



Fourth Sunday in Advent December 18, 2022



WE CELEBRATE A TREE

We worship together this Christmas using Scripture, song, and a tree. The picture of a tree can represent different ideas—prosperity, long life, and spring's new life, for example. Our tree will represent five trees, trees which help us understand what God has done for us through Jesus. These trees are: The Tree of the Knowledge of God and Evil, the Jesse Tree, the Christmas Tree, the Tree of the Cross, and the New Tree of Life in Christ. We invite you to listen, read, and sing along with us as we celebrate a tree.

REGARDING COMMUNION

Advent calls our attention to Jesus—the Word made flesh who came among us, full of grace and truth (John 1:14)—who comes to us still in the bread of His Body and wine of His Blood in Holy Communion and will come again on the last day. As a congregation of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, we celebrate and receive Christ's Holy Supper for the forgiveness of sins and to strengthen our union with Him and one another. Our Lord invites to His table those who trust His words, repent of all sin, and set aside any refusal to forgive and love as He forgives and loves us so that we might show forth his death and resurrection until He comes. Christian denominations have differing understandings Communion, if you are not a member of a Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod congregation and have not communed here before, we ask that you speak with the pastor or elder prior to communing with us the first time. Those not communing are invited to cross their arms over their chests and approach the pastor for a blessing during the distribution. Also, if certain factors prohibit you from partaking of regular wine, non-alcoholic wine is available in the center circle of the tray. If you would like to begin sharing this sacred meal with us on a regular basis, please ask the pastor for a time of faith instruction and formation.

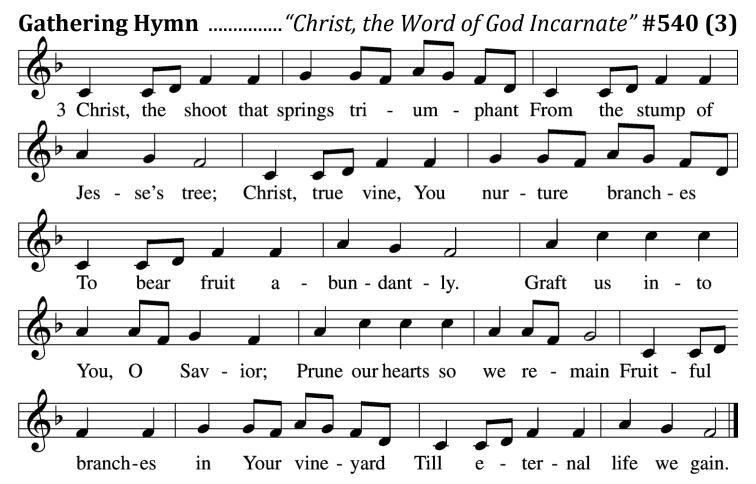
If you are in need of a gluten-free wafer for Communion, please let Pastor or an Elder know.

Liturgical Color:

Blue is the color of water and sky, thus hope, for the baptized who know Christ came down from heaven to earth and is coming again. **Prelude**Rich Vanderburgh

Pastoral Welcome

Please rise



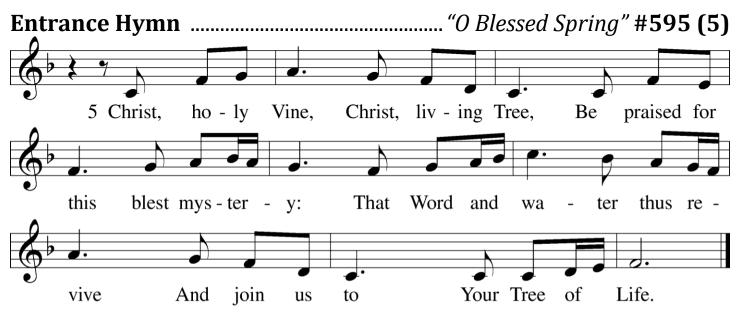
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Divine Service, Setting Four Confession and Absolution

Invocation and Confession & Absolutionpage 203

- In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C Amen.
- P Our help is in the name of the Lord,
- C who made heaven and earth.
- P If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?
- But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.
- P Since we are gathered . . . God, be merciful to me, a sinner.
- Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.
- P Almighty God, . . . through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C Amen.

Service of the Word



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Salutation page 205

- f P The Lord be with you.
- C And also with you.
- P Let us pray.

Collect of the Day(spoken in unison)

O God, our Maker and Redeemer, You wonderfully created us, and in the coming of Your Son as a human being among us yet more wondrously restored us. Grant that we may ever be alive in Him who made Himself to be like us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated

The Jesse Tree Symbol

CHILDREN'S PRESENTATION—WE CELEBRATE A TREE

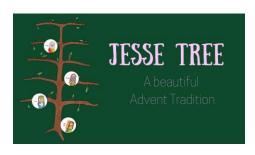


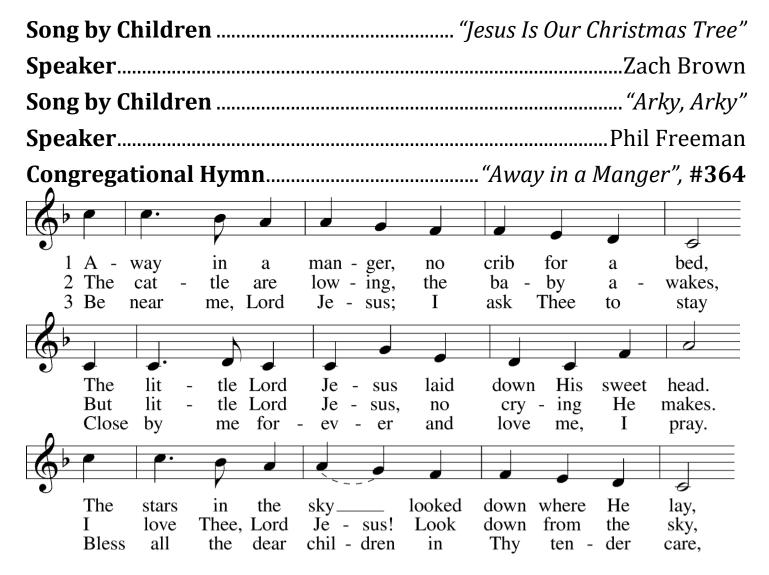
PART 1: CREATION'S TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL



Speaker.....Aedan Pederson

PART 2: THE JESSE TREE OF PROMISE







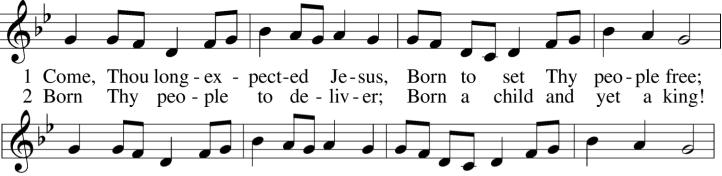
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Speaker	Delaney Clemons
Speaker	Noah Pederson
A Hymn of David	(Psalm 98 TEV)

- P Sing a new song to the Lord; He has done wonderful things! By His own power and holy strength, He has won the victory.
- The Lord announced His victory; He made His saving power known to the nations.
- He kept His promise to the people of Israel, with constant love and loyalty for them. All people everywhere have seen the victory of our God!
- Sing for joy to the Lord, all the earth; praise Him with songs and shouts of joy!
- P Sing praises to the Lord with harps; play music on the harps!
- With trumpets and horns, shout for joy before the Lord, the King! Roar, sea, and all creatures in you; sing, earth, and all who live there!
- P Clap your hands, oceans; hills, sing together with joy before the Lord, because He comes to rule the earth!
- He will rule all peoples of the world with justice and fairness. Glory be to the Father and the Son and the Spirit. As it was in the beginning, so it is now and will ever be until the end of time. Amen.

Speaker.....Kersten Thomas

Congregational Hymn......"(Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus", #338



From our fears and sins re-lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee. Born to reign in us for-ev-er, Now Thy gra-cious king-dom bring.





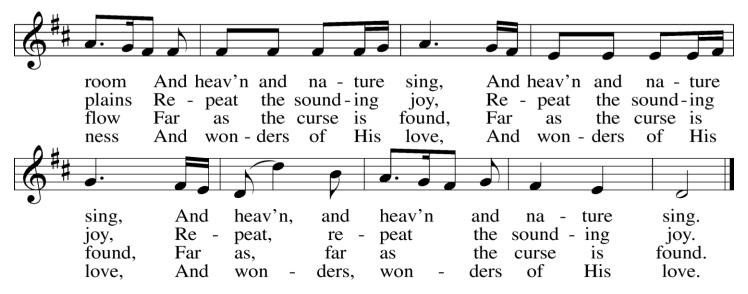
Dear de - sire of ev-'ry na-tion, Joy of ev-'ry long-ing heart. By Thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it Raise us to Thy glo-rious throne.

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PART 3: THE CHRISTMAS TREE



Speaker.....Kersten Thomas Speaker.....Aedan Pederson Song by Children "We Three Kings of Orient Are" Speaker.....Aedan Pederson Congregational Hymn....."Joy to the World", #387 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive her 2 Joy to the earth. the Sav - ior reigns! their songs Let men em -3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow Nor thorns in - fest the 4 He rules the world with truth and And makes grace the na - tions Him King; heart Let ev 'ry pre pare While fields ploy, and floods. rocks. hills. and ground; He comes make His bless ings to The glo ries of His righ prove teous



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PART 4: THE TREE OF THE CROSS



Speaker...... Trevor Thomas Congregational Hymn......"Let Us All with Gladsome Voice", #390 all with glad-some voice Praise the God of 1 Let heav en. us tears He comes, Here 2 To this vale of to serve in sad ness. 3 We are rich, for He was poor; Is not this der? won -4 Christ, our Lord and Say - ior dear. Be Thou ev - er near us. re - joice, His own Son hath giv Who, bid our hearts to en. glad with Him in heav'n's fair homes We may reign in That ness. There-fore praise God ev - er - more Here on earth and von der. Grant A - men, Je - sus, hear us now glad new year. a us.

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PART 5: THE NEW TREE OF LIFE IN CHRIST



.....Zach Brown Speaker..... Hymn of the Day "The Tree of Life" #561 (3 & 4) 3 What mer - cy God plan showed to our of race, 4 Now from that Je - sus' shame Flows life tree of e -His send-ing One grace: by In from wom-an's cue res His name; For all who trust and will ter nal in be seed, The One to fill great-est need— For our Sal - va-tion's liv And of this lieve, ing fruit re - ceive. up - lift - ed high His on - ly Son for sin would tree fruit pure and sweet The Lord in - vites the world to ₫. die, Would drink the of scorn and cup find with - in this eat, To cross of To cient ser - pent's dread crush the head! an The life ev - 'ry wood tree of with good.

Response Prayer (spoken in unison)

For the gifts of joy and love, hope and peace;

Four our life and friends and loved ones;

And especially for the Babe born in Bethlehem:

We thank You, O Lord.

We thank You for the Tree we celebrate;

For Your plan through Christ to save all of us,

For the hope that is alive in Jesus' birth.

We thank You again.

Now all praise to the Father, Son, and Spirit

We pray that soon all people will know You

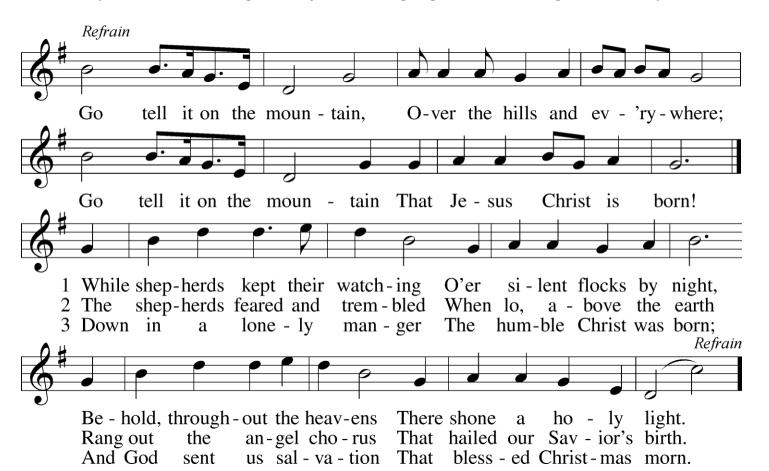
And know joy in the Babe of Bethlehem.

For Your goodwill to men,

The Tree of Life Blessing(Children)

Song by Children/Congregation "Go Tell It on the Mountain", #388

(Children will sing the refrain; Congregation will sing the verses)



Holy Gospel	Matthew	1:18-25
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- P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.
- **G** Glory to You, O Lord.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

- **P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- Praise to You, O Christ.

Nicene Creed......page 206

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,

the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;

who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man;

and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered and was buried.

And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures

and ascended into heaven

and sits at the right hand of the Father.

And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the Lord and giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Please be seated

Homily....."The Forest & the Tree"

(A great way of exploring this theme further is reading the good and very accessible book **Reforesting Faith**—What Trees Teach Us About the Nature of God and His Love for Us—by Matthew Sleeth, 2019.)

Please rise

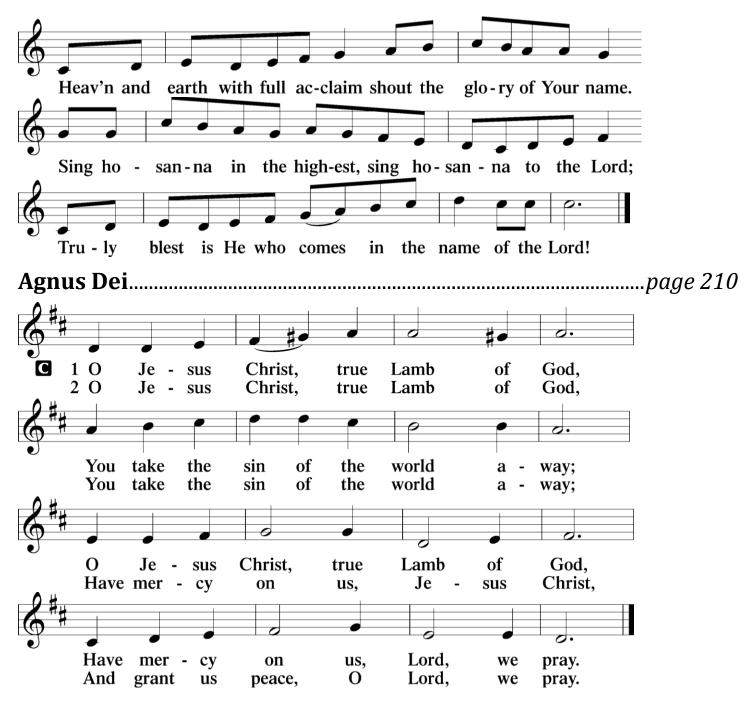
Service of the Sacrament

Communion Liturgypages 208-210

- P The Lord be with you.
- **C** And also with you.
- **P** Lift up your hearts.
- **C** We lift them to the Lord.
- **P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- It is right to give Him thanks and praise.
- P It is truly good, right, and beneficial . . . evermore praising You and saying:



□ Ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth a - dored;



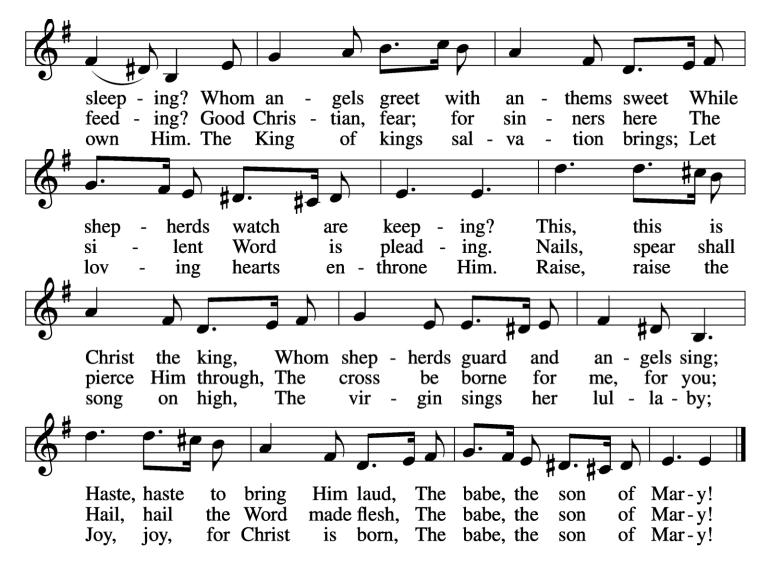
Please be seated, until motioned to rise & proceed forward if going for Communion or a blessing.

Instrumental

Communion Hymn""What Child Is This" #370

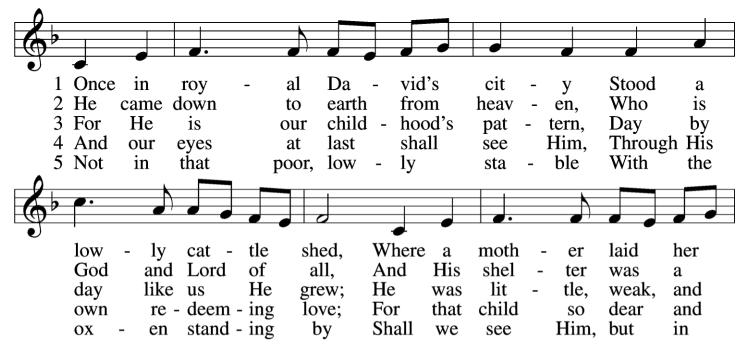


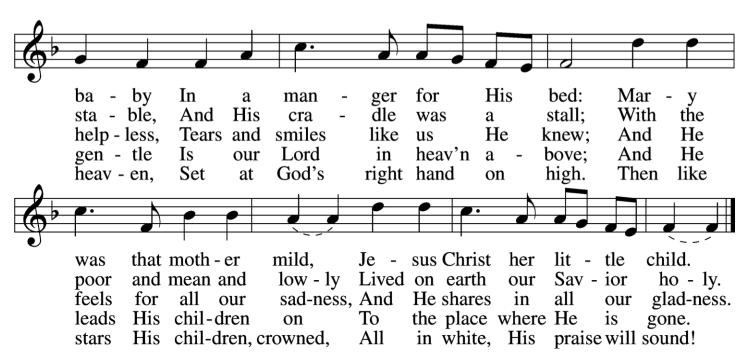
- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mar y's lap is
- 2 Why lies He in such mean es-tate Where ox and ass are
- 3 So bring Him in cense, gold, and myrrh; Come, peas ant, king, to



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Communion Hymn "Once in Royal David's City" #376





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Please rise

Post Communion Canticle......"Nunc Dimittis" page 211



Post-Communion Collect......page 212 Benedicamus and Benediction......page 212 Sending Hymn......" "See amid the Winter's Snow" #373 (1 & 4) a - mid the win - ter's snow, Born for 1 See on earth be - low. ho - ly Child, Thy face so meek 4 Teach, O teach us, By and mild, Prom-ised from e - ter - nal years. See. the gen - tle Lamb ap-pears, Teach us re - sem - ble Thee In Thy sweet hu - mil - i - ty. to Refrain Hail. O ev - er - bless-ed morn! Hail. re-demp-tion's hap-py dawn! "Christ is born in Beth-le-hem!" Sing through all Je - ru sa-lem:

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Dismissal (Bethlehem's Mission)

- **P** Grow in Christ,
- C Live in Love and Share the Faith!

PostludeRich Vanderburgh

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Next week's readings:

OT: Isaiah 7:10-14; Epistle: 1 John 4:7-16; Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

Attendance Last Saturday: 30 Attendance Last Sunday: 68

Attendance Midweek: 25

Total Offering: \$12,504.00 Missions: \$82.00 Home Use: \$9,932.00 Benevolences: \$2,490.00

Serving us today:

Elders	Alan Miller, Caleb Thomas
Musicians	Rich Vanderburgh
Altar Committee	Teresa Hillsman (Chair), Mary Creswell,
	Lisa Gulick, Beryl Lindley, Susie Mills
Flower Committee	Eunice Cobb (Chair), Penny Humphrey

This Week's Schedule

ricadic	
12:00 p.m.	Children's Christmas Party
11:00 a.m.	Johnny Nichol's funeral
2:00 p.m.	Moms and Tots
	Pastor's Vacation Day
	Cindy's Vacation Day
10:30 a.m.	Bible Study
7:00 p.m.	Advent Service
	Office Closed-Christmas Eve Holiday
6:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service/Communion
10:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service/Communion
8:00 a.m.	The Lutheran Hour broadcast on 96.9
9:00 a.m.	Radio Broadcast 98.5 (can also be heard at
	www.blchurch.com, under the Sermons tab)
	No Bible Class, No Sunday School
10:30 a.m.	Christmas Day-Holy Communion
	Cindy's Vacation Day
	Pastor's Vacation Day
	Cindy's Vacation Day
	11:00 a.m. 2:00 p.m. 10:30 a.m. 7:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m. 10:00 p.m. 8:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m.

Office Hours

The Church Office will be closed on December 23 and December 26 for the Christmas Holiday and January 2 for the New Year's Holiday.

Pastor Joel will be on vacation on January 2 and 3. Cindy Smith will be on vacation December 30.

Prayers

For the family and friends of Johnny Nichol on his death this past week. May Christ the Risen Lord fill them with all comfort and peace as they commend him to the Lord's eternal keeping! His visitation will be at Sweeny Phillips & Holdren Funeral Home on Sunday, December 18 from 5:30-7:00 p.m. and at Bethlehem on

Monday, December 19 from 10:30-11:00 a.m. The funeral will follow at 11:00 a.m.

For Pregnant Mothers (& Waiting Fathers), especially Paige & Colin Hart as their due date gets closer! The Lord's good provision to all who await the birth of a child (as we remember pregnant Mary this Advent).

For Sustenance, Healing, and Provision—We remember those who are dealing with illness, are homebound or in nursing homes, are undergoing and recovering from surgery, as well as going through hospitalization and rehabilitation: Holli Burge, Mel Bockelman, Paula Brewer, Ray & Mary Carstensen, Bob & Barbara Compton, Marion Droege, Wilma Gertz, Karen Haase, Mary Johnson, Wanda Kreisel, Judy Pierce, Maryanna Savery, Denny Spanton, Rose Steitz, & Joe Zeman.

For Military Members—We remember all service and support personnel who are deployed and stationed away from us and their families: Andy Burden, Ty Carter and Chance Hillsman.

Prayer Requests & Spiritual Care—If you would like to make a prayer request, contact Pr. Joel or email the church office. Also, if you're feeling the strain, feel free to call or text Pr. Joel or contact your elder or the church office. We rely upon the Holy Spirit and his gifts in Christ during every time of uncertainty, and can never be thankful enough for the gift of each other!

Worship Services

Livestream Service will be for Christmas Eve—NOT Christmas Day.

Saturday Services start at 5:30 p.m. Sunday Services are at 10:30 a.m. Sunday's Services are live on Facebook and YouTube and the webpage at blchurch.com.

The Final Midweek Advent Service will be held this Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. in our sanctuary. Plan on setting aside this time for a quiet and contemplative keeping of the short and often crowded-out season of Advent as we focus on "The Fullness of Time."

Advent Midweek Offerings—By using the seasonal envelopes (and those not designated elsewhere), the special offerings will go to the Food Banks at our two denominational seminaries: Concordia—St. Louis and Concordia—Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Thanks for supporting our church-workers-in-training this way!

Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve Offerings will go to the local Food Center.

A Children's Christmas Party will be held after the Children's Service on Sunday, December 18. All children are invited. There will be food, crafts and Christmas activities for kids 0-18.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Services will be held on **December 24 at 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.** Let others know, invite, and attend as you can! We gather around the very reason this holy day is called Christmas—Jesus, the Word made flesh, coming into our midst! **The early service will be on livestream.**

Christmas Day Service will be held on the regular Sunday time at 10:30 a.m. Invite others and join us for a traditional Lessons and Carols! There will be no livestream.

Sunday School and Christian Education

There will be no Sunday School on Christmas Day or New Year's Day.

There will be no Bible Study on Christmas Day or New Year's Day.

Wednesday Bible Study—We are just starting to read and discuss our way through the writings of the prophet Zechariah. Join us in the conference room from 10:30 a.m. to noon for this biblical journey together! We will keep meeting through the end of the year and unless the weather is bad or no one shows up.

Fellowship

Exercise Class happens at 9:30 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays in the Fellowship Hall. This class is low impact exercise open to anyone, men or women. For more information, contact Judy Smith. We will not meet on Friday, December 16 and will take a break until January 4, 2023.

The Games and Card Group meets on Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. in the Youth Room downstairs. Anyone, men and women, are welcome to come. If you have any questions, please contact Melvin Theroff. Cards will not meet until January 5, 2023.

The Quilting Group meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month from 9:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. (September through May). Anyone is welcome to help with this project. No special sewing skills are needed. Bring your own lunch. If you have any questions, please contact Georgia Luker. Quilting will not be meeting again until January 2023.

This & That

Offering Envelopes—The company we order our contribution envelopes from has said that due to supply chain shortages & staffing issues our 2023 envelopes are not done as of December 15, 2022. The sales staff is asking the production crew to expedite our order but the soonest it will be here is the end of December. It is very likely we will not receive the envelopes until sometime in January. I will get them out to everyone as soon as I get them.

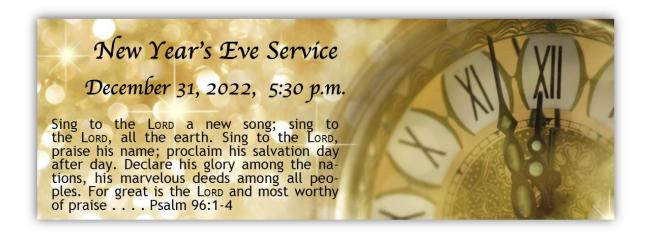
Country Kitchen Cards—We have Country Kitchen Cards. Stop by the office if you would like to purchase one. They are \$10 and you get 10 buy-one- get-one free meal deals. All proceeds go to the youth group. Thanks for your support!

Ongoing thanks to those who generously give to the Bethlehem Emergency Fund, which enables Pr. Joel to assist members and certain people in the community who are in crisis situations. Much appreciation for your good support!

2022 Elders

Willie Crespo (last name begins A-D) 660-679-8121, crespo6fam@gmail.com
Ricky Bertels (last name begins E-H), 660-262-8080, rick1janice2@gmail.com
Jack Easterwood (last name begins I-Ma) 660-678-2045, easter.egg2380@gmail.com
Alan Miller (last name begins Mc-R) 660-909-1764, alorrmiller@aol.com
Caleb Thomas (last name begins S-Z) 660-441-2010, calebthomas50@gmail.com







Thank you to the following people for their involvement with the children each week. Ellen Pederson, Penny Humphrey, Rich Vanderburgh, Jack Easterwood and Rebecca Holland.

Thanks to Thrivent for the treat bags they prepared for the children.

Zach Brown
Haley Clemons
Delaney Clemons
Phil Freeman
Katy Freeman
Emory Holland

Aedan Pederson Noah Pederson Killian Pederson Silas Pederson Mila Sullins Kersten Thomas Trevor Thomas
Connor Thomas
Bryce VanWey
LauraBeth VanWey
Gracyn VanWey
Bryson Welch



Thank you to everyone that helped with the Crazy Christmas Dinner and all those that attended to make it an enjoyable evening. Special thanks to Mark Brown for all the cooking and Penny Humphrey for organizing the event.

Other helpers included Felisa Brown, Scott Humphrey, Abby Humphrey, Beryl and Shawn Lindley, Cindy Smith and our youth servers: Anna, Morgan, Zach and Andrew.



Joy to the World

Y G Z S Z S Η R R Μ В D L Η R Ι В Η В Z Ε G \mathbf{T} E Η S C Μ G Α J Α J S Ν Η M z Y L R Μ Ν I R Α D 0 R T L U E Μ V Ι E S E Α C Y Η W Ι S E Μ E N C S E E J Y P U т Κ Ν F Ν Ε K L P E S E R Ι K т Α Ι L Ι W D Μ E S В т P Ν Κ В Ν Α L E G Ν Α 0 L Α T Ν Α G R Η Ν S \mathbf{T} Х J Z N Α T S Ν Ι Α R E J Ι C E Μ R S J 0 S М В E T Η L E Η E Μ F Х

ADVENT
ANGEL
BETHLEHEM
BIRTH
BLESSINGS
CAMELS
FRANKINCENSE

INFANT JESUS JOSEPH MAGI MANGER MARY MIRACLE MYRRH NATIVITY REJOICE STABLE STAR THREE KING

THREE KINGS WISE MEN

Contact Information

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 607 N. Maguire, Warrensburg, MO 64093

Our Mission

· Grow in Christ · Live in Love · Share the Faith

Our Vision

To be a community of believers, disciples, and servants while we deepen our personal faith and reach others for Christ.



Rev. Joel R. Kurz

Tuesday & Thursday: 8am-5pm, Wednesday & Friday: 10am-5pm

Otherwise by appointment Office: 660-747-6742 Cell Phone: 660-441-5710

Email: <u>pastor@blchurch.com</u>
Website: <u>www.blchurch.com</u> Facebook: <u>blcwarrensburg</u>

Office Manager:

Cindy Smith
Monday–Friday: 8am-5pm
660-747-6742
officemanager@blchurch.com

Bookkeeper:

Teresa Hillsman Tuesday: 9am-11am Thursday: 9am-11am financial@blchurch.com

Please note that Bethlehem Lutheran Church has a closed-circuit video system. This allows for live streaming on the web, viewing of the service on screens in the building and helps to enhance our security. Please see a trustee or an elder if you have any questions.