

**PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
February 16, 2025, 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.  
Pastor Christian Magnell

WELCOME AND GREETING

HYMN *“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Lord God, we will read this morning that we are to “imitate God.”

**Yet this feels like an impossible task.**

How is it we can love like Christ and sacrifice for others?

**Teach us to follow and imitate you because we’re lost on our own.**

As the Spirit moves, let us pay attention to our own brokenness. *(time for reflection)*

Let us pray together:

**Father, we come before you in humility. We are not the center of the world. Yet we act as though we are! Help us to set aside our arrogance, hatred, anger, lust... whatever holds us back. We confess that we’re sinners and ask for daily forgiveness. We pray for renewal as individuals and revival in our community and world.**

For the sake of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. We walk in freedom, free to live and serve as He has created us to do.

**Thanks be to God! Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN’S SERMON “Who’s Number 1?”

HYMN *“Wonderful, Merciful Savior”*

READING: Ephesians 5:1-33

*While people get hung up on language of submission near the end of this passage, the key is to understand this whole chapter as urging us to imitate God in Christ.*

<sup>1</sup> Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. <sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. <sup>3</sup> But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. <sup>4</sup> Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. <sup>5</sup> For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or

impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. <sup>6</sup> Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. <sup>7</sup> Therefore do not become partners with them; <sup>8</sup> for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), <sup>10</sup> and try to discern what is pleasing to

the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. <sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. <sup>13</sup> But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, <sup>14</sup> for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” <sup>15</sup> Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup> And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. <sup>22</sup> Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body,

and is himself its Savior. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.[a] <sup>28</sup> In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup> “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup> This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION      God is good.

**All the time.**

SECOND READING: Matthew 28:16-20

*Imitation of Christ always starts with remembering that he is with us, leading us out to carry out the mission he has given us. We don't serve in our strength but the power of Christ.*

<sup>16</sup> Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw him, they worshiped him, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION      All the time.

**God is good!**

HYMN

*“A Mighty Fortress is Our God”*

SERMON – “Imitate God – Ephesians Week 5”

PRAYER AT RECEIVING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION  
THE LORD’S PRAYER  
MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION  
PRAYER & BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

BENEDICTION

And now may the Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace!

**Amen!**

CLOSING SONG

*“I Speak Jesus”*

DISMISSAL

Let's go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

**Thanks be to God!**

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**Imitation– February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

***“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.” - Ephesians 5:1***

I don’t know about your learning style, but I do best when I can see something done and then try it myself. I can’t just read something in a book; I do best when it’s demonstrated and then I can try it myself.

I remember learning to ski at Buck Hill in Burnsville. They could talk all the theory they wanted (not that instructors used the word “theory” with kids), but at some point I needed to stop hearing, start watching, and then start doing. One of the things that helped me best throughout childhood and into high school was to look at good skiers and try to be like them. To imitate them. I have memories of watching ski videos on our bus to skiing in California and then watching live skiers ski moguls and trying to do it like them.

Paul tells us we are to be imitators of God! How do we imitate an omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent being? By looking to Jesus Christ. What he did, we should do. How he spoke, loved, encouraged, sacrificed, and even lived, we should strive for that.

We will fall short of course. Yet he is the model – the one we imitate!

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