

# **5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Epiphany**

*February 7, 2021*

## **GATHERING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

## **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS (ELW p. 116)**

In the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

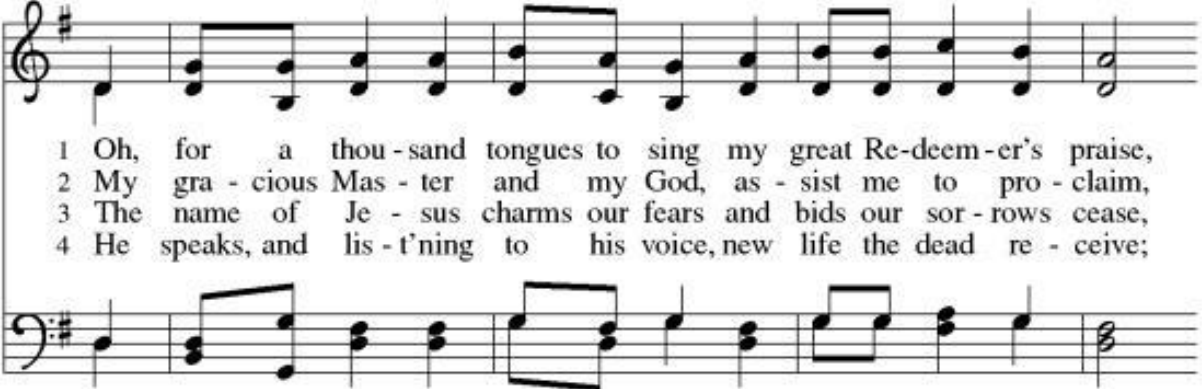
Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God, **we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**


In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG** – “Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing” (ELW 886)

## Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing



1 Oh, for a thou - sand tongues to sing my great Re - deem - er's praise,  
2 My gra - cious Mas - ter and my God, as - sist me to pro - claim,  
3 The name of Je - sus charms our fears and bids our sor - rows cease,  
4 He speaks, and lis - t'ning to his voice, new life the dead re - ceive;



the glo - ries of my God and king, the tri - umphs of his grace!  
to spread through all the earth a - broad the hon - ors of your name.  
sings mu - sic in the sin - ner's ears, brings life and health and peace.  
the mourn - ful, bro - ken hearts re - joice, the hum - ble poor be - lieve.

5 Look unto him, your Savior own,  
O fallen human race!  
Look and be saved through faith alone,  
be justified by grace!

6 To God all glory, praise, and love  
be now and ever giv'n  
by saints below and saints above,  
the church in earth and heav'n.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, alt.  
Music: AZMON, Carl G. Gläser, 1784–1829; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

### Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

1 Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing  
my great Redeemer's praise,  
the glories of my God and King,  
the triumphs of his grace!

2 My gracious Master and my God,  
assist me to proclaim,  
to spread through all the earth abroad  
the honors of your name.

3 The name of Jesus charms our fears  
and bids our sorrows cease,  
sings music in the sinner's ears,  
brings life and health and peace.

4 He speaks, and list'ning to his voice,  
new life the dead receive;  
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,  
the humble poor believe.

5 Look unto him, your Savior own,  
O fallen human race!  
Look and be saved through faith alone,  
be justified by grace!

6 To God all glory, praise, and love  
be now and ever giv'n  
by saints below and saints above,  
the church in earth and heav'n.

**GREETING (ELW p. 120)**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW p. 124)**

Let us pray. **Everlasting God, you give strength to the weak and power to the faint. Make us agents of your healing and wholeness, that your good news may be made known to the ends of your creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

**WORD** - God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**FIRST READING:** Isaiah 40:21-31

A reading from Isaiah.

*The Judeans in exile have a good reason to be hopeful: the one who will bring them to freedom is the God who created the world, the God who subdues the rulers of the earth and gives strength to those who are weary.*

21Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; 23who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing. 24Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in

the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. 25To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One. 26Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing. 27Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God"? 28Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. 29He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. 30Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; 31but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM:** Psalm 147:1-11, 20c

The Lord heals the brokenhearted. (*Ps. 147:3*)

1Hallelujah! How good it is to sing praises | to our God! How pleasant it is to honor God with praise!

**2The Lord rebuilds Jerusalem, and gathers the exiles of Israel.**

3The Lord heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

**4The Lord counts the number of the stars and calls them all by their names.**

5Great is our Lord and mighty in power; there is no limit to God's wisdom.

**6The Lord lifts up the lowly, but casts the wicked to the ground.**

7Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; make music upon the harp to our God,

**8who covers the heavens with clouds and prepares rain for the earth, making grass to grow upon the mountains.**

9God provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they cry.

**10God is not impressed by the might of a horse, and has no pleasure in the speed of a runner,**

11but finds pleasure in those who fear the Lord, in those who await God's steadfast love. 20c| Hallelujah!

**SECOND READING:** 1 Corinthians 9:16-23

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

*God entrusted Paul with the responsibility of bringing the gospel to diverse people. Hence the focus of Paul's ministry is not his own rights or privileges as an apostle but the privilege of serving God by freely sharing the good news of Christ with others.*

16If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! 17For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. 18What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel. 19For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. 20To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. 21To those outside the law I became as one outside the law

(though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. 22To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. 23I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## **CHILDREN'S SERMON**

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 124)**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

### **GOSPEL: Mark 1:29-39**

The holy gospel according to Mark.

#### **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Everywhere Jesus goes, many people expect him to set them free from oppression. Everywhere he goes, he heals people and sets them free. Disease, devils, and death are running for their lives. The forces that diminish human life are rendered powerless by Jesus.*

29As soon as [Jesus and the disciples] left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. 31He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. 32That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. 33And the whole city was gathered around the door. 34And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. 35In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. 36And Simon and his companions hunted for him. 37When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." 38He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." 39And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

The gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **SERMON (ELW p. 125)**

Why are we here?

This past year, as we have lost many elements of our worship and faith life, I think it has caused us to really think about the core of worship, the center of our faith practices and why we gather. What is crucial for us? What is important and meaningful but can be put by the wayside?

For those of you sitting in your cars, listening to the radio, watching this online? Why are you here? There are surely other things you could be listening to or doing. Goodness, there surely is less accountability- every week I find it pretty amazing to look at the "count" on Facebook. You

all are still out there. I know many of you are “showing up” in your own ways, consistently listening to the Good News in your homes. Why carve out the time out of our busy schedules and lives for worship?

For some of us, it might be routine. For others of us, it might be trying to refocus on what’s important in life. For others, it might be “what good people do.”

But, for many of us, beyond those reasons, I think we are looking for a word, a presence, a moment of healing and comfort in a harsh, divisive and cold world. Despite all the changes and limitations of this year, we have found ourselves working and thinking about how we convey and carry those words and stories of comfort to each other in this time of need.

In today’s Gospel text, the whole city was gathered because they were looking for healing. The whole city was gathered because they were sick, possessed and burdened. They knew where to look for healing: Jesus.

In whatever ways we can, we are still gathering and connecting because we know what brings us healing: Jesus. Chocolate might be great and seem to solve things for the minute, but it doesn’t last. TV can help us drown out life’s agonies. All sorts of actions and behaviors-some better than others- are done daily to help us cope and numb the anxieties and pain. But none of them provide like Jesus can.

Today, Jesus shows us what ministry is about. He serves. He reaches out in a time and place surrounded by death and despair. He is present in times of pain and sadness. And he brings life.

This is our calling too, and we come here to be reminded of this.

We also come here to be healed. We might not be physically dead but many of us are surrounded by things that kill us- kill our minds, our souls, our relationships, our spirits. Toxic people. Ailments. Prejudices. And, just as Jesus defied an impossible situation and brought new life into it, we trust that Jesus defies the situations we think are impossible in our lives and brings healing to us. Jesus’ teachings can bring healing to relationships we are sure are beyond repair. Jesus’ teachings can re-energize us when we think we nothing more to keep us going. Jesus’ love can help us to love even those we think we could never possibly love or understand. Whatever way we are coming together, we come together trusting that Jesus does the impossible. Jesus is more powerful than the worst parts of our lives... even death itself. We come, trusting that we will be healed and restored. We keep coming back to that source of healing, Jesus Christ himself, in the middle of all of our challenges.

Today’s passage has an interesting twist, too. We are reminded that being healed really isn’t the “end game” of our encounter. So often, we come to church for a sense of peace. Maybe we watch the service for a sense of connection. Maybe we listen to the radio worship for a sense of hope. And, all these things are good. But they aren’t the goal.

The goal is what happens in today's Gospel. Simon's mother-in-law was healed, and she began to serve the disciples. She was healed, and then she served others. She was healed, and she immediately lived out her vocation and calling, using her talents in hospitality.

We don't just make time to gather online, or on the radio, in our cars, or in the sanctuary so we will feel better, happier, more at peace or more alive. This really isn't about us as individuals, and it actually isn't even about us as a church fully either. We gather to gain the sustenance and healing we need to serve each other and the world.

As you leave worship today, take a moment to reflect. How have you been healed? How has this restoration allowed you to serve the world?

First Lutheran, we don't live for ourselves. We aren't healed just because it feels good. We are healed because the world needs Christ's love shown through us. We are healed for a purpose, to love and serve.

As Teresa of Avila reminds us, "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours."

May we, God's healed and restored friends, always remember this.

## HYMN OF THE DAY – "O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come" (ELW 610)

### O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come



- 1 O Christ, the heal - er, we have come to pray for health, to plead for friends.
- 2 From ev - 'ry ail - ment flesh en - dures our bod - ies clam - or to be freed;
- 3 In con - flicts that de - stroy our health we rec - og - nize the world's dis - ease;
- 4 Grant that we all, made one in faith, in your com - mu - ni - ty may find



How can we fail to be re - stored when reached by love that nev - er ends?  
yet in our hearts we would con - fess that whole - ness is our deep - est need.  
our com - mon life de - clares our ills. Is there no cure, O Christ, for these?  
the whole - ness that, en - rich - ing us, shall reach the whole of hu - man - kind.

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000

Music: DISTRESS, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

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## **Words**

O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come

1 O Christ, the healer, we have come  
to pray for health, to plead for friends.  
How can we fail to be restored  
when reached by love that never ends?

2 From ev'ry ailment flesh endures  
our bodies clamor to be freed;  
yet in our hearts we would confess  
that wholeness is our deepest need.

3 In conflicts that destroy our health  
we recognize the world's disease;  
our common life declares our ills.  
Is there no cure, O Christ, for these?

4 Grant that we all, made one in faith,  
in your community may find  
the wholeness that, enriching us,  
shall reach the whole of humankind.

## **APOSTLES CREED (ELW p. 126)**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.\* On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

For the church: for ministries of healing and wholeness, for hospital, hospice, and military chaplains, for those serving in prison ministry, for all who proclaim freedom and release in the name of Christ, let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

For creation: for insects in the grass, clouds on the mountaintops, for cattle and the rainwater they drink, for the humility to take our place among all creatures of the earth, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**



For the nations: for all who lead in cities and towns, states and countries; for community organizers, school officials, and CEOs; for international health organizations, that in times of trial, fear, or hopelessness, they find freedom in service to those most in need, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For all wearied by life's burdens: for those who are poor, for those lacking supportive relationships, for those crushed by debt, for those struggling with chronic pain or other sickness, for those exhausted from overwork or stress, and for all who cry out to you... Todd Hallstrom, Ron Almjeld, Linda Towne, Charlene Wachter, Bob Dieter, Mary Kraft, Marilyn Frisch, Julie & Denny Christensen, Dianne Sanderson, Betty Nelson

**Members in Nursing Homes:** Bobbie Elvin, Gene Wachter, Sandra Marsh

**Members in Care Facilities:** Joan Doeden, Jean Bender

**Family Members & Friends:** Lois Gruis, Josh Hansen (Mary Ingenthron's son), Lee Morrison (Terry Morrison's son), Henrietta Lais, Tom Morgan (Sandy Randall's dad), Peggy Konold (Norma Radenbaugh's daughter), Brad Martens (Valerie Veen's son)

We especially remember Linda Towne upon her back surgery and Maverick, the great-grandson of Fern Burmister as they monitor his blood vessels. **Let us pray.**

**Have mercy, O God.**

We thank you for the gift of baptism and ask that you surround Rhett with all grace, love, forgiveness and joy as he and his family celebrate his baptism. Use us here at First Lutheran to surround him with love, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For this congregation: for outreach and social ministries centered here Meals on Wheels, Sharing Seeds, the Coat Ministry and more; for our lay visitors; for ministries of companionship and support, for the young people in this place who open us to new understandings, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

In thanksgiving for the faithful departed, who were called by name and now rest from their labors, that their lives serve as witnesses to the goodness of God, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**

**MEAL** - God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

**OFFERING AND CGC MOMENT**

**MUSIC**

**OFFERING PRAYER (ELW p. 129)**

Let us pray. Holy God, gracious and merciful, you bring forth food from the earth and nourish your whole creation. Turn our hearts toward those who hunger in any way, that all may know your care; and prepare us now to feast on the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

### **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

#### **DIALOGUE (ELW p. 129)**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

#### **PREFACE (ELW p. 130)**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations;  
in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son;  
and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

#### **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 130)**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.**

#### **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE (ELW p. 130)**

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,  
you have brought us this far along the way.  
In times of bitterness you did not abandon us,  
but guided us into the path of love and light.  
In every age you sent prophets  
to make known your loving will for all humanity.  
The cry of the poor has become your own cry;  
our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire.  
In the fullness of time, you sent your chosen servant  
to preach good news to the afflicted,  
to break bread with the outcast and despised,  
and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup  
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection,  
we await the day when Jesus shall return  
to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death.  
Come, Lord Jesus! And let the church say, Amen  
**Amen.**

Send your Holy Spirit, our advocate,  
to fill the hearts of all who share this bread and cup  
with courage and wisdom to pursue love and justice in all the world.  
Come, Spirit of freedom! And let the church say, Amen  
**Amen.**

Join our prayers and praise with your prophets and martyrs of every age,  
that, rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection,  
we might live in the freedom and hope of your Son.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

#### **LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 134)**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION (ELW p. 134)**

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

**COMMUNION (ELW p. 134)**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (ELW p. 136)**

Let us pray. O God, our life, our strength, our food, we give you thanks for sustaining us with the body and blood of your Son. By your Holy Spirit, enliven us to be his body in the world, that more and more we will give you praise and serve your earth and its many peoples, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**SENDING OF COMMUNION (ELW p. 136)**

Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care:

As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread,  
assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament  
with those who are *sick, homebound, and imprisoned.*

In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us  
all the comfort of your abiding presence  
through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

**BLESSING (ELW p. 136)**

Almighty God, Father, ✚ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

**SENDING SONG – “I Love to Tell the Story” (ELW 661)**

## I Love to Tell the Story

1 I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove,  
2 I love to tell the sto - ry; how pleas - ant to re - peat  
3 I love to tell the sto - ry, for those who know it best

of Je - sus and his glo - ry, of Je - sus and his love.  
what seems, each time I tell it, more won - der - ful - ly sweet!  
seem hun - ger - ing and thirst - ing to hear it like the rest.

I love to tell the sto - ry, be - cause I know it's true;  
I love to tell the sto - ry, for some have nev - er heard  
And when, in scenes of glo - ry, I sing the new, new song,

it sat - is - fies my long - ings as noth - ing else would do.  
the mes - sage of sal - va - tion from God's own ho - ly word.  
I'll sing the old, old sto - ry that I have loved so long.

*Refrain*  
I love to tell the sto - ry; 'twill be my theme in glo - ry

## I Love to Tell the Story

1 I love to tell the story  
of unseen things above,  
of Jesus and his glory,  
of Jesus and his love.  
I love to tell the story,  
because I know it's true;  
it satisfies my longings  
as nothing else would do.

### Refrain

I love to tell the story;  
'twill be my theme in glory  
to tell the old, old story  
of Jesus and his love.

2 I love to tell the story:  
how pleasant to repeat  
what seems, each time I tell it,  
more wonderfully sweet!  
I love to tell the story,  
for some have never heard  
the message of salvation  
from God's own holy word. Refrain

3 I love to tell the story,  
for those who know it best  
seem hungering and thirsting  
to hear it like the rest.  
And when, in scenes of glory,  
I sing the new, new song,  
I'll sing the old, old story  
that I have loved so long. Refrain

**DISMISSAL (ELW p. 137)**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

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