

Worship Outline

December 24, 2016



LUTHERAN CHURCH
We go out to transform lives through Jesus Christ.

GATHERING

Music to Prepare Us for Worship
Gathering Songs
Welcome, Worship 101, Bells,
Connection Card
No Longer Strangers Prayer
Greeting
Prayer of the Day

STORY

We 3(re) Kings? They're Here,
Already?!

Rejoice! A Message for Mary
Rejoice! Jesus Comes to Us
Rejoice! The Shepherds Seek Jesus
Sermon

FEAST

Offering
Music During Offering
Setting the Table
Thanksgiving at the Table
Words to Bless the Feast
The Lord's Prayer
Invitation to the Meal
Communion
Communion Songs
Prayer after Communion

SENDING

Blessing
Sending Song
Music to Send You Out



Merry Christmas! Welcome to River of Hope as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the miracle of love born again to us this night.

Welcome. We are so glad you are in worship at River of Hope today.

Come as you are. Well, you're already here. We don't care what clothes you wear or what kind of shape your spiritual life is in. God meets you and loves you where you are.

Where everybody knows your name? We all wear name tags each week - not just the visitors. Even when we think we know everyone at River of Hope, it's simply not true. These name tags are our awkwardly friendly way to help us stick out our hand, say, "hello, you're new to me" and practice being the friendly church everyone swears we are. If we practice this awkward move here, we've got a shot at actually doing it in our everyday lives.

We like kids. No kidding. We think kids are leaders in worship and lives of faith. Just look around you.

Nursery care. Weeping and gnashing of teeth? There is a "cry room" available outside the worship area. The "Pray Ground," located in the worship space, is for those younger than kindergarten age.

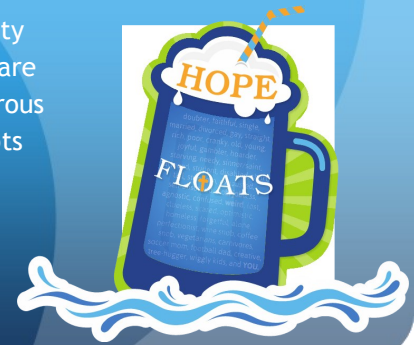
Communion. You are welcome, without exception. If you are hungry and thirsty for unbounded grace, mercy, and forgiveness through Jesus Christ, you are welcome at Christ's table.

Connection Cards. For visitors and regulars to communicate. We won't use your info to bother you. We promise.

Worship Style. We are an intentional intergenerational community. "Sunday School" happens within worship! We sing hymns, we sing songs. We pray ancient words and words that are new to us. We actively practice faith during worship. Sometimes it's beautiful. Sometimes it's awkward. Sometimes it's both. It always "counts" as worship. Then we try it again next week. We are a pro-participation, anti-excellence community.

River of Hope Lutheran Church

We are the ELCA church in town. We are a purposely intergenerational community who is following Jesus out of the building and into the world where we live. We are learners (disciples) and practice-ers. Worship is a safe place to practice a dangerous gospel. And, believe us, it takes practice. Your questions, critical thinking, doubts and imperfect lives are welcome here. In fact, no matter your status in society (divorced, never-been-to-church, gay, straight, old, young, cranky, liberal, conservative, questioning, allergic-to-church, snarky) you'll be welcomed here. Then you'll be sent out, to live your life, transformed by Jesus Christ. And we believe, through the love of Jesus, you'll help to transform other lives.



Dear Hopeful Ones,

We gather tonight because of love. That's why Jesus was born into the world - to show us the breadth and depth of God's love for us and for the world. This is the kind of love that transforms our lives, making us wonder just what's happened to us. This is the kind of love that will ask you to reach out to someone you don't know, to do the hard thing, to forgive, to show love when it would be much easier to walk away or shut down. This night when we celebrate the birth of Christ we are brought back into community, we are made whole through God's love and we are sent out to love the world God loves. Make no mistake, it's a tough call to follow Jesus into the world because he always leads you toward hard stuff.

Even as we smile at our children helping to re-tell the story and marvel at the mystery of it all, we remember that Jesus was born on the road, a refugee, and then was on the run with his parents, his life under threat. This continues to be reality in our world with people like you and me, living comfortable lives with heat and running water and jobs and cars. Suddenly, for thousands upon thousands of people, they have lost their jobs, their homes, their status as citizens. They've braved water and winter. They are living in a constant state of limbo as countries close their borders. Jesus was a refugee. Jesus, our king. Jesus, the savior of the world.

Give to one or all of these organizations to reach out to people who are suffering mightily.



Give to The Compassion Collective: <http://thecompassioncollective.org>. 100% of proceeds go to help actual people involved in the refugee crisis.



Or check out International Institute of Minnesota and their refugee resettlement program: <http://www.iimn.org/services/refugee-resettlement/>



Or Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota: <http://www.lssmn.org>



OR Nurture Project International: www.nurtureprojectinternational.org

Love, Pastor Laura

Our purpose as a church:

We go out to transform lives through Jesus

Our Guiding Principles:

(Disciple = learner)

God is God and we are not.

We are called to grow together as disciples: to forgive, to teach, to love.

Disciples are inspired by the Holy Spirit to take risks.

Disciples seek God's justice.

Disciples serve with no strings attached.

Disciples invite and welcome through loving acceptance.

We meet you where you are.



**IF YOU KEEP UP WITH BRANDS,
THEN YOU SHOULD KNOW WE
ARE PART OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH IN AMERICA (ELCA).
WE'RE PRETTY PLEASED ABOUT
THIS.**

Give a financial gift to River of Hope. Scan this code to make your gift.

