

O holy Child of Bethlehem



descend to us, we pray



+ Nativity Of Our Lord: December 24 +

Christmas Eve

AS WE GATHER

Christmas is a celebration of love. Loving thoughts and deeds certainly are part of this holy season as goodwill among people seems more pronounced than at other times of the year. What is the source of that love? It is the love of God that is fully expressed in Christ Jesus, the babe in the manger. For centuries, hymn writers and poets have found meaningful ways of describing that love of God. A poem by English writer Christina Rossetti simply but beautifully shares the Gospel truth that blesses this season.

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign. (LW 46:1)

Through the words of gifted hymn writers and poets and the evangelists Matthew, Luke, and John, we hear the angels, we see the star, and more, we see the Word made flesh—Jesus the Light and Life! Once again, the message of God’s love echoes in our world!

REGARDING COMMUNION

Jesus was born in a town called “house of bread” (Bethlehem) and laid in a feeding trough (a manger) where the livestock normally found their grain. Little surprise then that Jesus spoke of himself as “the bread who came down from heaven” (John 6:41) and as “a grain of wheat falling into the earth” (John 12:24)! Christmas is the celebration of the Eternal Son Jesus, God of God and Light of Light, taking on flesh and dwelling among us so that we behold in him the glory of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Our word “Christmas” simply means *Christ’s Mass* and reminds us that Jesus is still present among us in body and blood through the sacred gifts of bread and wine. In this vein, Luther once said: “Word and Sacrament are the manger and swaddling clothes into which it has pleased Christ to lay himself.” May we come to Christ’s manger (the Altar) humbled in repentance for all that is wrong in our lives so that we may receive his gracious meal for forgiveness and renewal. ***Since Christian denominations have differing understandings of Holy 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:

White is the color of purity and is associated with festivals of Christ and his Church such as Christmas Eve

*Visitors: We are glad you have chosen to be with us today! We would especially like to follow-up with you beyond today, so please take a moment to leave your best contact information in the guest books at each entrance/exit or in the Record of Fellowship books found on each pew. **A cry-room for parents and children is just off from the front entryway, and there's a wonderful nursery downstairs at the end of the fellowship hall for you to make use of at any time.** Do you have any questions about anything here? Don't hesitate to ask an ushers or elder, or talk to the pastor.*

Taper Candle Lighting

*Fifteen minutes or less prior to the start of today's/tonight's service, please light your candle and place it in one of the sandboxes in the chancel—**making sure there's some space between it and the others and that it's not too close to the sides!** You may use the side doors to the chancel (ramp or steps) as well as the railing steps by the baptismal font—plus, there is also a sandbox on the pew level. Make that lighting and placing moment a time of hopeful prayer and thankful joy for the light shining in the darkness! Your candle and all the others will shed their light in the chancel throughout the service. **Those running late will have a chance to light their tapers during "Silent Night."***

Prelude

Pastoral Welcome

Service of the Word

Please rise, when invited to do so, and turn to face the entrance to the sanctuary. (If you need to stay seated or sit at any time, please do so.)

Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Holy Gospel Matthew 1:18-25

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.

C **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.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray.

O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

C **Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes again to be our Righteous Judge;**

P through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Turn to face the processional cross as it is carried through the nave and into the chancel.

Processional Hymn "Oh Come, All Ye Faithful" #379



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, Joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
 2 High - est, most ho - ly, Light of Light e - ter - nal,
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, Sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this hap - py morn - ing;



come ye, O come — ye to Beth - le - hem;
 Born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal He comes;
 Sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!
 Je - sus, to Thee — be — glo - ry giv'n!

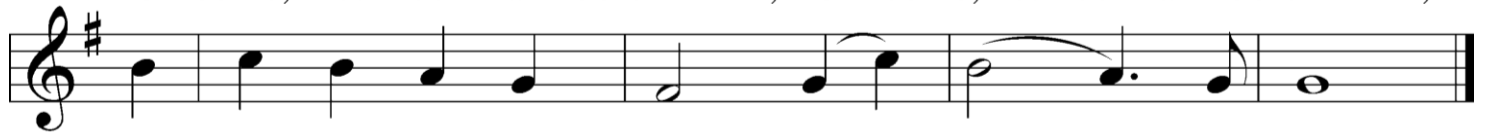


Come and be - hold Him Born the king of an - gels:
 Son of the Fa - ther Now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
 Glo - ry to God — In — the — high - est:
 Word of the Fa - ther Now in flesh ap - pear - ing!

Refrain



O come, let us a - dore Him, O come, let us a - dore Him,



O come, let us a - dore Him, Christ the Lord!

Text and tune: Public domain. Used by permission. LSB Hymn License No. 11003555

Confession and Absolution

P Joined in worship on this sacred night, let us make confession to our heavenly Father, confident of His forgiveness for Jesus' sake.

Silence for reflection

P Almighty Father,

C we confess that we are sinners by nature and by thought, word, and deed. We have not always given You the best of what we have and are, and have not fully made room for You in our lives. With repentant hearts, we turn to You for mercy, seeking Your grace. In Your loving kindness forgive, restore, and lead us so that we may be renewed and live to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

P With joy I announce God’s Good News to You. Our gracious God in His mercy has given His Son to be born, to live, and then to die for you and to rise again in glory. For His sake God forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Be at peace and rejoice in the Lord.

C Amen.

Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray.

C Gracious heavenly Father, with joy we celebrate our Lord’s birth as the fulfillment of Your promise of redemption from sin. Grant that as Your Holy Spirit works in our lives, there always be room for Jesus as Lord of our hearts, who now lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

The Gospel is read from the front of the congregation as a reminder that Christmas is the celebration of the Word taking on flesh and dwelling among us (John 1:14).

Holy Gospel John 1:1-5, 9-18

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the first chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth

came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

Please be seated.

The Jesse Tree Symbol

(Those who did not have a chance to light a candle earlier may come forward and do so while the carol is being sung.)

Nativity Hymn..... "Silent Night" #363



1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,
all is bright Round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
at the sight; Glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
love's pure light Ra - diant beams from Thy ho - ly face
Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, Sleep in heav - en - ly
Heav'n - ly hosts sing, Al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy
peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
birth, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Tune and text: Public domain. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110003555

Prayer of Light

P Let us pray.

C O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven; through the same

Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, on God, now and forever. Amen.

Old Testament Reading..... Isaiah 7:10-14

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Vocal SoloPeggy Forstad (10:30 a.m.)

“God is With Us” (Wayne Kirkpatrick)

Vocal SoloChristoph Marsh (7:00 p.m.)

“Gesù Bambino” (“The Infant Jesus”), by Pietro Yon

Epistle Reading1 John 4:7-16

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Carols & Luke's Narrative of the First Christmas

About the Carol

The Carol "God Loves Me Dearly", #392 (1-3)



1 God loves me dear - ly, Grants me sal -
2 I was in slav - 'ry, Sin, death, and
3 He sent forth Je - sus, My dear Re -



va - tion, God loves me dear - ly, Loves e - ven me.
dark - ness; God's love was work - ing To make me free.
deem - er, He sent forth Je - sus And set me free.

Refrain



There - fore I'll say a - gain: God loves me



dear - ly, God loves me dear - ly, Loves e - ven me.

Tune and text: Public domain. Used by permission. LSB Hymn License No. 110003555.

About the Carol

The Carol "It Came upon the Midnight Clear", #366



1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, That glo - rious song of old,
2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come With peace - ful wings un - furled,
3 All you, be - neath your heav - y load, By care and guilt bent low,
4 For lo, the days have come to pass By proph - ets seen of old,



From an - gels bend - ing near the earth To touch their harps of gold:
And still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats O'er all the wea - ry world.
Who toil a - long a drea - ry way With pain - ful steps and slow:
When down in - to the cir - cling years Came Christ as was fore - told.



“Peace on the earth, good-will to all, From heav’n’s all-gracious king.”
 A - bove its sad and low-ly plains They bend on hov-’ring wing,
 Look up, for gold-en is the hour, Come swift-ly on the wing,
 His word of peace shall to the earth God’s an-cient prom-ise bring,



The world in sol-lemn still-ness lay To hear the an-gels sing.
 And ev-er o’er its ba-bel sounds The bless-ed an-gels sing.
 The Prince was born to bring you peace; Of Him the an-gels sing.
 And all who take this gift will hear The song the an-gels sing.

Tune and text: Public domain. Used by permission. LSB Hymn License No. 110003555.

Introduction

Reading.....Luke 2:1-5

About the Carol

The Carol“O Little Town of Bethlehem”, #361



1 O lit-tle town of Beth-le-hem, How still we see thee lie!
 2 For Christ is born of Mar-y, And, gath-ered all a-bove
 3 How si-lent-ly, how si-lent-ly The won-drous gift is giv’n!
 4 O ho-ly Child of Beth-le-hem, De-scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep The si-lent stars go by;
 While mor-tals sleep, the an-gels keep Their watch of won-d’ring love.
 So God im-parts to hu-man hearts The bless-ings of His heav’n.
 Cast out our sin, and en-ter in, Be born in us to-day.



Yet in thy dark streets shin-eth The ev-er-last-ing light.
 O morn-ing stars, to-geth-er Pro-claim the ho-ly birth,
 No ear may hear His com-ing; But in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ-mas an-gels The great glad tid-ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee to-night.
 And prais - es sing to God the king And peace to all the earth!
 Where meek souls will re - ceive Him, still The dear Christ en - ters in.
 O come to us, a - bide with us, Our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Tune and text: Public domain. Used by permission. LSB Hymn License No. 110003555.

Reading.....Luke 2:6-7

About the Carol

The Carol “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”, #393



1 In - fant ho - ly, In - fant low - ly, For His bed a cat - tle stall;
 2 Flocks were sleep - ing, Shep - herds keep - ing Vig - il till the morn - ing new



Ox - en low - ing, Lit - tle know - ing Christ the child is Lord of all.
 Saw the glo - ry, Heard the sto - ry, Tid - ings of a Gos - pel true.



Swift - ly wing - ing, An - gels sing - ing, Bells are ring - ing, Tid - ings bring - ing:
 Thus re - joic - ing, Free from sor - row, Prais - es voic - ing, Greet the mor - row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!
 Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

Reading.....Luke 2:8-12

About the Carol

The Carol “Away in a Manger”, #364



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed,
 2 The cat - tle are low - ing, the ba - by a - wakes,
 3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask Thee to stay

The lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down His sweet head.
 But lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing He makes.
 Close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.

The stars in the sky _____ looked down where He lay,
 I love Thee, Lord Je - sus! Look down from the sky,
 Bless all the dear chil - dren in Thy ten - der care,

The lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
 And stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
 And take us to heav - en to live with Thee there.

Reading..... Luke 2:13-16

About the Carol

The Carol "Angels We Have Heard on High", #368

1 An - gels we have heard on high, Sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
 2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;

And the moun - tains in re - ply, Ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
 What the glad - some tid - ings be Which in - spire your heav' n - ly song?
 Come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.

Refrain

About the Carol

The Carol "Let Our Gladness Have No End, #381



1 Let our glad - ness have no end, al - le - lu - ia!
 2 Proph - e - sies in days of old, al - le - lu - ia!
 3 See, the love - liest bloom - ing rose, al - le - lu - ia!
 4 In - to flesh is made the Word, al - le - lu - ia!



For to earth did Christ de - scend, al - le - lu - ia!
 God has sent Him as fore - told, al - le - lu - ia!
 From the branch of Jes - se grows, al - le - lu - ia!
 He, our ref - uge and our Lord, al - le - lu - ia!

Refrain



On this day God gave us Christ, His Son, to save



us; Christ, His Son, to save us.

Tune and text: Public domain. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110003555

Homily..... "Seeing Christ in Bethlehem"

Please rise.

Prayer of the Church

- P** . . . Lord, in Your mercy
- C** hear our prayer.
- P** for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C** Amen.

Please be seated.

Offering

Please rise.

Nicene Creed

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.

Service of the Sacrament

Preface

- 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.

C It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Proper Preface

P It is truly good, right, and beneficial. . .of Your eternal love.

C Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will among mankind!

Prayer of Thanksgiving

P Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth . . .with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Pax Domini

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

(For standing, continuous distribution: Approach the pastor for Christ's bread & Body or a blessing then step to the left for Christ's wine & Blood—by common or individual cup—and then return to your seat ready to go and make known the joy and peace of Jesus' presence in every place of life.)

Instrumental Guitar Solo

Communion Hymn "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come", #358 (1-3)



1 "From heav'n a - bove to earth I come To bear good
2 "To you this night is born a child Of Mar - y,
3 "This is the Christ, our God Most High, Who hears your



news to ev - 'ry home; Glad tid - ings of great
cho - sen vir - gin mild; This lit - tle child of
sad and bit - ter cry; He will Him - self your



joy I bring, Where - of I now will say and sing:
low - ly birth Shall be the joy of all the earth.
Sav - ior be From all your sins to set you free.

Communion Hymn *"See amid the Winter's Snow", #373*



1 See a - mid the win - ter's snow, Born for us on earth be - low,
 2 Lo, with - in a sta - ble lies He who built the star - ry skies,
 3 Sa - cred In - fant, all di - vine, What a ten - der love was Thine,
 4 Teach, O teach us, ho - ly Child, By Thy face so meek and mild,



See, the gen - tle Lamb ap - pears, Prom - ised from e - ter - nal years.
 He who, throned in height sub - lime, Sits a - mid the cher - u - bim.
 Thus to come from high - est bliss Down to such a world as this!
 Teach us to re - sem - ble Thee In Thy sweet hu - mil - i - ty.

Refrain



Hail, O ev - er - bless - ed morn! Hail, re - demp - tion's hap - py dawn!



Sing through all Je - ru - sa - lem: "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"

Tune and text: Public domain. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110003555

Instrumental Organ/Horn Duet

Communion Hymn *"Of the Father's Love Begotten", #384 (1-3)*



1 Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten Ere the worlds be -
 2 Oh, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed, When the vir - gin,
 3 This is He whom seers in old time Chant - ed of with



gan to be, He is Al - pha and O - me - ga,
 full of grace, By the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing,
 one ac - cord, Whom the voic - es of the proph - ets



He the source, the end - ing He, Of the things that are, that
 Bore the Sav - ior of our race, And the babe, the world's Re -
 Prom - ised in their faith - ful word. Now He shines, the long - ex -

have been, And that fu - ture years shall see
 deem - er, First re - vealed His sa - cred face
 pect - ed; Let cre - a - tion praise its Lord
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.

Tune and text: Public domain. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110003555

Communion Hymn "Go Tell It on the Mountain", #388

Refrain

Go tell it on the moun - tain, O-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;

Go tell it on the moun - tain That Je - sus Christ is born!

- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing O'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem - bled When lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger The hum-ble Christ was born;

Refrain

Be - hold, through - out the heav - ens There shone a ho - ly light.
 Rang out the an - gel cho - rus That hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
 And God sent us sal - va - tion That bless - ed Christ - mas morn.

Tune and text: Public domain. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110003555

Stand

Post Communion Prayer

C Amen.

Benediction

P The blessing of God Almighty— . . . with you, now and forever.

C Amen.

Sending 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! Let men their songs em -
 3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow Nor thorns in - fest the
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the na - tions



King; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare Him
 ploy, While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
 ground; He comes to make His bless - ings
 prove The glo - ries of His righ - teous -



room And heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n and na - ture
 plains Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing
 flow Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is
 ness And won - ders of His love, And won - ders of His



sing, And heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, Re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, Far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, And won - ders, won - ders of His love.

Text and tune: Public domain. Used by permission. LSB Hymn License No. 110003555

Dismissal (Bethlehem's Mission)

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

Postlude

Acknowledgements Creative Worship for the Lutheran Parish, Series B, Quarter 1. Copyright © 2023. Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Attendance Last Saturday: 23

Attendance Last Sunday: 73

Advent Attendance: 58

Total Offering: \$3,673.09

Missions: \$0.00

Home Use: \$2,995.09

Benevolences: \$678.00

Serving us today:

Elders.....Willie Crespo, Jack Easterwood (10:30 a.m.)
..... Ricky Bertels, Jimmy Smithers (7:00 p.m.)
Musicians Jerrode Marsh, Gary Moege (7:00 p.m.)
Vocals Peggy Forstad (10:30 a.m.), Christoph Marsh (7:00 pm)
Altar Committee.....Teresa Hillsman-Chair Lisa Gulick, Beryl Lindley
..... Susie Mills, Cindy Schnell, Samantha Schnell
Flower Committee Penny Humphrey (Chair), Cindy Smith

This Week's Schedule

Monday		<i>Christmas Day-office closed</i>
Tuesday		<i>Pr. Off in Morning</i>
	1:00 p.m.	Christmas Caroling
Wednesday		<i>Pr. Off in Morning</i>
Friday		<i>Cindy's Vacation Day</i>
Saturday	5:30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday	9:15 a.m.	Christian Education
	10:30 a.m.	New Year's Eve/Holy Communion
	7:00 p.m.	New Year's Eve Service
Monday		<i>New Year's Day-office closed</i>

Prayers

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: Charlie Becker, Mel Bockelman, Paula Brewer, Mark Brown, Ray & Mary Carstensen, Galen Cobb, Bob & Barbara Compton, Marion Droege, Rev. Tom Fatka (Tommy Fatka's dad), Peggy Forstad, Wilma Gertz, Winnie & George Goldsmith (Steve's parents), Karen Haase, Ken Hoemann, Juanita Holcomb (Peggy Forstad's mother), Mary Johnson, Wanda Kreisel, Duane Limback, Lloyd McCarter, Jeannie Peterson, Maryanna Savery, Rose Steitz, and & Joe Zeman.

For Military Members—We remember all service and support personnel who are deployed and stationed away from us and their families.

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!

Special Days for Members This Week

Birthdays—Neil Tebbenkamp-24th, Teresa Hillsman-28th. **Anniversaries**—Dan and Patricia Lockhart-27th, Alan and Lorraine Miller-28th.

Worship Services

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

Sunday School and Christian Education

Sunday School is at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday mornings downstairs for ages Preschool through 12th grade. We start out with a combined opening with the adults to kick off each Sunday. The children continue working on songs with the goal of singing in the church service once per month. We invite all children to come and be a part of this time growing together in Christ!

Sunday Proverbs Bible Study—*Oh, to love wisdom and live wisely!* How many times have you said and thought that? Join us for our Sunday Bible study—*Living (& Loving) Wisdom*—which explores the book of Proverbs through the lens of the Ten Commandments and Christ “the Wisdom of God” (I Cor. 1:24. Pr. Joel is drawing from David Coe’s *Provoking Proverbs*. **We start at 9:15 a.m.** (in the conference room) and still have a lot of ground to cover! No Bible Study Christmas Eve but we will resume on New Year’s Eve.

Let’s join the LCMS Memory Verse Challenge! The Sunday School children will be challenged to learn these verses every week, and you can too! To help make this easy to do and remember, each Sunday I will post the weekly verse on the BLC Facebook page, provide a coloring page with the verse printed on it to take home (find this at the mailboxes), and post the verse in the **Band** app. Download this free app and join the group **BLC Sunday School**. I created a Group Challenge (Rehearse the weekly memory verse), for which you can check-in daily. I’ll make a new challenge for each month. You can also visit lcms.org/worship/memory-verse-challenge to find the weekly verse.

Wednesday Bible Study—Join us at **10:30 a.m.** in the conference room. We’re looking at the Apocrypha and the time between the two Testaments.

Thursday Bible Study at 7:00 p.m.—Pastor Bertels’ study on the book of Ezekiel meets in the conference room and is open to all who have the interest and time available.

Music

Christmas Caroling—On December 26th (the 2nd Day of Christmas—St. Stephen’s

Day), we will be caroling to homebound members and those in nursing homes. If you know someone who would like a visit from us, please let the church office know. We will meet at the church at **1:00 p.m.** and be ready to go spread Christmas cheer on this “down day”—especially since the twelve days of Christmas until Epiphany are just beginning! Everyone is welcome to join the festivities!

Choir meets on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. for fellowship time and rehearsal from 7:00-8:00p.m. During Advent we will meet after the Wednesday service. We are always looking for new members! Please contact Peggy Forstad with any questions about joining the choir.

Opportunities to Serve

Christmas Store—Thank you cannot fully express my appreciation for all who assisted in their help and support! Pastor prayed with us and gave us spiritual support. He also (when his time allowed) visited with clients as many had described Bethlehem as Pastor Joel’s church when they were asked if they knew where Bethlehem was located. It will be a month or so before we have final numbers and donations, but voucher distribution was a great success. **Sue Cottrill.**

Bulletin Board—**A section of the bulletin board at the North entrance has been dedicated to our congregation members who are home-bound and in nursing homes.** Please check it out to see how you can reach out to those who can no longer come to services regularly. Send a card or leave one in the pocket on the board to be delivered during a visit. If you have a picture of a loved one you can share, please send it to Rebecca to have it posted!

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. Exercise class will not meet again until **January 3rd.**

The Games and Card Group meets on **Thursdays at 1:00 p.m.** in the Youth Room downstairs. Everyone is welcome to come to this fellowship time.

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 or go out and grab something. If you have any questions, please contact Georgia Luker.

Men's Club will meet for a breakfast on **Saturday, January 13 at 8:45 a.m.** at the Warrensburg American Legion. Breakfast cost is \$5. We'll discuss plans for 2024. Contact Wille Crespo, Alan Miller or Ron Rode with any questions.

This and That

The Johnson County Resource Center happens every Tuesday and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the basement of First Presbyterian Church (206 N. College)—providing breakfast, a hot lunch, and a place to hang out. Housing assistance and case management are provided, as well as Medicaid signup. **Katy Trail's Mobile Medical Unit will resume its services on January 16th.**

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 in shining the light of Christ! If you'd ever like to hear some of the stories of how these funds have been used, just ask Pr. Joel.

2023 Elders

Willie Crespo (last name begins A-F) 660-679-8121, crespo6fam@gmail.com

Ricky Bertels (last name begins G-K), 660-262-8080, rick1janice2@gmail.com

Jack Easterwood (last name begins L-O) 660-678-2045, easter.egg2380@gmail.com

Alan Miller (last name begins P-Z) 660-909-1764, alormiller@aol.com



Poinsettias



SueAnn Carter

In Memory of: Mike Carter (her husband)

Roy and Judy Schache

In Memory of: Schache and Loth Families

Cody Droege

In Memory of: Andy Droege (her husband)

Schumaker Family

In memory of: Ann Schumaker (James' mother)

Peggy Hoyer

In Memory of: Ruth and James Peterson (Peggy's mom and dad)

Jerry and Karon Harding

In memory of: Robert (Bob) and Florence Schnackenberg (Karon's parents)

Sue Cottrill

In Memory of: John (her husband), Laurence & Marie McMullin (parents)
Pete and Virginia Cottrill (in-laws), Irvin Lee Cottrill (brother-in-law)

Duane and Rebecca Limback

In Memory of: John and Esther Limback (Duane's parents)
Henry and Martha Ernstmeyer (Becky's parents)

Peggy Forstad

To the Glory of God for all His precious blessings.

Scott and Penny Humphrey

In memory of: Joanne and Stan Humphrey

Larry and Karen Haase

To the Glory of God for His blessings.

Dorothy Anderson

In Memory of: Loved Ones

Carol Kurz

In Honor of: Pastor Joel

Darlene Laubenstein

To the Glory of God

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: jkurz@blchurch.com

Website: www.blchurch.com Facebook: [blcwarrensburg](https://www.facebook.com/blcwarrensburg)

Office Manager

Cindy Smith

Monday–Friday: 8am–5pm

660-747-6742

csmith@blchurch.com

Congregation Life Facilitator

Rebecca Holland-VanWey

Wednesday: 1pm–5pm

Thursday: 1pm–5pm

rholland@blchurch.com

Bookkeeper

Teresa Hillsman

Tuesday: 9am–11am

Thursday: 9am–11am

thillsman@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.