



Blessed are the agnostics. Blessed are they who doubt. Blessed are those who have nothing to offer. Blessed are the preschoolers who cut in line at communion. *Blessed are the poor in spirit.* You are of heaven and Jesus blesses you.

Blessed are those whom no one else notices. The kids who sit alone at middle-school lunch tables. The laundry guys at the hospital. The sex workers and the night-shift street sweepers. The closeted. The teens who have to figure out ways to hide the new cuts on their arms. *Blessed are the meek.* You are of heaven and Jesus blesses you.

Blessed are they who have loved enough to know what loss feels like. Blessed are the mothers of the miscarried. Blessed are they who can't fall apart because they have to keep it together for everyone else. Blessed are those who "still aren't over it yet." *Blessed are those who mourn.* You are of heaven and Jesus blesses you.

I imagine Jesus standing here blessing us because that is our Lord's nature. This Jesus cried at his friend's tomb, turned the other cheek, and forgave those who hung him on a cross. He was *God's Beatitude*—God's blessing to the weak in a world that admires only the strong.

Jesus invites us into a story bigger than ourselves and our imaginations, yet we all get to tell that story with the scandalous particularity of this moment and this place. We are storytelling creatures because we are fashioned in the image of a storytelling God. May we never neglect that gift. May we never lose our love for telling the story. Amen.

-Nadia Bolz-Weber

February 1, 2026

WELCOME TO WORSHIP AT NEW HOPE

Our worship stems from the Presbyterian/Reformed branch of the Christian faith, and you'll find much of what you need to participate in this bulletin. If you're unfamiliar with these traditions, you may simply let the prayers of the community carry you forward. There is no wrong way to come to God in prayer.

We're glad you're here.

During Today's Worship

Children are especially welcome in our worship services, because faith is formed by the practices that shape it. Worship clipboards for children may be found on the table outside the office. An usher will help you locate one. Parents who prefer child care will find the nursery (infant-Pre-K) in Room 204 (main level).

Worship Feast, an alternative Christian formation experience for elementary-age children is available during the service. Children who wish to participate may be dismissed after the Gospel Reading. They will exit by the side (north) door and be escorted across the hallway.

Preparing for worship... Please silence cell phones upon entering the sanctuary. The need may arise for you to exit the service early. If so, please refrain from exiting during prayers, reading of scripture and choral anthems. Natural and appropriate exit points are during congregational hymns or sung responses. Your courtesy is appreciated. Also, as a kindness to fellow worshipers, please do not take flash photos during the worship service.

Large-print bulletins are available for ease of worship. An usher will be happy to assist you.

The offering... Your financial contributions to New Hope may be placed in one of the two offering stands located at the entry to the main sanctuary doors. Contributions may also be made securely online via the QR code toward the back of this worship bulletin.

The Eucharist (the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion) is open to all the baptized. The Lord's Supper and Baptism are inseparable. If you feel called by the Holy Spirit to meet Christ in Communion, we believe that you are also being called to Baptism. We will not turn anyone away from the Lord's Table, but we do invite you to speak to the pastor or a member of the Session about Baptism as soon as possible.

Restrooms are located on the south side of the building, across the hall from the kitchen. When you exit the worship space, turn left and they are down the hall on the right.

Liturgist: Jim Pettit

Tech team: Julie Nowakowski & Bob Davenport

If You Are New to New Hope

Information about our church can be found at the Outreach & Information area in the foyer.

Wifi network: NHPCGuest **Wifi password:** Reformed

New Hope Cares

For pastoral care and to notify the church of illness, hospitalization, or death, please contact the church office at 636/936.2200 (tjohnson@nhpres.org). To arrange for home-bound Communion, contact Pastor James at cqjames@nhpres.org or 936.2200 x.11.

ORDER OF SERVICE FOR
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

February 1 2026

10:15 a.m.

THE GATHERING

*As the people gather, worshipers greet one another, welcoming newcomers.
Please silence electronic devices.*

CALL TO WORSHIP

+ PRELUDE

It Is Well with My Soul

Terry Martinez, tenor saxophone

arr. Molly Ijames

♪ This prayer is offered to help worshipers center the heart and mind for worship.

God our deliverer,
you walk with the meek and the poor,
the compassionate and those who mourn,
and you call us to walk humbly with you.
When we are foolish, be our wisdom;
when we are weak, be our strength;
that, as we learn to do justice and to love mercy,
your rule may come as blessing. Amen.

+ GREETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS

+ *INTROIT

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

REGENT SQUARE

*All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One:
come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, our Lord and king!*

*OPENING SENTENCES & PRAYER OF THE DAY

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who hunger for justice,
for they will be filled.

Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are we when we gather to hear God's Word,
for we will be nurtured and sustained.

...one God, now and forever.
Amen.

*THE CONFESSION

O God, all that you require of us
 is to do justice, love kindness,
 and journey humbly with you.
 We confess we are ensnared in systems
 that trade justice for the luxury of the few.
 Forgive us for fearing the risks of following you
 in a culture where money is king
 and for failing to trust the grace you give freely.
 Teach us again that we cannot earn your grace,
 only humbly accept it.
 Give us the courage to love kindness,
 do justice,
 and to share each other's burdens gladly.

❧ You may reflect on this prayer and offer personal confession in silence.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

THE PEACE

❧ Greet those around you with: "The peace of Christ be with you," responding, "And also with you."

Glory to God

GLORIA

Glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, glo-ry in the high-est!

5
 Glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia!

THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Micah 6:1-8

EPISTLE READING

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

*THE GOSPEL

THE ACCLAMATION

CELTIC ALLELUIA

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 5:1-12

SERMON

 A moment for silence and reflection.

*HYMN 172

Blest Are They

BLEST ARE THEY

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

...O Christ, our light,
hear our prayer.

THE EUCHARIST

OFFERING OF OURSELVES & OUR GIFTS

 Financial contributions to the mission and ministry of New Hope may be placed through the slot of the offering stand located at the entry to the sanctuary, or securely online via the QR code on page 10.

Walk Humbly with Your God

Joel Raney

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

...we join with all the saints of every age
in proclaiming our thanks and praise.

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Isa. 6:3; Ps. 118:25-26

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

...Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.

...all glory and honor are yours, almighty God,
now and forever.

Amen.

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray.

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.

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

Ushers will invite worshipers to the Lord's Table by rows. Please approach the Table at the center and return by the outside aisles.

Please cup your hands to receive the bread. Gluten-free bread is available at the plate in the center.

*Amazing Grace!
How Sweet the Sound*
Terry Martinez, tenor saxophone

arr. Eleanor Whitsett

PRAYER AFTER THE MEAL

THE SENDING

*HYMN 314

Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness

CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT

*BLESSING & CHARGE

*POSTLUDE

*Please rise in body or spirit.

+Those arriving may be seated.



"I've Been Wondering..."

FAQs about Worship

Why does worship always begin with the greeting, "Grace to you and peace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"? Why not simply, "Good morning"?

We never want to underestimate the power and importance of words. Such a greeting as "Good morning" is something we say to each other that constitutes "polite" speech. The reality, however, is that it is not always a "good" morning. Consider the man who just lost his job, or the woman who is mourning the death of a loved one. The quality of the day is beside the point of our gathering. We gather as Christians for worship not because it's a "good morning" or a "glorious day," because often it doesn't feel that way. We come together as the Church because of Jesus the Christ. Paul often addressed his congregations: *"Grace to you and peace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Or "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all"* (2 Cor. 13:14). That is not something you will hear at a Rotary meeting or the Elk's Lodge. A greeting like this signifies that we are called together by a power far greater than ourselves. It sets the tone for this assembly.

Why do those reading scripture say, "Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church?"

Rather than giving information about the reading (i.e. book, chapter and verses already printed in the worship bulletin), liturgists (readers, also known as "lectors") address the meaning of what is happening when we gather. This is a statement of belief that the Tri-une God continues to speak in the present time through the Holy Spirit. So we are bid to "listen." This moves the reading of scripture beyond a mere recitation of ancient words. Rather, it is God becoming manifest to shine forth in the Word read and proclaimed. Thus, the liturgist begins with a strong verb—"Hear..."—as a summons for us all to take notice and attend to this still-speaking God.

Why do we have times of silence in the liturgy?

We live in a world saturated with noise and our culture bombards us with sounds all around. Cell phones and computers, television and radio constantly vie for our attention. In the midst of life in this sort of world, the church gathers to hear God's voice in song, scripture, sermon and prayer, but also to listen for the Holy Spirit and respond from the

depths of our hearts. Silence is the space within the liturgy for this to happen. Aidan Kavanaugh has said that silence in worship is “the thunderous quiet of people communicating that which escapes being put into mere words.” In our worship, silence is observed at the time of confession, following the sermon, during the prayers of the people, and elsewhere depending upon the season. Learning to engage silence requires just that—discipline and effort, but we are blessed if we try because this silence can become a fruitful oasis by which we are nourished in communion with God. Consider these scriptures: *“Be still, and know that I am God”* (Psalm 46:10); *“The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him!”* (Habakkuk 2:20).

WORSHIP RESOURCES

"It Is Well with My Soul." Music: Philip P. Bliss, arr. Molly Ijames. ©2018 Beckenhorst Press, Inc.

Prayer of Preparation, *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 60.

Opening Sentences. *Call to Worship: Liturgy, Music, Preaching, & the Arts*, Vol. 53:1, 46.

Prayer of Confession. *Call to Worship: Liturgy, Music, Preaching, & the Arts*, Vol. 59:1, 38.

"Glory to God." Text and music: Jacques Berthier and Taize Community. ©1979 Les Presses de Taize (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

"Celtic Alleluia." Text: trad. liturgical. Music: Fintan O'Carroll. ©1985 Fintan O'Carroll and Christopher Walker. Published by OCP.

"Blest Are They." Text and music: David Haas. ©1985 GIA Publications, Inc.

"Walk Humbly with Your God." Text and music: Joel Raney. ©2017 Hope Publishing Co.

"Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound." Music: NEW BRITAIN, arr. Eleanor Whitsett. ©2008 Birnamwood/MorningStar Music Publishers, Inc.

"Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness." Text and music: Bernadette Farrell. ©Bernadette Farrell (pub. by OCP).

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*Striving to welcome and include all,
worship God,
grow in Christian faith,
serve others,
and be God's love in the world.*

The Rev. Dr. Christopher Q. James, *Pastor*
Dr. Gay Holmes Spears, *Director of Music Ministries*
Trudi Johnson, *Office Manager*

Session

2026	2027	2028
Jeff Connor	Rick Getz	Kirk Garten
Lynn Harmon	Bill Lamey	Kathy Gibbs
Holly Martinez	Deb Mackin, Clerk of Session	Randy Malta
Stan Whiteley	Colleen Shear	Lynne Snyder

Diaconate

2026	2027	2028
Bryan Eikmann, Moderator	Ruth Connor	Mike Black
Shari Mahon	Bob Davenport	Donna Huffman
Joe Seidler	Jane Johnston	Bill Irvine
Amie Tilk	Robin Murphy	Chris Waddell

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