

Second Sunday after Epiphany
January 18, 2026
United Church of Christ - Neillsville
Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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PRELUDE

"Beneath Thy Wings O'ershading" Van Denman Thompson
Karen Mohr

RINGING OF THE CARILLON

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Listen up, everyone!

God has given us work to do.

**God has called each of us
before we were even born.**

It was God who named us.

It is God who claims us.

The light of God's love shines in us.

Let's shine God's love into all the world!

OPENING PRAYER

God of Isaiah, you are our God, too. You spoke to the prophets, but your message did not end with them. There is still work to be done, and we pray to hear your call afresh. Help us joyfully claim our role as your beloved servants, knowing that you provide all that we need to do our work. You walked with us before we were even born, and you continue to hold us by the hand each and every day of our lives. We pray with the confidence of those who have been filled with your light. We pray with the assurance of those who have been called into fellowship with your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

HYMN *"Arise, Your Light is Come"*

#164 NCH Ruth Duck

**1 Arise, your light is come!
The Spirit's call obey;
Show forth the glory of your God,
Which shines on you today!**

**2 Arise, your light is come!
Fling wide the prison door;
Proclaim the captives' liberty,
Good tidings to the poor.**

**3 Arise, your light is come!
All you in sorrow born,
Bind up the broken-hearted ones
And comfort those who mourn.**

**4 Arise, your light is come!
The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing;
God's power will make us strong.**

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION

Faithful God, you call us to be saints, but we are more comfortable with the role of sinner; you call us to be your servants, but we worry that we lack the skills to do your work; you put a new song of praise in our mouths, but we stumble on unfamiliar words; you show us the work to be tackled, but we turn away defiant, insisting we have more important things to do. Put your song on our lips and in our hearts and remind us of the joy that awaits us when we put our trust in you. Guide us into the light of your unwavering, never-ending, and grace-filled love. Amen.

WORDS OF GRACE

God is faithful and ever-present. The God who knew us before our birth loves us still and strengthens us, that we will one day be blameless. Through the gift of Jesus Christ, God offers forgiveness, grace, and mercy. Enter into the light!

PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The Peace of God be with you.
Many: And also with you.

All are invited to greet one another with words such as *"The peace of Christ be with you,"* and the response: *"And also with you"*.

RESPONSE: *“Enter, Rejoice, and Come In”*

#73 NCH (vs 1) Louise Ruspini

**1 Enter, rejoice, and come in,
Enter, rejoice, and come in.
Today will be a joyful day;
enter, rejoice, and come in.**

CHILDREN’S TIME

SCRIPTURE READINGS

OLD TESTAMENT Isaiah 49:1-7

¹ Listen to me, all you in distant lands! Pay attention, you who are far away! The Lord called me before my birth; from within the womb he called me by name.

² He made my words of judgment as sharp as a sword. He has hidden me in the shadow of his hand. I am like a sharp arrow in his quiver.

³ He said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, and you will bring me glory.”

⁴ I replied, “But my work seems so useless! I have spent my strength for nothing and to no purpose. Yet I leave it all in the Lord’s hand; I will trust God for my reward.”

⁵ And now the Lord speaks— the one who formed me in my mother’s womb to be his servant, who commissioned me to bring Israel back to him. The Lord has honored me, and my God has given me strength. ⁶ He says, “You will do more than restore the people of Israel to me. I will make you a light to the Gentiles, and you will bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.”

⁷ The Lord, the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel, says to the one who is despised and rejected by the nations, to the one who is the servant of rulers: “Kings will stand at attention when you pass by. Princes will also bow low because of the Lord, the faithful one, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”

NEW TESTAMENT Psalm 40:1-11

¹ I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. ² He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along. ³ He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the Lord.

⁴ Oh, the joys of those who trust the Lord, who have no confidence in the proud or in those who worship idols. ⁵ O Lord my God, you have performed many wonders for us. Your plans for us are too numerous to list. You have no equal. If I tried to recite all your wonderful deeds, I would never come to the end of them.

⁶ You take no delight in sacrifices or offerings. Now that you have made me listen, I finally understand— you don’t require burnt offerings or sin offerings.

⁷ Then I said, “Look, I have come. As is written about me in the Scriptures: ⁸ I take joy in doing your will, my God, for your instructions are written on my heart.”

⁹ I have told all your people about your justice. I have not been afraid to speak out, as you, O Lord, well know. ¹⁰ I have not kept the good news of your justice hidden in my heart; I have talked about your faithfulness and saving power. I have told everyone in the great assembly of your unfailing love and faithfulness.

¹¹ Lord, don’t hold back your tender mercies from me. Let your unfailing love and faithfulness always protect me.

NEW TESTAMENT John 1:29-42

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ He is the one I was talking about when I said, ‘A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.’ ³¹ I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel.”

³² Then John testified, “I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon him. ³³ I didn’t know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, ‘The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God.”

³⁵ The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. ³⁶ As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, “Look! There is the Lamb of God!” ³⁷ When John’s two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus.

³⁸ Jesus looked around and saw them following. “What do you want?” he asked them. They replied, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”

³⁹ “Come and see,” he said. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place where he was staying, and they remained with him the rest of the day.

⁴⁰ Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. ⁴¹ Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means “Christ”).

⁴² Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, “Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas” (which means “Peter”).

SERMON “Give YOU as a light” Pastor Sue

HYMN “Lamb of God” Twila Paris
#281 W&R

**1 Your only Son, no sin to hide,
But you have sent him from your side
To walk upon this guilty sod
And to become the Lamb of God.**

Refrain

**O Lamb of God, sweet Lamb of God,
I love the holy Lamb of God.
O wash me in his precious blood.
My Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.**

**2 Your gift of love, they crucified,
They laughed and scorned him as he died,
The humble King they named a fraud
And sacrificed the Lamb of God.**

Refrain

**3 I was so lost, I should have died,
But You have brought me to your side
To be led by your staff and rod,
And to be called a lamb of God.**

Refrain

MORNING PRAYERS

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

THE OFFERING SERVICE

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory “Theme from Finlandia” Jean Sibelius

Doxology “We Give You But Your Own” Wm.How
#785 NCH

**We give you but your own,
whate’er the gift may be;
All that we have is your alone,
We give it gratefully.**

Prayer of Dedication

Generous God, you have already given us all that we need. Help us trust your continued care, that we may share with others the abundance of your blessings. Strengthen us for service and remind us of the great joy that awaits those who answer your call. Accept our gifts and give us new songs of praise as we celebrate the opportunity to be in ministry, in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

HYMN “God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending”
#565 NCH (vs. 1-3) Robert L. Edwards

**1 God, whose giving knows no ending,
from your rich and endless store,
nature's wonder, Jesus' wisdom,
costly cross, grave's shattered door:
gifted by you, we turn to you,
offering up ourselves in praise;
thankful song shall rise forever,
gracious donor of our days.**

**2 Skills and time are ours for serving
that your will on earth be done:
all at peace in health and freedom,
races joined, the Church made one.
Now direct our daily labor,
lest we strive for self alone;
born with talents, make us servants
fit to answer at your throne.**

**3 Treasure, too, you have entrusted,
gain through powers your grace conferred;
ours to use for home and kindred,
and to spread the gospel Word.
Open wide our hands in sharing
as we heed Christ's ageless call,
healing, teaching, and reclaiming,
honoring you by loving all.**

BLESSING

SHARING OUR BLESSINGS AND BURDENS

As we are gathered together as children of God, we are called to share our blessings and joys and our concerns, our deepest fears, sadnesses, griefs and needs so that we may bear one another up and support each other in prayer and Christian love.

HYMN "God Whose Giving Knows No Ending"
#565 NCH (vs.4)

**4 Lend your joy to all our giving,
let it light our pilgrim way;
from the night of anxious keeping,
loose us into generous day.
then when years on earth are over,
and we've lived our human span,
God, fulfill beyond our dreaming,
all our stewardship began.**

BENEDICTION

Go in the love of the One who strengthens us for the work to which we are called. Go in the fellowship of Jesus Christ, who claims us as sisters and brothers. Go in the community of the Holy Spirit, who binds us together with all the saints. Go with grace to shine God's love into all the world. Amen.

POSTLUDE

RADIO BROADCAST

**11 AM Sunday radio broadcast
on WCCN 98.5FM and 1370AM**

**This week's radio broadcast
is given anonymously
by a faithful listener.**

YouTube link for Sunday, January 18, 2026
<https://youtube.com/live/VNYzRca0yk0>

WELCOME

We welcome you to our service of worship!
We are glad that you have joined us on site,
through the internet or on the radio.
We pray that you will hear God's call,
seek to follow Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This Sunday, January 18th

- 9:30 AM Worship

***Following worship – Annual Congregational Meeting**

Deacon – Barb Shoemaker

Greeters – Linda Stalsberg, Carla Marty

Ushers – Hap Eddy, Roger Carl

Power Point – Paul Vine

AV – Crispin Hediger

FYI - (for those who are scheduled for PowerPoint or AV it is suggested that you arrive 30 minutes prior to the church service to get the laptop turned on, allow for any updates, lower screen and start running the announcements).

Following Sunday, January 25th

Deacon – Sally Sadowska

Greeters – Howie & Kathy Mathis

Ushers – Debbie & Mike Perkl

Power Point – Brynn Heck

AV – Stephanie Heck

Monday, January 19th

- 9:00 AM Card Making

Tuesday, January 20th

- 1:00 PM Bible Study

5:30 PM Trustees Meeting

Wednesday, January 21st

- 3:30 PM Confirmation at UCC

5:00 PM JAM meets at Calvary

6:00 PM Leadership Council Meeting

Coffee fellowship after worship -

Sign up on back bulletin board

Jan 18 – *Annual Congregational Meeting*

Jan 25 –

Feb 1 –

Feb 8 -

We need people to sign up