

February 1st, 2026
Fourth Sunday
after Epiphany

St. John's Lutheran Church
Mahone Bay





St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church (SJELC)

South Shore Lutheran Shared Ministry (SSLSM)

Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia

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Sunday February 1, 2026, Service of the Word Fourth Sunday after Epiphany, Lectionary 4

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome Statement *(read by lector)*

We are honored to be worshiping here today in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People, and we acknowledge them as the past, present, and future caretakers of this land.

Here at St. John's, we intentionally welcome all to worship and participate in our community. We believe we are drawn together by the love of Jesus Christ, our care for each other, and our passion for our community. At St. John's, all people are welcome, and we seek to worship in a way that respects and inspires our diversity. We believe that all people are created in the image of God, that all people are of sacred worth, and that Christ died, and rose, for all people. We believe that God's radically inclusive love excludes no one. We welcome everyone without exception, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, family or socioeconomic status, educational background, political affiliation, physical or mental ability, faith history or life experience. We believe that the diversity of God's creation is part of what makes it beautiful. We are a church where it is safe to have differences and still remain united in the love of Jesus. No matter who you are, where you're from, or what you believe, you are always welcome at St. John's.

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
the Creator of heaven and earth,
the Word who spoke life into being,
the Wind stirring the waters.

Amen.

Let us turn in confession to the one who knows us completely.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Mighty God, lover of justice,
**you call us to life in community,
but we have served our own interests
at the expense of our neighbors.
We have sown deceit where honesty was needed.
We say the right words,
but our hearts are far from you.
Turn us to seek your face.
Knit us together and give us the mind of Christ,
that we may do justice, love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God.
Amen.**

The former things have passed away,
and new things God now declares:
Like a spring of water that never fails,
God covers you in the righteousness of Christ,
and forgives your sin in ✝ Jesus' name.
May the Spirit give you strength to live for others,
and bless you with the gift of peace.
Amen.

***Opening Hymn ~ ELW 314
How Good Lord to be Here***

GREETING

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.**

KYRIE ~ p. 213

CANTICLE OF PRAISE ~ p. 213

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS

FIRST READING: MICAH 6:1-8

¹ Hear what the Lord says: Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice.

² Hear, you mountains, the case of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth, for the Lord has a case against his people, and he will contend with Israel.

³ “O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

⁴ For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

⁵ O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised, what Balaam son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the Lord.”

⁶ “With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

⁸ He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

Word of God, Word of life. **Thanks be to God**

PSALM: PSALM 15

Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle?

Who may abide upon your holy hill?

Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right,

who speak the truth from their heart;

they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends;

they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.

In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those who fear the Lord.

They have sworn upon their health and do not take back their word.

They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes against the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.

SECOND READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 1: 18-31

The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through

wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. In contrast, God is why you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Word of God, Word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION ~ ELW p. 216

The holy gospel according to John
Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

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

SERMON: Pastor Annette

***Hymn of the Day ~ ACS 1062
Build a Longer Table***

NICENE CREED – p. 104

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven;
Was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
Who with the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.
Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

As God's beloved children united in Christ, let us pray for the church, the whole human community, and the well-being of the earth, our home.

A brief silence.

God our wisdom, renew the church in the power of the Spirit, that it may do justice, love kindness, live humbly, and boldly proclaim Christ crucified. We pray for social justice,

humanitarian aid ministries, for Israel, Palestine, Sudan, Minneapolis, Venezuela, Greenland, Russia and Ukraine. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God our source, we honor you by caring wisely for your creation. We pray for the health of old growth forests, ice caps, and ocean currents. Preserve the diversity of life on earth. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God our righteousness, raise up visionary leaders who serve with integrity and respect human rights. Increase freedom in every nation. Protect educators, journalists, artists, and religious activists who are reviled for speaking truth. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God our advocate, you give hope to all who suffer because of persecution, poverty, or war. Reunite separated families and bring orphaned children to safety. Comfort any who grieve or suffer in any way especially Jocelyn Wentzell, Florence Slauenwhite, Shelley Ernst, Donna Naugler, and Wendy Keddy. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God our blessing, we pray for the children and youth of this congregation, and for parents, grandparents, mentors, teachers, and youth ministers who model love for their neighbor and care for others. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God our joy, we give thanks for the lives of those before us who journeyed humbly with you. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Confident that the Holy Spirit receives our prayers and answers us, we commend all for whom we pray to God's loving-kindness made known to us in Christ Jesus our Savior.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Let's share a sign of peace with one another.

THANKSGIVING

OFFERING

Offering is presented by one of the greeters.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of majesty, no eye has seen, no ear has heard what you have prepared for those who love you, yet in this meal you reveal the wideness of your mercy. Use what we have gathered to feed us with the reign of God come near, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

CANTICLE OF THANKSGIVING ~ ELW p 219

LORD'S PRAYER ~ p 221

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.

SENDING

BLESSING

May the triune God,
who has put a new song in your mouth
and tuned your heart for praise
✠ bless you now and forever.
Amen

Sending Hymn ~ ELW 988
The Spirit Sends Us

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy.
Thanks be to God.

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

**Jocelyn Wentzell, Florence Slauenwhite, Shelley Ernst, Donna Naugler,
and Wendy Keddy.**

Please remember to pray for all those who we know ~ family and friends.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Events:

- **St. John's Cantata/Choir Practice:** Thursdays at 6:15pm
- **St. John's Handbells Practice:** Thursdays at 7:30pm

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

- **No Common Table** in January.
- **No Fellowship Sunday** in January or February.
- **Annual General Meeting:** February 8th, 2026 @ 12:00pm with a potluck
- **The Bishop's Table:** February 14th Bishop Carla, host



Location/Time: SJELC from 2:00-4:00pm.

All are welcome for a time of fellowship and learning with our Atlantic Ministry siblings in Christ. We invite you to support ministry by building a longer table rather than a higher fence.

Easter Season Worship:

- **Ash Wednesday, February 18th:** St Paul's at 4:00 pm; Zion at 7:00pm
- **Midweek Services during Lent:**
 - "Lenten Café" at Zion: Wednesdays at 10:00am-12:00pm
 - "Bless this Night" at St John's: Wednesdays at 7:00pm
- **Maundy Thursday, April 2nd:** St John's at 7:00pm; St Paul's at 7:00pm
- **Good Friday, April 3rd:** Ecumenical Services in Mahone Bay and Lunenburg
 - St Paul's 7:00pm
- **Easter Sunday, April 6th:** St. John's Service at 1:00pm

Charitable tax receipts for 2025 tax returns will be issued as follows:

- **February 15, 2026:** Pick up for contributions received from Mar 1 – Dec 31, 2025

South Shore Shared Lutheran Ministry (SSLSM) Survey

- **We want to hear from you!! St. John's Church Council is seeking your feedback of our new shared ministry.** This survey will provide an opportunity for members to reflect on our experiences, share feedback, and help shape the ongoing life of our church and direction of the shared ministry.
- **At the AGM there will be opportunity for sharing feedback followed by time to complete a written survey that we will share with the SSLSM council. We are seeking feedback on how we are feeling about our shared ministry model.**

In Our Community:

- After a year and a half in hospital, **Christian Herridge** wants nothing more than to come home. While he remains at Fisherman's Memorial Hospital, Christian still relies on a wheelchair, and his parents, **Ruth and Bruce**, will need significant home modifications, equipment, and supports to make it possible for him to return safely to Mahone Bay.
- To help make that happen, a **fundraiser will be held on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, from 3:00–5:00pm at the Saltbox.** This is a drop-in event where you can:
 - Order **perpetual calendars and cards**
 - Place a bid on a stunning 36" x 13" **metal relief of Mahone Bay's Three Churches** by Theresa Ritter, numbered 0001 of 1506, **opening bid \$350.**
- All proceeds go directly to the **Herridge family.**

Many of us remember Christian as an extraordinary photographer. One of his photographs is featured as the **December image in the Perpetual Calendar**, and due to strong interest, **pre-orders are now being taken for a second printing.**

💛 Can you help?

Support can be offered **financially or in kind**—whether through purchases, bids, donations, services, or equipment that could help make Christian's transition home possible.

Every gesture matters.

Youth and Young Adult Retreat: Call for Volunteers

Are you passionate about Youth and Young Adult ministry? Are you interested in being part of a collaborative planning team? Are you passionate about administration and budgeting for an event? On June 12-14 (tentatively), the congregations of the SSLSM are invited to take part in planning a Youth and Young Adult Retreat at Camp Mush-a-Mush which is focused on finding stillness in the storms of life. Anyone who is interested in participating in an initial planning or wishing to help lead activities during the retreat, please contact Pastor Victoria at sslsm.pastorvictoria@gmail.com for more information.



COUNCIL CHATS - 20 JAN 2026

Highlights from our latest meeting.

THE ANNUAL MEETING IS FEBRUARY 8TH

We need one person to join us on Council!

Both men were late tonight, but David won the lateness award. Holy smoke - he drove down from the city for the meeting but had so much fun visiting with his parents he forgot about us! (BEST excuse ever - who among us wouldn't miss a Council meeting to have dinner with our parents? ♥)

The timer for the bell tower and narthex lights is working again; the timer had been set 12-hours off. Thanks for fixing it up Tim!

SSLSM Questionnaires will be coming out very soon! They are due back after the Annual Meeting on Sunday February 8 following the service. Copies will be on hand if you need one.

This was Lynn's last meeting with us. Lynn - we are all so incredibly grateful to you for your years of service, your dedication to us and to St John's, for your smart ideas and willingness to lend a hand should ever one be needed, not to mention your great sense of humour & ready enthusiasm to share a glass of Nova 7. We'll all be missing you very much at our next meeting on February 17th.

If you ever have any questions about what we've discussed at Council, have a chat with one of us: David, Judy, Jean, Melinda, Sara, Tim & Trudi



SSLSM Worship Schedule

Odd Months (January, March, May, July, September, November)

Pastor Annette

Pastor Victoria

First Sunday

9:00 am – Mount Calvary, Upper Northfield

9:00 am – St. Andrew's, West Northfield

11:00 am – St. Paul's, Bridgewater

11:00 am – Zion, Lunenburg

1:00 pm – All Saints, Newcombville

1:00 pm – St. John's, Mahone Bay

Second Sunday

9:00 am – St. James, Branch LaHave

9:00 am – St. Paul's, Bridgewater

11:00 am – St. John's, Mahone Bay

11:00 am – Mt. Olivet, Upper LaHave

1:00 pm – Zion, Lunenburg

1:00 pm – Grace, First South

Third Sunday

9:00 am – St. Andrew's, West Northfield

9:00 am – Mt. Calvary, Upper Northfield

11:00 am – St. Paul's, Bridgewater

11:00 am – All Saints, Newcombville

1:00 pm – St. John's, Mahone Bay

1:00 pm – Zion, Lunenburg

Fourth Sunday

9:00 am – Grace, First South

9:00 am – St. Paul's, Bridgewater

11:00 am – Zion, Lunenburg

11:00 am – St. John's, Mahone Bay

1:00 pm – St. Luke's, Rhodes Corner

2:00 pm – St. James, Branch LaHave

Even Months (February, April, June, August, October, December)

Pastor Victoria

Pastor Annette

First Sunday

9:00 am – Mt. Calvary, Upper Northfield

9:00 am – St. Andrew's, West Northfield

11:00 am – St. Paul's, Bridgewater

11:00 am – Zion, Lunenburg

1:00 pm – All Saints, Newcombville

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11:00 am – Zion, Lunenburg

11:00 am – St. John's, Mahone Bay

1:00 pm – St. Luke's, Rhodes Corner

2:00 pm – St. James, Branch LaHave

CONTACT INFORMATION SOUTH SHORE LUTHERAN SHARED MINISTRY

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