape juice into your cup if you have not already done so. Then, add a small amount of water to the cup. With this water, we remember that Jesus is human. With this fruit of the vine, we remember He is divine forever.

Brother Benedict: Now, please lift your cup with me as I pray this prayer. Blessed are you, Lord, God of all Creation. Through your goodness, we have this fruit of the vine, which the Earth has given us and human hands have lovingly made. Now, through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, this fruit of the vine will become for us the Cup of Our Salvation (Psalm 116:13), the Cup of Everlasting Life (John 6:54-57), the Cup of the New Covenant (Matthew 26:28, Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25), the very Blood Of Christ (John 6:54-56; 1Corinthians 10:16).

ALL: Blessed be God forever.

Kaiden: Please set down your cup.

Pastor: Truly present and risen among us; **SAINTS**, the Lord is with you!

ALL: And also with you!

Pastor: As His Body, we lift up our hearts!

ALL: We lift them up to the Lord!

Pastor: As His Church, we give thanks to the Lord, our God!

ALL: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Pastor: (An improvised prayer is said here.)

May our voices be one with all the fabulous Faithful from every time and place as we sing our song and join their unending praise hymns.

Holy, Holy, Lord!

To my friends in Christ
at Ray Of Hope Church

"Music for Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts
October 31, 1993
Revised 8/2013

Ho - ly Ho - ly Ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and
 5 might. Hea-ven and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho - san - na in the
 10 high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est.
 16 Bless - ed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.
 22 Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est. Ho -
 27 san - na in the high-est.

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+ We Invoke the Blessing Of The Holy Spirit

Lisa Frost: At Ray Of Hope Church, we pray together and ask the Holy Spirit to give us the same gifts Jesus gave when He instituted Holy Communion for His Church. We invite you to extend your hands forward over the Bread and fruit of the vine, or extend your arms out with palms turned up in prayer, and say the following Invocation of the Holy Spirit with me.

ALL: O God, in the Name of Jesus, we, your faithful people, ask your Only One and Holy Spirit to bless and separate this Bread and fruit of the vine for Christ's purpose. Through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit, give to us the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in precisely the exact same manner that He gave them, and

commissioned us to do often in His Holy Name. You alone, O Loving, True God, authenticate for us that this is the Messiah, Christ, New Covenant Meal that Jesus instituted for our physical and spiritual well-being. We ask this in the Name of Jesus. Amen

Marcus: You may relax your arms and hands. Lisa, please show the Bread today, and Kaiden, please show the cup. **Today, we pray together in song the words of Institution.**

+ The Words Of The Institution Of The Holy Eucharist

WORDS OF INSTITUTION SONG: Remember Me. Words and Music by Gerrit Gustafson and Martin J. Nystrom © 1991 Integrity's Hosanna! Music. c/o Integrity Music, Inc., P.O. Box 16813, Mobile, AL, 36695. All rights reserved. International copyright secured. CCLI Song # 451177 Used with permission through our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121 and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.

+ The Lord's Prayer

Colby Dense: Having heard the Word of God and remembering the sacrifice of the Cross, we invite everyone to (pray or sing) together the prayer of Jesus.

**ALL: 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**

Music setting information: **The Lord's Prayer Composed by Albert Hay Malotte.** ©1935 G. Schirmer, Inc. (Admin. by Music Sales Corporation) CCLI Song#1534 Used with permission by our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121, and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.



The Reception of Holy Communion

Pastor: Please raise the Blessed Sacrament as a sign of praise and pray together:

ALL: Behold the Lamb of God. Behold the Christ truly present in the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation. Behold Him who said whoever eats of this Bread and drinks of this cup, though they die, they shall live forever, and I will raise them up on the last day.

Lisa Frost: Blessed are those who come to this table; everyone is welcome.

ALL: Lord, you make me worthy to receive you, and by your Word, I am healed. It is through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, that all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, forever and ever.

Doxology/Amen!

To my friends in Christ
at Ray Of Hope Church

"Music For Worship"

Music by: Gaude! Liturgical Arts
October 31, 1993

All hon - or and glo - ry be un - to You. Al - migh - ty

5 God world with - out end. A men! Al - le - lu - ia

11 A men! Al - le - lu - ia! All hon - or and glo - ry to you! A - men!

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Veronica Floyd: Please open your kit and receive Holy Communion now. Receive now the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Gift of God for the People of God. Receive these gifts of love to strengthen your resolve to serve others and God, and to fortify your Salvation. I assure you, by the promises of Christ, that anyone who receives this Holy Communion today will indeed receive sanctification and healing in mind, body, soul, and spirit, and will be raised by Christ to new life, and live forever.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

PRIVATE PRAYER FOR A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

Veronica: We understand that some of you watching do not have actual Holy Communion Bread and Wine. We invite you to pray for a Spiritual reception of Holy Communion, based on a prayer in the Prayer Book of the Episcopal National Cathedral. This prayer assures all the benefits and blessings of a physical reception. Together;

Oh, My Jesus, I believe you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things and welcome you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let me never be separated from you. May I live in you, and you in me, in this life and the life to come. Amen.

Spiritual Communion Prayer from the Episcopal National Cathedral Prayer Book.

A spiritual communion is a personal devotional anyone can pray at any time to express their desire to receive Holy Communion. Still, circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.

+ Sign Of Peace

Colby Dense: The Peace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with you.

ALL: And also with you.

Colby Dense: Please take a moment to share a sign of Peace with

those around you. **During COVID, we wave across the room and into the camera for the Internet.

Kaiden Benedict: Now, we clean our tables and altars. Please be sure all of the crumbs are in your cup. Add some water and swirl it around inside the cup. Drink the water. Dry the cup with the side napkin.
Clear your worship table and altar.

Katrina Lourdiane: We continue our prayers now by singing together: "Holy Forever." The music is in the Electronic Music Edition, and the words are below. Please rise as you are able to sing "Holy Forever."

COMMUNION SONG Jesus Name Above All Names words and music by
Naida Hearn

Verse 1

Jesus, name above all names,
Beautiful Savior, glorious Lord.
Emmanuel, God is with us.
Blessed Redeemer, living Word.

Verse 2

Jesus, loving Shepherd,
Vine of the branches, Son of God.
Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counselor,
Lord of the universe, Light of the world.

Verse 3

Praise him, Lord above all lords,
King above all kings, God's only Son.
The Prince of Peace, who by his Spirit
Comes to live in us, Master and Friend.

Jesus Name Above All Names words and music by Naida Hearn
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Treasurer's Report for the month of December 2025

Thanks be to God for His great faithfulness and to you all for your generous donations. We are truly blessed.

General Fund opening balance at the beginning of December was \$1,119.42. Regular donations to the General Fund were \$2,522.26. I transferred into the account from savings \$166.66 and we had undeposited funds from November of \$945.00. Payments out of this account were: Pastoral compensation of \$2,060.00 Verizon \$62.84, I was reimbursed \$26.49 for Juice communion sets purchased from Amazon. Cyrus was paid for our web page \$450.00, U.S. Treasury was paid \$250.00 for the Appointed Pastor's 4th quarter self-employment tax, Concordia was paid \$99.95 for wine kits. Larger bills monthly allotment was moved to savings in the amount of \$153.00 and Paypal Charges were \$32.26. After these were paid the balance of this account at the end of the month was \$1,618.80. There were no undeposited funds for December.

Building Fund opening balance was \$493.65 Donations to the Building fund were as follows: Ian and Christina McLaughlin \$450.00, Brother Shawn Benedict \$648.00 and Ed Askins \$40.00. Bills that came out of the fund this month was the Credit Card bill with Key Bank of \$50.67, electric bill \$500.00, gas bill \$136.74, Insurance bill \$324.91, Water bill \$68.74 and I transferred \$216.00 to saving toward the large bill allotment. Ending balance of this fund was \$334.59.

Building Improvement Fund opening balance on this account was \$1,687.36. Deposits to this account were Ed & Phyl \$500.00, Veronica \$300 Wayne and Glenn \$50.00. We also had undeposited funds from November from Wayne and Glenn of \$50.00. There were no transfers out of this account during December so the ending balance was \$2,587.36. Our bill with Isaac's was \$2,510.00!

Savings (Council) Account opening balance in this account was \$1,252.19. Transfers to this account were \$153.00 from the General Fund for large bills and \$216.00 from Building fund for large bills. Transfers out of this account were \$166.66 to the General Fund towards the Appointed Pastor's self-employment tax payment. The balance at the end of the month was \$1,454.53.

Our year-to-date donations to 12/31/2025 are \$52,493.41. Our year-to-date expenses are \$51,244.80. We closed out 2025 with income over expenses of \$1,248.61.

Upcoming bills: For the Building Fund we have two repair bills from Isaac's totaling \$422.37, City of Elmira Property Tax Bill of \$36.66 both of these are due by the end of January. The transfers to savings for the Appointed Pastor's self-employment tax of \$83.34, the General Funds transfer to savings of \$153.00 for large bills and the Building Fund transfer to savings of \$216.00 for large bills and \$70.00 to Rainah Barnes still has to be done in January. Please note the following, I had mentioned a couple months ago that we were slowly exhausting the excess in the Building Fund. Our current regular monthly donations to this account are normally \$1,138.00 on a 4 week month. . Our monthly utility budget amounts have increased. Our regular bills out of the Building Fund for next month are going to be almost \$1,500.00. These are just regular bills of utilities, insurance, credit card and water bill. So we need some extra donations to the Building Fund. I'm asking the Council, what is the procedure if money does not come in for these bills? Do I transfer any excess from other accounts?

Credit Card

The balance on the credit card is \$2,129.62. There is available credit of \$1,870.38. I did make an extra payment on this of \$99.95 out of the General Fund on this as I had used the credit card to purchase the wine kits. Katrina had donated \$50.00 towards this.

Balances as of January 23, 2026

General fund: \$896.80, Building Fund \$418.73, Building Improvement Fund \$497.36 and Savings is \$1,254.53

Savings breakdown is: Saved for dishwasher \$150.00, saved for General Fund large bills \$398.00 and saved for Building Fund large bills \$706.53.

The donations records have been distributed or mailed depending on location, the Annual report has been done, the January council meeting reports is completed and the Appointed Pastor's last payment for his self-employment tax has been sent in. The only item I am waiting on is to receive the 1099 and 1096 in the mail from the IRS to complete the Appointed Pastors annual earnings and all of the end of year work will be complete. I ordered it from the IRS the first week of January and they said two weeks, so I'm expecting that any day.

NOTES OF THANKS TO EVERYONE FOR GENEROSITY GIVEN TO THE LORD THROUGH RAY OF HOPE

General Offering for the week of January 4, \$960.00 Attendance 13 on Sunday
Tuesday January 6 - 9, Wednesday, January 7, Mass - 9

General Offering for the week of January 11, \$378.00 Attendance 14 on Sunday
Tuesday January 13 - 7, Wednesday, January 14, Mass - 7

General Offering for the week of January 18, \$00.00 Attendance 12 on Sunday
Tuesday January 20 - 10, Wednesday, January 21, Mass -8

General Offering for the week of January 25, \$600.00 Attendance 12 on Sunday
Tuesday January 20 - 8 attended Holocaust Remembrance Day, and 6 attended Bible Enrichment,
Wednesday, January 28, Mass -6

THANK YOU, EVERYONE, for all the donations made to date on our building improvements.

UPDATE: The heat has been repaired by Isaac's as planned. You are making change happen with your generosity. CELEBRATE the accomplishments!!!!!! Donations that cause change and growth are not always in cash; many thanks to everyone who donates time and talent, cooking, cleaning, transporting, calling, reminding, making copies, and so many other examples of donated help. Thank you.

DISHWASHER / APPLIANCE ROOM NOVEMBER: (11-1-25 Katrina Lourdiane made a \$50.00 donation) (11-16-25 Katrina Lourdiane made a \$50.00 donation), (11-19-25 Wayne and Glenn made a \$100.00, thank you both) **JANUARY, 2026:** Katrina 1-14-26 \$60.00, thank you! Deanna Caputo - \$360.00, thank you Deanna!

Building Improvement Fund: DECEMBER FUNDS: Ed and Phillipa Askins \$500.00, thank you both very much. 12-21-25 \$50.00 from Wayne and Glenn, thank you both. **JANUARY, 2026** 1-26-26 \$50.00 from Wayne and Glenn, thank you both

Donations to the Building Improvements are still welcome as we have electricity, the water lines, insulation, drywall, dryer vent, and finishing to do.

**** Special Gifts made this week:** Ian and Christina made a \$450.00 donation to the Building Fund, thank you both. Ed Askins made a \$40.00 gift to the Building Fund, thank you Ed.

**** Special Gifts made in addition to offering plate gifts made recently**** Marcus made to the Building Fund in the amount of \$400.00, thank you, Marcus.

THANK YOU to everyone who brought gifts to the Monastery over the Season. Thank you to everyone who has been cooking, donating food, and making desserts.

Brother Benedict made a \$710.00 donation to the Building Fund, the first week of January, thank you Brother. Thank you Ed for a \$40.00 donation to the Building Fund. Thank you Ian and Christina for a \$450.00 donation to the Building Fund. Brother donated \$324.00 (2/2 of December donation) to the Building Fund, thank you Brother. Wayne and Glenn donated decorations, thank you. Marcus donated a tripod to hold the camera for the Facebook recording, Thank you Marcus. Brother donated \$324.00 (1/2 of December donation), thank you Brother.

NOVEMBER: Ian and Christina donated \$450.000 to the Building Fund, Thank you both. Ed donated \$40.00 to the Building Fund. Thank you. Ed. Marcus donated two wireless microphones.

To be added to our email list, fill out the email information form at the hospitality table and place it in the offerings/donations box at the door. Internet participants can email rayofhopechurch@aol.com and write "email list" in the Subject box.

UPCOMING EVENTS ON OUR CALENDAR

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Annie Davis celebrates on February 14

Gary Davis February 27

Tami Whatley February 23

Tuesday, February 3, 6:30- 8:00 p.m. Bible Enrichment - The Book of Revelation

Wednesday, February 4, 12:00 Noon ecumenical Mass

Friday, February 6, 7:30 p.m. *******Music Ministry Rehearsal*******

Sunday, February 8, 2026, 10:30 a.m. Black History Month Week II.

Tuesday, February 10, **7:15 p.m.** - 8:45 p.m. Bible Enrichment - The Book of Revelation

Wednesday, February 11, 12:00 Noon ecumenical Mass

Friday, February 14, 7:30 p.m. *******Music Ministry Rehearsal*******

Sunday, February 15, 2026, 10:30 a.m. Black History Month Week III.

MONDAY, February 16, 6:30 p.m. Chapel Assistants Committee changes the chapel for Ash Wednesday and Lent.

Tuesday, February 17, 6:30- 8:00 p.m. Bible Enrichment - The Book of Revelation

Wednesday, February 18, 12:00 Noon ecumenical Mass - Ash Wednesday

February 18 is Ash Wednesday here: 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Friday, February 20, 7:30 p.m. Council Meeting ***No Music Ministry planned***

Sunday, February 22, 2026, 10:30 a.m. Black History Month Week IV, **First Sunday of Lent.**

=====PLANNING AHEAD=====

March 15 is Laetare - Rose color Sunday in Lent.

HOLY WEEK, 2026

Sunday, March 29, 2026, is Palm Sunday

Wednesday, April 1, 2026, Noon ecumenical Mass during Holy Week

Thursday, April 2, 2026, 7:00 p.m. Holy Thursday -

Friday, April 3, 2026, 7:00 p.m. Sacrifice of the Cross, Good Friday The Stations of the Cross

Saturday, April 4, 2026, 7:45 p.m. Vigil of the Resurrection - Baptisms? Membership?

No events scheduled for Sunday, April 5, 2026

May 10, Sunday, Mother's Day and Foundresses Day

May 17, Sunday, Ascension Sunday

May 24, Sunday Pentecost

May 31, Trinity, Memorial Sunday

June 6, Saturday, Pride Elmira

June 7, Sunday, Corpus Christi - relicense Servants of the Eucharist

June 13, Saturday, Pride Corning

June 14, Sunday, 30th Ordination Anniversary

June 20, Saturday, Juneteenth in Elmira E.O.P.

June 21, Sunday, Father's Day, Juneteenth Celebration (19th), and 30th Ordination Anniversary

June 29th PRIDE SUNDAY

There is a sign-up sheet on the table for desserts during the after-worship fellowship time, and we are seeking volunteers to sign up for desserts. Kaiden will text the volunteer during the week to remind them they have signed up to provide snacks that week.

=====



We Are Sent Forth To Serve

Kaiden Benedict: SAINTS: The Lord is with you!

ALL: And also with you!

Kaiden Benedict: **This is our closing prayer.** We bless and praise you, God, for this time of worship we have enjoyed together today. Send us forth now to share what we have experienced with others. We ask you, Almighty God, to bless us with quiet miracles, the warmth of love, and fill us with wonder and peace; (*+*) In the Name of God, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen

Wayne Harris: **We pray** Romans Chapter fifteen, verse thirteen together, saying:

ALL: Now may the God of hope fill you with all Joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen (Romans 15:13)

Wane Harris: We go forth in peace and Love to serve all people and the Lord ...

ALL: ... on our journey into renewal, fresh beginnings, new possibilities, and a renewed embrace of our potential! Thanks be to God.

Wayne Harris: Please rise as you are able for our final song, Notebook #108, and in the Electronic Music Edition, "Walking Up The King's Highway." Please rise as you are able to sing "Walking Up The King's Highway."

LAST SONG WORDS ONLY

Walking Up The King's Highway Words and Music Mary E. Gardner | Thomas A. Dorsey

Chorus

It's a highway to heaven
None can walk up there
But the pure in heart
It's a highway to heaven
Walking up the King's highway

Verse 1

My way is brighter
My load gets lighter

Walking up the kings highway
There's joy in knowing
With Him I'm going
Walking up the King's highway

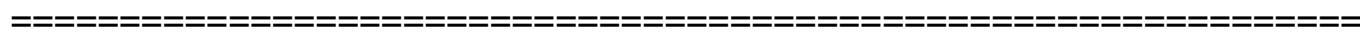
Verse 2

Don't have to worry
don't have to hurry
Walking up the King's Highway.
Christ walks beside me,
Angels to guide me
Walking up the King's Highway.

Verse 3

If you're not walking
Start while I'm talking
Walking up the King's highway
There'll be a blessing
You'll be confessing
Walking up the King's highway

Words and Music Mary E. Gardner | Thomas A. Dorsey © Words: 1940. Renewed 1967 Unichappell Music, Inc. (Admin. by CURB | Word Music Publishing) Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp. (Admin. by CURB | Word Music Publishing) Music: 1940. Renewed 1967 Unichappell Music, Inc. (Admin. by CURB | Word Music Publishing) Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp. (Admin. by CURB | Word Music Publishing) CCLI Song # 78385 Used with permission through our Christian Copyright License Incorporated License Number 706121 and Christian Copyright License Incorporated Streaming Plus License 21787152.



The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. Isaiah 9:7 This is all God's fault, God's design, God's doing from start to end.

Br. Benedict at the time of Renewal of Vows, June 20, 2021: "Looking forward, I like to say the first twenty-five years were spent on **stabilization, survival, and sustainability**. The second twenty-five years will be spent on growth to help Ray Of Hope **thrive, train, and transplant** this Congregation to new leadership. The founders and foundresses successfully transferred the leadership to a new generation, us, and now we must do the same. I plan to fade into the Congregation and continue providing support to the new

leadership. My goal is to leave the Congregation with new leadership, in good standing, and thriving."



We never held a vote to decide if we would be an ***INCLUSIVE*** church for you.

We are not an ***OPEN AND AFFIRMING*** church for you.

We are not a ***RECONCILING CHURCH*** or
RECONCILING CONGREGATION for you.

We are not an ***OPEN MINDED*** or ***ACCEPTING*** or ***WELCOMING***

Church where you can attend as long as you blend in quietly and discretely.

WE ARE YOU!

THIS is the Church where YOU belong.

Ray Of Hope Church is the Church by us, for us, and made by You.

Made by you and for you, because we are

The Third Sunday of Pride, 2019

Ray Of Hope Church Weekly Schedule

Elmira Worship- Sunday 10:30 a.m. – 380 W. First St. Parsonage/Monastery . Join us live on Zoom. Sign on by 10:15 a.m. **Syracuse Worship-** looking for a host in Syracuse. For more information [Click Here](#).

Bible Enrichment- Tuesday 6:30–8 p.m.-380 W. First St. Parsonage /Monastery. Or Join us live on SKYPE: rayofhope26 is our contact name. Sign on by 6:15 p.m. [Click Here](#).

**** to call the Pastor: Rev. Shawn Benedict: 607-280-0374***

Policy Concerning Minors at Events

Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ welcomes all youth and children to worship with us and participate in our activities. We endeavor to provide a safe and non-threatening environment for all children. To this end, we have a Policy Concerning Minors at Events, which is available from the Clerk upon request and is on our website; http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/Minors_At_Events.htm. Please enjoy your visit with us, and we hope you will return.

NOTE: On June 15, 1996, as a part of the Ordination Ceremony and his profession of Benedictine Vows, Rev. Leo W. McDermott, II retired the use of his secular birth name and was given a new name in Religion, Brother Shawn Francis Benedict.

The Chapel is not open to the general public, the way it used to be from 7:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. daily, as we try to do our part to stop the spread of COVID-19. Call for an appointment if you want some time to come in to pray, read, or visit The Blessed Sacrament. 1-607-280-0374 Our regular services will be blended with live participation in the Chapel, live on Skype and Facebook. To read the information on how to use Skype to participate with us, [Click Here](#).. Recordings of most of our Worship events are on our Facebook page, to see [Click Here](#). We will reopen the Chapel as soon as it is reasonably safe and prudent.

Visitors: Please feel free to fill out the information slip below and place it in the collection plate. Please indicate any special needs you may have. All information will be used for church purposes *only*.

(Optional) Name: _____

(Optional) Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

I would like to be included on the church Email list.

I would like to schedule an appointment with the Pastor.



Ray Of Hope Church Statement Of Purpose

In the Spirit of God, and in the footsteps of Christ Jesus, we the Faith Community at Ray Of Hope Church commit to:

- **guide** and welcome all people to the Free Gift of Salvation in Christ Jesus, with a God-ordained celebration of all sexual orientations, and gender expressions, with an open ministry to persons affected by or infected with HIV/AIDS, their families and friends,
- **declare** and openly assert the Truth that same-sex relationships, founded and fostered in God-centered Love, are holy and blessed, and in fact originate by the work of the Holy Spirit; and, that God equally uses blessed same-sex and heterosexual Holy Unions and Marriages to bring God's own Love and good news of "Salvation to all who believe" into the World,
- **uphold**, proclaim, and teach the historic Biblical Christian Doctrine, build community through worship and prayer, break the Bread, and live the ministry of the Holy Spirit,
- **change** the World around us by living Gospel principles of social justice in everything we do, thereby exposing all forms of prejudice, oppression, racism, homophobia, sexism, and misogyny,
- **proclaim** the ray of hope, which is the soon coming return of Christ Jesus, and the fullness of His Eternal Community where the Will of God will establish liberty, justice, equity, and Peace for all God's People and the Universe.

Visit us online:

Our website: <http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/> Mobile-Friendly website version: <http://www.rayofhopechurch.com/P2023-Bookmark.htm> Facebook Page (like and follow) [Click Here](#). Our YouTube page: www.youtube.com/rayofhopenyglbtqs

Scripture verses to share with others:—————

Romans 15:13 Now may the God of **hope** fill you with all Joy and Peace in believing, that you may abound in **hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Titus 2:11, 3:4 The grace, the goodness, the loving-kindness of our God has appeared, bringing Salvation **to everyone**.

John 5:24 Those who hear my Word and **believe in God** who sent me, **have** eternal life, will **never** come under judgment and have passed from **death to life** already.

Romans 10:13 "For **whoever** calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (repeated @ Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21) "everyone, anyone who" asks. "Lord" here refers to God principally as in the book of Joel that is being quoted, so all persons who call on God shall be saved.

"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"
(Isaiah 43:19 ESV)

"Behold, I make all things new." (Revelation 21:5)

