

 WORSHIP

 GROW

 LIVE

 CARE

 SERVE

DECEMBER 13, 2020

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent



BETHLEHEM  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

WEEKLY  
*star*

 Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

We are currently in the midst of the worst global pandemic in the last 100 years, with deaths in the U.S. rapidly approaching a mind-boggling 300,000! Medical experts tell us that the coming winter will be a long and dark one, as those numbers continue to rise. It is impossible to ignore the devastation of COVID19.

Efforts to prevent the spread have affected people's jobs and where they work, the way kids play and go to school, and the ability to gather in person with family and friends. These measures have also changed how people shop, worship, exercise, eat, seek entertainment, and celebrate holidays and special events.

It is natural to mourn all we have lost: human touch; face-to-face interactions with family, friends, and colleagues; our daily routine; jobs; financial and economic stability; sense of safety, predictability, control, freedom, and security. The pandemic has unraveled our lives in ways we thought unimaginable just a year ago.

In the midst of all of this darkness where do we see the light of Christ? We see it in the physically and emotionally exhausted medical community who continue to work incredibly long hours under challenging conditions to treat the ill and to comfort the dying with quiet words and gentle touch so they do not die alone; their stories bring us to tears. In the dedication of teachers as they learn new technology to reach and stimulate students through distance learning. In those who check in on family, friends, and neighbors, especially the elderly. In the faithful leadership of pastors who must rethink how to provide worship opportunities and points of connection for congregations unable to gather in person. In those who shop and run errands for parents and grandparents. In grocery workers, first responders, childcare providers, electricians and plumbers, maintenance and transportation workers, and all those who supply the goods and services on which we depend.

The following quote from Mike Slaughter in his book *Christmas Is Not Your Birthday* is especially timely. "Even in the midst of the unexpected, the messy, and the devastating, you can still fully expect God to show up. No matter what you are struggling to overcome, God promises to show up. This is truly what Christmas is about: in the midst of all our messes – poverty, genocide, environmental disasters, wars, terrorism, religious hate and bigotry, divorce, illness, and yes, even death – God shows up to bring you peace, purpose, joy, hope, and wholeness."

~ Sherry Cook

**WORSHIP TIME:**

**SUNDAYS ~ 8:30 AM WORSHIP  
(FACEBOOK LIVE)**

**Are you Ready for Worship?** There are now three ways to participate in our Livestream of Sunday worship.

1. [Facebook Live](#) - We encourage you to start your own watch party!
2. [Watch On YouTube](#) – Subscribe to our channel
3. [Livestream on the website](#)

## **Worship the Living God**

**Lessons for Sunday: 12/13:** Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11;

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

*John the Baptist points the way. Watching for the light means testifying to the Light of Christ.*

**Lessons for Sunday: 12/20:** 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 26-38

*Nothing will be impossible with God! Watching for the light means living with hopeful expectation for God's promise to be fulfilled.*

★ Don't forget to look for this **Star Icon** (★) to easily identify the newest information each week

**Watch for the Light** this Advent. We invite you to participate in our weekly livestream from your home and light Advent candles, sing carols, and listen to familiar stories that help us prepare for the birth of Christ, who brings hope and promise, even when we are separated (details about our livestream worship are listed below). Visit our website <https://blcfairport.org/advent-2020/> to follow a daily pattern of readings and prayer to mark each day of this Advent Season as we prepare for the birth for Christ.

You can always find links to participate in Livestream worship on our website at [Share In Worship](#) along with a link to the bulletin (Order of Worship) and the Zoom logins (for Sunday morning gatherings that follow worship). We also send an email each Saturday with all the details to get you ready for worship! Please contact the church office at [office@blcfairport.org](mailto:office@blcfairport.org) if you are not receiving these emails and would like to be added to the distribution!

★ **Advent Coffee Conversations with the BLC Community! (a.k.a. Coffee with a Pastor) ... 11 am on 12/13 (note the later start time!)...** During the Sundays of Advent, share a (virtual) cup of coffee via Zoom at 11 am with our pastors! Join through our [Calendar of Events](#) (or [Join](#) via Zoom - ID 823 7018 2058) Listen in as Pastor Hoffman interviews a member of the BLC community each week about where and how they are watching for the light in their professional and personal lives – as healthcare workers, teachers, caregivers and followers of Jesus. This week features Jim and Shannon Oliverio, who are part of the BLC family along with their children, Sydney and Grady. Jim and Shannon are both nurse practitioners, who work in hospital and elder care settings. These Zoom conversations will leave opportunity for additional conversation with all who attend.

★ **Christmas Eve – December 24** - Celebrate Christ's birth in your home this year! Set up your nativity scene; gather around the Christmas tree; light the candles on your Advent log or wreath and share in worship with the Bethlehem community. Worship will include a children's moment (with a special guest from the North Pole!), God's Word through Lessons and Carols, and a time for lighting candles and singing Silent Night. Worship will be posted on our website to watch any time after 4 pm on Christmas Eve. If you'd like to share in worship at the same time as your BLC community, our church FB page will host a "watch party" that starts at 7:30 pm. Be ready for worship by providing one candle for each member of your household. There will be a time to light them during the service.

## **Grow in Faith and Discipleship**

★ **Share in BLC's upcoming Crucial Conversation** on Sunday mornings beginning January 10 at 9:45 am on Zoom

- **Who:** Co-Lead by Pastor Amy and Pastor Hoffman
- **When:** Sunday mornings, January 10, 17, 24 and 31 at 9:45 am
- **Where:** Zoom event
- **What:** We'll study the ELCA's Social Statement *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*

Adopted in 1993 by the Churchwide Assembly, this social statement is available to read and download at <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Race-Ethnicity-and-Culture>. Paper copies are available by contacting the church office.

**Why:** Living our faith in daily life means that we spend time wrestling with big issues in an environment of fellow disciples who hold a diversity of viewpoints, opinions, perspectives and experiences. In this environment we'll learn and study together grounded in the unity that comes from faith in Christ. *Share in this important, faith-centered conversation. Come for all four sessions or whenever you're available.*

**Faith Formation for Pre-school through High School!** All ages: Weekly - we will post the children's moment (the same one that is shared in worship on Sunday), and additional ways to engage <https://blcfairport.org/faith5-at-home/>

*As always, please contact the church office, Marcy Adams, Bethany Trippi or Pastor Amy if you are looking for additional support around your faith formation in the home. You can use the 'Join event now' button in the listing on our [Calendar of Events](#) or find login details on the calendar at the end of the STAR!*

- Zoom\* Pre-K to 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Monthly Meet-up: Join Patty Chaffee and Rachael Parlett on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month (the next one is Sunday, **December 13 – this week!**) - on as we offer a time of connection through stories, music and conversation to kids and families (ages pre-K through 2nd grade)
- Zoom\* 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Monthly Meet-up: Join Marcy Adams & Sue Cardinal on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month (the next one is Sunday, December 20) as we offer a time of connection through stories, music and conversation to kids and families (grades 3-5)
- Confirmation (grades 6-8): Weekly - Mondays at 7 pm via Zoom. Please contact Pastor Amy if you have questions about your child's involvement.
- LYO (grades 9-12): Weekly - Sundays at 7:30 pm via Zoom. If you have any questions, please contact [Bethany Trippi](#)

★ **Midweek Bible Study:** Looking for a short-term study? Join us as we look at the scripture readings for Advent in December. We continue to meet virtually. Please consider joining us in our Zoom conversations - Wednesdays at 9:30 am. Please join us! Questions - contact [Kathy Moragne](mailto:Kathy.Moragne@rochester.rr.com).



## Live Our Faith in Daily Life

★ **Knitters and Crocheters:** We are going to continue to collect and distribute knitted and crocheted hats to donate. Feel free to leave them in the bins in the narthex or contact Cathy Gottermeier at 429-0782 (call or text) or [cgotterm@rochester.rr.com](mailto:cgotterm@rochester.rr.com) and I will be happy to pick them up from you. I also have yarn available if needed. Thank you in advance for supporting this mission!

★ Our theme, **Watch for the Light**, struck me when I read an article about the Star of Bethlehem. Did you know that the Star of Bethlehem will be visible in the sky this year around Christmastime? Yes, you heard me right. The Star of Bethlehem ... the same one that the Magi followed to see Jesus. Mark your calendar. The Christmas Star will appear shortly after dusk on December 21<sup>st</sup>. This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. In fact the last time this occurred was back in the Middle Ages, in the year 1228, nearly 800 years ago. The Star of Bethlehem is actually two planets, Jupiter and Saturn, whose orbits will be lined up so they look like a huge bright star in the sky. It's interesting in the bible story, the Magi followed the star. But how could they "follow" a star? We know that stars are bright but they don't move... Astronomers say that the Star of Bethlehem was not a star at all, but planets. From our vantage point here on earth they looked like a single bright star in the sky when their orbits line up as they did when Jesus was born. Check it out. **Watch for the Light** on December 21<sup>st</sup>.

Look in the southwestern sky, just above the horizon and you might see the Star of Bethlehem that led the Wise Men to Jesus.

~ Paulette Costanza



## Care for One Another

### ★ NOTES OF THANKS:

★ *Thank you for your thoughtful kindness at a time when it was greatly appreciated! To the BLC community and the Barnabas Group - Thank you for your prayers during this difficult time. The gift of goodies were very helpful and appreciated. Thank you, Christin, Tom, Zoe & Jenna Greenwood*

★ *To BLC, Thanks for the many prayers, cards and good wishes. Erich and I hope everyone is well and coping with this abnormal situation. Affectionately, Connie Helbig*

*I am so grateful to all of you for your help in navigating the last twelve weeks, beginning with recovery from shoulder replacement surgery, but also including two weeks of quarantine for COVID-19!! First, to all of you for all of your prayers! Where would any of us be without those!! Then to all of you who sent cards, emails, and text messages; and those who called to check that I was managing well. I am truly blessed to have been a part of the BLC church family. (I do miss you all!) Many, many thanks - and God Bless! Mary Osgood*

**We Pray for Each Other** – Each Sunday in worship we give thanks and offer prayers for those in our community whose celebrations or needs are known to us. Requests for prayers are shared in our monthly prayer listing as well, with updates available the first Sunday of each month. If you have a prayer request for yourself, a family member, or friend, you can easily submit them digitally via the "pew card" at <https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/>. Alternately they can be shared by contacting the church office or a pastor.



## Serve Our Neighbor

**M&SC** stands for the Mission and Social Concerns Committee. M&SC Committee members: Cathy Gottermeier, Pat Kurtz, Julie Owen, Carolyn Straub, Beth and Rick Walker, Pastor Amy Walter-Peterson, and Desiree Wolfe. **Visitors are always welcome at meetings to ask questions or provide suggestions.** The next M&SC meeting is **January 13, 2021**, at 6 pm via Zoom. If you would like to attend but are not part of the committee, please contact Beth Walker at [rbowsend@rochester.rr.com](mailto:rbowsend@rochester.rr.com) for the zoom link.

**The mission focus for December is Building Capacity** – The work of calling out and dismantling of unfair systems in our midst is not the work of the disenfranchised, it is the personal and collective work of the dominant culture and those who have power. This understanding gives us information on what to do next.

As Christians strive to understand inequity, an examination of our world view and society is a first step.

- Who is or is not represented in places of power?

- (Why is a female, person of color as Vice President so unusual?)
- Who is or is not represented in the positive and negative history of the culture?  
(What were we taught in school about the Trail of Tears, the Tulsa Greenwood Massacre, women and/or people of color scientists, mathematicians, or engineers?)

Some definitions to help you think about those questions:

**BIPOC** – Black, Indigenous, People of Color

**Gender** – the cultural or self-selected identification of a person along a spectrum of male or female characteristics

**LGBTQ** – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Queer (or questioning)

**Disability** – Any condition which makes it more difficult for a person to engage or interact with the world around them

**Alternate giving opportunity!** In lieu of poinsettias in 2020, we encourage people who wish to memorialize, or honor loved ones to do so through a gift to our alternative giving opportunity this Christmas season, which will support Heritage Christian Services. HCS works to make sure everyone - including children, older adults and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities - feels valued and honored. To make a gift write: HCS in the memo line of a check or select Other Designated Giving on Tithe.ly and write HCS in the Note/Memo section. To share your gift dedication please [fill out this form](#) or contact the church office directly. *Dedications must be received by Sunday, December 20, 2020 to be included in order to be included in the Christmas Eve order for worship.*

★ **Angel Tree** – We will be supporting local families again this year with our Angel Tree Project. The tree is in the church narthex, in front of the library. Please take a tag off the tree or call the church office and they will get you a tag. After purchasing the gift, please wrap it, and affix the angel tag on the outside of the wrapped package. Gifts may be returned to the boxes behind the tree in the narthex. We will have a "no contact" drive thru gift drop off on Saturday, December 12th from 10am to noon. You may drive up to the entrance near the board of education lot (like we did for Advent bag pickup) and someone will take the gift out of your vehicle. ***The last day to drop off the gifts is Saturday, 12/19***, as the gifts will be delivered on Sunday morning, 12/20. Thank you for your support!

## Council News

★ **Congregational letter** - Watch your mail for a congregation letter that was sent this week.

## Community News

If you are seeking a way to mark these weeks of Advent waiting and preparation, this opportunity might just be for you.

***Walking Together Through Advent*** – Wednesdays, December 16, 23 from 7:00-8:15PM

The word “synod” literally means “walking together” This course is a way for us to join siblings from all the communities of the synod in walking toward Christmas. You may want to intentionally invite a friend or family member who lives far way to join with you in this Advent faith practice as an opportunity to be together while being apart.

Each week we will watch short a film together (3-7 minutes long). The films series we will use is called “Birthing God’s Movement of Grace” produced by The Work of the People. Then we will have small group conversation about what we learn and notice. Finally, we will share in a time of contemplative prayer practice. **SIGN UP HERE:**  
<https://forms.gle/rWdrdPdGNwNkz1Qu8>

Once registered you will be sent the Zoom link for the retreat along with the other necessary information from the leader. There is no cost to participate. Questions? contact Pastor Lori Kochanski ([lkochanski@upstatenysynod.org](mailto:lkochanski@upstatenysynod.org))  
**More about the focus of each session:** December 16 “The God that is Coming” with Kelly Brown Douglas; December 23 “Upsetting the Pyramid” with Diana Butler Bass

## **We Ask Your Prayers:**

*We pray for those whose thanks or needs are known to us.*

*We pray for those who are grieving, especially the family and friends of:*

- Ken Strecker (stepfather of John Perry) who died on 12/9. Prayers are especially with Mary Strecker (John's mother).
- Verlyn Strenge (father-in-law of Mike Higgins' cousin Brandon) who died on 12/6 following a car accident.
- Sue Murphy (friend of Hans & Pr. Amy Walter-Peterson) who died on 12/4. Our prayers are especially with her husband, Jeff, and their three teenage boys, Ronan, Sam and Jude
- Alva Schumacher (mother of Dale Schumacher) who died on 12/1 after 105 years of life

*We pray for those in need of healing, especially:*

- Danielle Betts as she prepares for surgery on 12/18
- Mary Strenge (mother-in-law of Mike Higgins' cousin Brandon) recovering from injuries sustained in a car accident that she was in with her husband, Verlyn Strenge, on 11/10
- Maria Turco (friend of Neil Vokes) who is experiencing a recurrence of cancer
- Dick Johnson (brother of Sherry Cook) undergoing treatment for stage 4 melanoma
- Matthew Conover (son of Mary Osgood's friend Helen) who has suffered multiple health challenges, and also Matthew's sons, who are currently being cared for by Helen
- Jerry Stock (brother of Bob Stock) who was hospitalized and released and awaits gall bladder surgery
- Lisa Bandel (friend of Pr. Amy Walter-Peterson) who has been diagnosed with breast cancer and began treatment
- Jack Slaybaugh (brother-in-law of Bill Antell), hospitalized with a severe leg infection.
- Jim Peterson (father of Hans Walter-Peterson), who resumes chemotherapy following a re-assessment of recent test results.
- Those impacted by fires, hurricanes and other disasters
- Those who are involved with the ongoing work of caregiving for loved ones
- Those who are infected with or recovering from Coronavirus, and their caregivers
  - Bob, father of Sherry & Jim Cook's son-in-law
  - Jean, mother of Rick
  - Noel, brother of Rick

We also fulfill our commitment to pray for one another by remembering these members & friends of Bethlehem and their families Cheryl Newton (Seth & Vanessa), Mike Newton, Cameron & Brook Nichols (Quinn & Luke), Bob & Chrissy Null, Jim & Shannon Oliverio (Sydney & Grady) and our brothers and sisters in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. Additional ongoing prayer concerns can be found in the monthly prayer listing.

[Click here to view and print the December long-term prayer listing](#) – or contact the church office for a copy!

## Calendar for week of December 13 – December 20

(Updated on 12/9/20 at 12 noon, visit <https://blcfairport.org/event-directory/> for updates)

### Sunday, December 13

#### **Third Sunday in Advent**

8:30 am Facebook

Livestream

Worship

10:00 am Zoom\* Pre-K to 2<sup>nd</sup>

Grade Monthly Meet-Up

([Join](#) or use ID 853 8991 1172)

11:00 am Zoom\* Coffee with a

Pastor and Jim & Shannon

Oliverio

([Join](#) or use ID 823 7018 2058)

7:30 pm Zoom\* LYO

([Join](#) or use ID 818 2417 6546)

### Monday, December 14

6:00 pm Virtual Youth Choir

([Join](#) or use ID 816 9461 2911)

6:30 pm BSA Troop 208

7:00 pm Zoom\* GFL

Confirmation

([Join](#) or use ID 859 4816 8778)

### Tuesday, December 15

4:30 pm Zoom\* Education

Planning Meeting

6:30 pm BSA Troop 2019

### Wednesday, December 16

9:30 am Zoom\* Bible Study

([Join](#) or use ID 943 3691 2942)

1:00 pm Zoom\* Men's Lunch

([Join](#) or use ID 874 8853 3240)

6:30 pm Chancel Bells

7:30 pm Zoom\* Chancel Choir

Rehearsal

([Join](#) or use ID 869 2314 9200)

### Thursday, December 17

6:30 pm Zoom\* Church Council

### Friday, December 18

#### **Pastor's Sabbath**

10:00 am Folk Group Rehearsal

3:00 pm Dulcimer Group

Rehearsal

### Saturday, December 19

*No Brunch Bunch this week*

### Sunday, December 20

#### **Fourth Sunday in Advent**

8:30 am Facebook

Livestream

Worship

10:00 am Zoom\* 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>

Grade Monthly Meet-Up

([Join](#) or use ID 890 1964 4442)

11:00 am Zoom\* Coffee with a

Pastor and Pam Heiple

([Join](#) or use ID 823 7018 2058)

7:30 pm Zoom\* LYO

([Join](#) or use ID 818 2417 6546)

**For additional details** about any of the meetings, events and activities listed above contact the church office!

**Church Office Hours:** We continue to hold remote office hours M-F from 9 am to 12 noon. During these times, please call (585) 223-0634 to reach us directly, otherwise you may continue to email us at [office@blcfairport.org](mailto:office@blcfairport.org) and we'll respond as we're able. For further assistance or urgent pastoral care needs outside of office hours, please call the office and leave a message on the pastoral care line. Pastor Amy remains available by phone and email at other times.

**\*To join any of our BLC Zoom meetings, use the ID provided or contact the church office and/or group organizer.**

**\*Zoom Options:** For recurring meetings, the info will remain the same each time. Participants can join with the link provided (above where applicable, or via email), or by using the Meeting ID and manually enter the password (the 10-digit BLC phone number with area code, no spaces or hyphens). **Please contact the group leader or the church office for assistance or additional details! If you have trouble accessing a Zoom meeting in real-time, you can call or text (585) 364-2129 for assistance.**

**Announcements for the STAR** should be submitted through the office by Wednesday morning at 9am. Visit [www.blcfairport.org](http://www.blcfairport.org) and to sign up for reminders and special announcements (including the STAR!)



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