

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2025



Gethsemane Lutheran Church

3600 Hampton ~ St. Louis, MO 63109

Worship God, welcome all to nurture a community of harmony, healing, and justice

Welcome to worship! We're delighted you are here!



Gethsemane Lutheran Church is a *Reconciling in Christ* Congregation. **You are welcome here.**



We ask all members, guests, and visitors to please fill out the **attendance slip** in your worship folder and place it in the offering plate.



Please **silence** phones and other devices during the worship service. Sharing that you're at Gethsemane on social media is encouraged! "Check in" using hashtag: #glcstlCheckIn.



The presence, energy, and noise of **children** are always welcome in worship at Gethsemane. The sound of a child in worship is music to our ears. We welcome and encourage kids to move and play. Additional space to move and Wiggle Bags are located in the narthex entry area.



Postures are a way in which we engage the body in worship. These movements (sitting, standing, making the sign of the cross) are optional; please engage in them only as you are comfortable or able.



Holy Communion is offered to all who seek the presence of Christ. This is a welcome table.



Gethsemane Lutheran Church wishes to **acknowledge** and **honor** the Osage, Quapaw, Myaamia, Očhéthi Šakówinj, Kaskaskia, and Kickapoo peoples upon whose ancestral homelands we gather for worship, as well as all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to care for this place—this land—and call it their home.

CHURCH STAFF

Minister: Pastor Cheryl Walenta Gorvie
Connections Coordinator: Gretchen Jenson
Office Manager: Eve Cooney
Organist/Interim Choir Director: Amy Crousore
Council President: Gary Borkowski

pastor@gethsemanestl.org
connect@gethsemanestl.org
office@gethsemanestl.org
organist@gethsemanestl.com
gvborkowski@gmail.com

Office Hours: Vary. Please call before coming to the church to ensure someone will be here to let you in.

Church Office – (314) 352-8050

office@gethsemanestl.org www.gethsemanestl.org

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

Presented by the Gethsemane Handbell Choir

Venid, pastores (Come, Shepherds, Come)

A Puerto Rican Folk Melody

Los magos que llegaron a Belén (From a Distant Home)

A Traditional Puerto Rican Melody

Arrangements by Linda R. Lamb

PRELUDE *Away in a Manger*

Setting by Austin Lovelace

The congregation may stand as comfortable.

CHRISTMAS CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors!

C: **For unto us a child is born! Unto us a Son is given!**

P: Drawn together by the birth of our Savior, let us now confess our sins.

Silence for reflection

P: Incarnate one:

C: **we confess that we are bound, captive to the powers of sin and shadow. We have failed to listen to the words of shepherds, preferring the proclamation of the rich and mighty. We have failed to value vulnerability, preferring our salvation through war and conquest. We have failed to wage peace, preferring violence and destruction. Clothe us in love. Help the peace of Christ to rule in our hearts. Shine the light of forgiveness on us, that we may be saved.**

P: Do not be afraid, for we are given good news of great joy. Christ the Lord has been born for us! In him we have redemption, forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace that he has lavished on us.

C: Amen

LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS CANDLE

P: We have waited, feeling the heaviness of longing, the weight of expectation. We light this candle now, a sign of hope born to the world.

C: We meet the God of blessed hope in a manger.

P: We have watched in the stillness of the night, as the shadows long to disrupt the way of peace. We light this candle now, a sign of peace born to the world.

C: We meet the Prince of Peace in a manger.

P: We have wondered how a world so broken and oppressed can rejoice in the midst of its suffering. We light this candle now, a sign of joy born to the world.

C: We meet the source of justice and mercy in a manger.

P: We have longed for a place to belong, to be called beloved children. We light this candle now, a sign of love born to the world.

C: We meet the Lord of Love in a manger.

P: We celebrate the birth of Jesus on this night. We come to the manger, to find a fragile child who is the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. We light this final candle, a small light that shines with salvation.

C: For unto us a child is born, a son is given, proclaiming peace on earth, good will to all.

Christmas Candle Lighting

P: Jesus Christ you are the light of the world.

C: The light no darkness can overcome.

OPENING HYMN: *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

Hymn# 283

GREETING:

P: The grace of our Savior Jesus Christ, Word made flesh, born of Mary, be with you all.
And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

AM: Let us pray. God of the universe, and God of the stable, your abundant peace beyond understanding flows from the tiny baby wrapped in rags, and your humble love astounds us.

**In Jesus you have come to each one of us, that we might become one with you.
Open our hearts to receive your love, that we might share your peace with the world. Amen.**

The congregation is seated.

WORD

THE FIRST READING: ISAIAH 9:2-7

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied exultation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Great will be his authority, and there shall be endless peace for the throne and dominion of David. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: TITUS 2:11-14

The appearance of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior's final appearance.

¹¹The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴It is Jesus Christ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

On Christmas night all Christians sing
to hear the news the angels bring.
On Christmas night all Christians sing
to hear the news the angels bring:
news of great joy, news of great mirth,
news of our merciful king's birth.

At the Manger: Mary

The Story of Mary: Luke 1:26-38

(Mary is brought to the crèche – the manger scene)

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

HYMN: *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came*

HYMN# 265

At the Manger: Joseph

The Story of Joseph: Matthew 1:18-21

(Joseph is brought to the crèche – the manger scene)

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

RESPONSORY:

P: A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse.
And a branch shall grow out of his roots.

P: The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him
The spirit of wisdom and understanding

P: The spirit of counsel and might.
The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:1-2)

HYMN: *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* (verses 1&4)

HYMN# 272

At the Manger: Shepherds & Angels

The Story of the Shepherds & Angels: Luke 2:8-14

(Shepherds and angels arrive at the manger)

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

The congregation may stand as comfortable.

Hymn: *Angels We Have Heard on High*

HYMN# 289

At the Manger: The Birth of Christ

The Story of Jesus' Birth: Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The congregation is seated.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

The congregation may stand as comfortable.

HYMN OF THE DAY: *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

HYMN# 290

Out of respect for the history of African American Spirituals used in worship, and the absence of royalties paid to the original songwriters or their descendants, our Music Director and Worship and Music Committee, with guidance from the Center for Congregation Singing and the Hymn Society have created a reparations model to direct royalty payments collected for use of this art.

At the Manger: Christ Is Born In Our Hearts!

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

P: Let us confess our faith in the God who wages peace, in our hearts, through our hands and feet, with our voices.

C: We believe in God, the source of peace in creation, ordering the heavens and the earth to reflect the fullness of shalom, calling all people to care for what has been gifted to us.

We believe in God, Word made flesh, Prince of Peace, who teaches justice and mercy, who brings new life to a broken world, who leads through service, and guides our feet into the way of peace.

We believe in God, wild, wonderful Spirit, who works through us, pushing us to change the world through loving-kindness, resistance to evil, and peace-full living; who never leaves us alone; who amazes us with unending love; who calls us to echo shalom.

We believe in God, who wages peace with us for all the world.

THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION:

AM: Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

AM: . . . Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.
C: Amen.

THE PEACE:

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.
And also with you.

P: I invite you to share a sign of peace with those around you.

*The ministers and congregation may greet one another with a gesture of peace, using these or similar words: **Peace be with you.***

The congregation is seated.

MEAL

THE OFFERING: *The Offering is received as the Lord's table is prepared.*

MUSICAL OFFERINGS: Presented by the Gethsemane Handbell Choir

Christmastide

Arr. by Arnold B. Sherman

The congregation may stand as comfortable.

OFFERING PRAYER:

AM: Generous God, accept these gifts we offer with hearts full of hope. Use them to build systems of justice in the world, where love is the foundation and harmony reigns. May we become instruments of Your peace, finding joy in doing your will. **Amen.**

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER AND WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

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 THE TABLE

P: Friends, tonight we remember and celebrate the birth of Christ, God who came to us in human flesh, as a helpless baby. . . . Whether your faith is strong or wavering, whether you come to church often or have never been before, you are welcome here. Tonight, a Savior is born for YOU, and that same Savior welcomes you to this sacred meal.

COMMUNION

The congregation is seated.

All who seek the Lord are welcome at Christ's table to receive the gift of God's grace! Those not receiving the bread and wine are welcome to come for a blessing. Please come forward at the direction of the ushers.

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION:

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly **HYMN# 276**

What Child is This? **HYMN# 296**

I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve **HYMN# 271**

Love Has Come **HYMN# 292**

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen

The congregation may stand as comfortable.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

AM: Jesus, Prince of Peace, You have come to us in this meal, offering the gift of Your very self. Now send us out to serve all people, reflecting Your good will for this world in all we do. We ask this in Your holy name. **Amen.**

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE: *Hark the Herald Angels Sing!*

1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king;
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations, rise;
join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"

2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Refrain*

3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace!
Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth,
born to give us second birth. *Refrain*

* As the angels, we now sing
Hear the message that we bring
We'll let justice be our guide
No one shall be cast aside
We share struggles and rejoice
All together with one voice
Fear and malice, there is none
Out of many, we are one
Let our joy ring loud and long
Brought together with a song.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt. Public Domain. Extra verse text: Dan Kelly. Permission to print given by artist.

SENDING

At the Manger: The Light of Christ Fills Our Hearts

The congregation may be seated

PREPARING OUR LIGHTS

During the choir anthem, worship leaders will proceed down the side aisles with lit candles to light each row's individual candles. Please dip the unlit candle to receive the flame.

CHORAL ANTHEM: *A Holy Silent Night*

Arr. by Lloyd Larson

The congregation is invited to stand and join the choir in the singing of Silent Night at the appropriate time during the anthem (please sing the melody without harmony)

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and Child!
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,

heav'nly hosts sing, "Alleluia,
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!"

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from Thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820-1885. Music: STILLE NACHT, Franz Gruber, 1787-1863. Public Domain.

LESSON OF LIGHT: JOHN 1:1-5; 14

P: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

BLESSING:

P: The love of God surround you, the grace of Jesus fill you, and the life of the Spirit bless you and give you peace.

Amen

Please extinguish your candles.

SENDING HYMN: *Joy to the World*

HYMN #267

DISMISSAL

AM: Go out and wage peace. Share God's love.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: *Joy to the World*

By G.F. Handel, Arr. by Virgil Fox
Duet presented by Amy Crousore and Evan Gorvie on organ

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WORSHIP LEADERS	
PREACHER/PRESIDER	Rev. Cheryl Walenta Gorvie
GREETER	Lois Wind
USHERS	Adam, Colleen and Michael Rentchler, Todd and Riley Boehlje
ASSISTING MINISTER	Rick Schuessler
LECTOR	Ami Boehlje
VOICE CHOIR	Amy Crousore (director), Cindy Breed, T. Edwards Breed, Eve Cooney, Joseph Cooney, Andrew Copeland, Jessica Freiberger, Alfred Gorvie, Chris Schmidt, Robyn Wolfsberger
CHOIR ACCOMPANIST	Stephanie Rice (piano)
INSTRUMENTALIST	Jack Lane (guitar), Evan Gorvie (organ)
HANDBELL CHOIR	Tom Morrell (director), Eve, Evan and Joe Cooney, Andrew Copeland, Steve Hetager, Cayce Morice, Leah Morrell, Keith Paulson, Stephanie Rice, Carolyn Schainker
CHILDREN'S SERMON	Lindsey Schuessler
ALTAR GUILD	Leah Morrell
CAMERA	Gretchen Jenson

CHRISTMAS GIFTS GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD

Given By:	Dedication:
Kate Hartz ¹	For the joy that my grandsons Leo, Eli and Luke give so freely.
Beth Jung ³	In memory of Regina Jung
Debbie Landis ²	In memory of Tim Landis
Shelagh Revell ⁴	To help those in need
Phyllis Saathoff and Dawn Riske ²	To the elves who keep the Little Free Pantry stocked.
Joan Williams, Jack and Lois Wind ⁵	In memory of Harold and Norma Schenck, Cletus and Elaine Wind, Jeffrey Williams and all those who have touched our lives.

¹ Designated for Project Peanut Butter

² Designated for Little Free Pantry

³ For African Spiritual Reparations

⁴ Isaiah 58/St. Anthony's

⁵ Garden Fund

PRAYER REQUESTS:

Cindy Breed: healing

Neil Gustafson: healing

Kate Hartz: courage and trust

Barb Johnson: healing

Fred Lenhart: recovering from hip surgery

Richard Lima: successful surgery and rapid recovery

Dell Roth: in rehab after surgery

Sharon Salerno: healing and strength

Request for:	<i>On Behalf of:</i>
Family of Doug Adams, husband of Ed Breed's cousin	<i>Ed and Cindy Breed</i>
The people of Gaza and the Occupied Territories of Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Ukraine, Sudan, Myanmar, Cambodia and Thailand; Pat Fulton (healing, strength), Ginny Olson (healing, strength), Sister Marie Orf (strength), Marcelle (successful treatment), Jojo (healing, courage), all impacted by disasters; for peace with justice in our world.	<i>Maryn Olson and Angie Fulton</i>
Mary (healing on death of mom), Parents (continued health), Melissa (healing and employment), all service men and women serving, City of St. Louis	<i>Cat Leonard</i>
Anyone dealing with insecurity, "Mama" Jackie, Sam, Bethany, Olivia, Chloe & Bo on their new adventure	<i>The Penny Family</i>
Thanksgiving for Leah's father's successful A-fib treatment, Blessings for Tom's father's upcoming medical treatment	<i>Morrell Family</i>
Mike Schmidt's mom, Shirley Hammon (healing)	<i>Schmidt Family</i>
Sue, Conrad, Stephanie, Chris, Sandy, Chuck, Bill, Julie (For strength and guidance)	<i>Joan Williams</i>

Gethsemane Lutheran Church Calendar
December 25, 2025 – Jan 4, 2026

12/25 Thursday	10:00 am	Christmas Day Worship – Lessons and Carols
12/28 Sunday	9:30 am	1st Sunday after Christmas – Single Service of Lessons and Carols: In-Person and Livestream
1/4 Sunday	8:30 am 9:45 am 11:00 am Noon	Epiphany Sunday Worship: In person and Livestream Fellowship Worship: In Person VBS Planning Meeting and Lunch

Upcoming Dates to Consider

Date	Time	Event
Dec 24-Jan 4	All Weekdays	Church Office Closed
Sun, Jan. 11	9:45 am	Archwell Health Representative during Fellowship Hour
Sun, Jan. 18	10 am	3 rd Sunday Committee Meetings
Sun, Jan 20	6:30 pm	Church Council Meeting
Sun, Jan 25	9:30 am	One Service followed by Congregational Meeting

Christmas Eve: For YOU!

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace...”
(Isaiah 52:7)

God wages peace for all of humankind by becoming flesh and living among us. Incarnate in Jesus, the Word comes to shine light into the shadowed parts of ourselves and our world. In the coming of the Word made flesh, we too become children of God, bearing God’s grace and truth into the world. Peace, therefore, works through each of us.

The incarnate Word made flesh did not come simply for a select few, but for the world. Many times the world does not see or understand this God-born peace even when it is in our midst. The world shuns or misunderstands it, thinking joy and love are signs of weakness. The world refuses to acknowledge it for the world wants power and recognition. Even when heralds announce it, even when we see it, even when the very Word made flesh walks among us, we cannot accept it. Yet, God continues to come to us, again and again.

We are invited to open this gift we have been given: peace enfleshed in Jesus and in us. We are invited, as children of God, to use this gift for the sake of the world.

Gethsemane is a Reconciling in Christ Congregation Affirmation of Welcome

Christ's welcome knows no boundaries! Therefore, our welcome knows no boundaries, and we invite all people to full participation in the life of the congregation.

We at Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Saint Louis embrace...

People of any race or ethnicity...

People who are male, female, transgender, intersex or any other gender identity...

People of any age...

People wherever they are, or wherever they have been, on their faith journeys...

People who are single, married, widowed, divorced, separated or partnered...

People who are gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual, or any other sexual orientation...

People with a variety of political perspectives...

People who have, or had, addictions, phobias, abortions, or a criminal record...

People who are homeowners, renters, living with parents, or homeless...

People who are fully-abled, disabled, or of differing abilities...

People of differing educational backgrounds...

People of any socio-economic condition...

People not mentioned above, all of whom are created and loved by God!

As we celebrate and seek to preserve the beautiful, amazing diversity of God's creation, we pledge to ourselves and to all others that we will strive to live as a reconciling people in our life together and in our outreach to the world. We are committed to being a radically loving and welcoming community of faith.

Sunday Funnies: The Sunday Flock is printed with permission through Pastoral Center.



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American Spiritual
Reparation project.

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Gethsemane Lutheran Church

3600 Hampton Ave.,

St. Louis, MO 63109

314-352-8050

gethsemanestl.org

office@gethsemanestl.org

