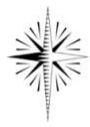




Sunday, November 7, 2021
All Saints Sunday



BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585)

223-0634 ~ www.blcfairport.org

The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

Welcome!

We are so glad to have you share in worship at Bethlehem today. If you are visiting, please introduce yourself to one of the pastors – they would love to greet you personally! At this time, we ask all worshipers to wear masks in worship.

Today's service will be recorded and live-streamed. Our camera operators take care to focus on worship leaders and don't regularly film worshipers. In the movement of the service, glimpses of people may occur. Please speak with a pastor if you have concerns.

Communicate with us: Share more about who you are, request further information, or leave a prayer request or comment through our website - <https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/> - scroll down the page to request or share information.

Children are welcome and encouraged to participate in worship. We have designated space within the sanctuary (underneath the window of Jesus, the Good Shepherd) that is reserved for families who may need additional space for strollers or carriers for children who cannot yet wear masks. If there is a way we can make worship a more hospitable environment for your family, please speak to a pastor or leave a comment through our website (see above).

Hearing assistance: Our sound system is equipped with personal hearing loop devices. Please ask an usher for a loop device.

Holy Communion: All are welcome to share in Christ's meal of forgiveness and grace. Children who do not yet commune are welcome to come forward for a blessing. (If you feel your child is ready to receive or have additional questions, please speak with one of our pastors.) Please see additional notes about the Sacrament in the service portion of the bulletin.

Our Perrin Street entrance is accessible. Please ask an usher or greeter for help if you need assistance operating the lift.

Please silence your cell phones: As a courtesy to others, we ask that you please silence your cell phones during worship.

Today's Worship Team

We all contribute to worship: lifting our voice in prayer and song, bowing our heads in prayer, opening our ears to hear the Word, and extending our hands to receive the Sacrament. Are you willing to serve in one of these additional roles to contribute to worship this week? Put your name on the sign-up in the narthex and grab the corresponding bulletin so we know the role is filled by you!

Acolyte: *Lights the altar candles during the prelude and extinguishes altar candles during the final hymn, bringing the light of Christ out into the world! May robe and sit on the chancel or sit within the congregation during worship. All ages who can safely handle fire and reach the candles are welcome to serve!*

Glass Washer: *Washes communion glasses either immediately following worship or after Faith Formation for All. Instructions are posted in the sacristy. Many hands make light work so grab a friend to help! (This is also a great opportunity for a household to serve together!)*

Offering: *Sit in the congregation and bring the offering trays from the entrance of the sanctuary forward to the altar during the offertory, giving our congregation's gifts to the glory of God! Pair up with a child if you'd like, so they can have a hands-on role in worship!*

Communion Assistants (2): *Sit in the congregation and come forward at the time of communion (when the congregation begins to sing "Lamb of God") to serve the wine/grape juice for communion. Must be able to hold a tray steady and speak the words, "Blood of Christ shed for you!"*

Intercessory Prayer Readers (3): *From your seat, speak the highlighted petition as part of the intercessory prayers on behalf of the congregation.*

Thank you also to those serving as Assisting Minister, leading the Children's Sermon, providing Special Music, and serving on Altar Guild, Bread Guild, Wine Guild, Hospitality Team (Usher, Greeter and Fellowship Hosts) and Livestream Team! For more information about any of these roles or to sign up to serve, please contact Beth in the church office or one of the Pastors.

Thank you for your participation and your overflowing grace and encouragement to one another as we work together to bring worship to life each week!

Sunday, November 7, 2021 ~ All Saints Sunday

Prelude:

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (from Cantata BWV 147)

J.S. Bach

Of all three years of the lectionary cycle, this year's All Saints readings have the most tears. Isaiah and Revelation look forward to the day when God will wipe away all tears; in John's gospel, Jesus weeps along with Mary and all the gathered mourners before he demonstrates his power over death. On All Saints Day we celebrate the victory won for all the faithful dead, but we grieve for our beloved dead as well, knowing that God honors our tears. We bring our grief to the table and find there a foretaste of Isaiah's feast to come.

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Confession and Forgiveness:

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Have mercy on us, O God.

We confess that we have sinned against you and against our neighbor. We have built walls instead of tables and have turned away the stranger. We have sought glory for ourselves and have treasured that which does not satisfy. Help us to love as you love, to welcome those you send, and to treasure mercy and justice. Turn us from our ways to your ways, and free us to serve those in need. Amen.

God, who makes all things new, forgives your sins for ✠ Jesus' sake and remembers them no more. Lift up your heads and your hearts. Yours is the kingdom of God.

Amen.

Gathering Hymn:

For All the Saints

ELW #422 stanzas 1, 2, 3 & 7

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.

Hymn of Praise:



Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.



Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,



we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



Let us pray. Almighty God, you have knit your people together in one communion in the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in lives of faith and commitment, and to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

Reading: Revelation 21:1-6a

Here is a vision of the new heaven and new earth in which God resides fully with God's people so that mourning, despair, and pain have been eradicated. These renewing words from the God who spans all of time are trustworthy and true.

¹I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

⁴he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

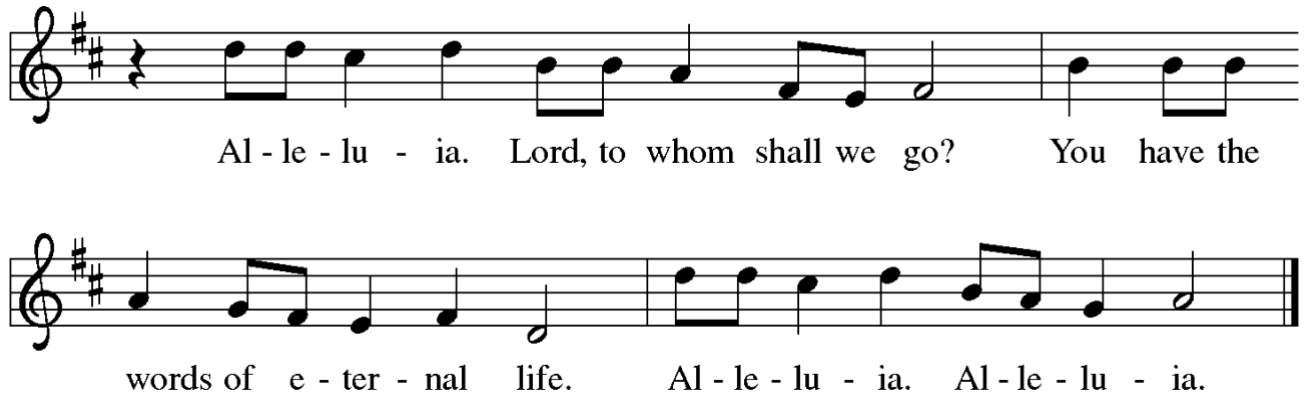
for the first things have passed away.”

⁵And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ^{6a}Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation:



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

Gospel: John 11:32-44

Through the raising of Lazarus, Jesus offers the world a vision of the life to come, when death and weeping will be no more.

³²When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵Jesus began to weep. ³⁶So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

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

Sermon

For all the saints . . .

Today, we give thanks to God for all those who have died in Christ. We thank God for all the ways that they have shared God's love with us and passed along the faith to us. This morning, you are invited to light a candle (please remember to light the candles back to front) to remember a saint in your life and give thanks for the light of Christ that was revealed through them. Dip the match down into the glass to light the candle. If you need help, a hospitality team member will assist you. As we worship, we remember that we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, and that through baptism, we are forever a part of God's family and one another's lives.

Hymns and Music for The Candle Lighting:

O Lord, Hear My Prayer (sing 5 times) ELW #751

“Meditation” by Frank Bridge

Cellist: Julia Finkbeiner

My Life Flows On in Endless Song ELW #763

Apostles' Creed:

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

The Prayers of the People:

Our prayers are always offered on behalf of the whole community; our prayers in this service are offered from among the congregation (voices #1-3).

Eternal God, you hold firm amid the changes of this world. Hear us now as we pray for the church, the world, and everyone in need.

A brief silence.

#1 Bring peace to those nations in conflict and where there is political instability. Protect those who are poor and hungry and give them hope. Move those with plenty, to share with those who have little. Help all people to love their neighbors as themselves. Hear us O God.

Your mercy is great.

#2 Thank you for the saints who helped us on our journey through life, and taught us what faith is by their words and actions, their strengths and weaknesses, their perseverance. Hear us O God.

Your mercy is great.

#3 God, you have laid out the Way I am to follow.

You have written the words I need to read to understand how to live, how to love, how to walk your path on this Earth.

How do I become your follower like those that are called "Saints"?

Help me to recognize when doubt prevents me from hearing your voice.

Help me to show your love and not just speak it.

Help me to forgive even when wrong is done against me.

Help me to be joyful and see Your Son in others eyes.

Hear us O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks that you see us and know our needs. Today we pray for these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: James & Kathy, Jason & Sarah (Logan & Quinn), Bryan & Lynn (Calvin & Emma), Frank & Gabriele, Gerald. We also pray for our sisters and brothers in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. Hear us O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of compassion, you know our needs better than we ourselves. Hear the prayers that we offer you now.

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

- Jim (father of Hans) who died on 10/29

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Rick as he anticipates cardiac surgery on 11/8
- Jerry who has been diagnosed with acute Leukemia and remains hospitalized at RGH
- Cori (daughter of Tom & Marcy) as she recovers from surgery on 10/26
- Waverly (friend of Bob & Phyllis) who is recovering from gall bladder surgery on 10/20
- 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

Hear also these prayers we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice. Hear us O God.

Your mercy is great.

God our hope and strength, we entrust to you all for whom we pray. Remain with us always, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

WE SHARE GOD'S MEAL:

The Peace:

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Greet those with whom you worship physically with a sign of peace. At home, extend the peace of Christ through the comments section or text to those who are at a distance.

Offering

Our worship is complete when we bring all of our resources to receive God's blessing and fulfill God's purpose. We celebrate the opportunity to share our abundance – of compassion, of time, and of material resources.



If you would like to make a one-time gift electronically, scan the QR (quick response) code on the right and you'll be brought to BLC's mobile giving page. For recurring gifts, download the Tithe.ly app. Checks may also be mailed to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450. Those worshipping in person may leave their offerings in the basket in the narthex.

Whatever form your offering takes, we give thanks to God for you and your generosity.

Offering of Music: Come, Come, Ye Saints
Words: William Clayton Music: English Folk Song, arranged by John Purifoy
Chancel Choir (Director, Jim Jefferis)

Offertory:

Musical notation for the Offertory song, consisting of five staves of music in treble clef. The melody is written on a single line for each staff. The lyrics are written below the notes.

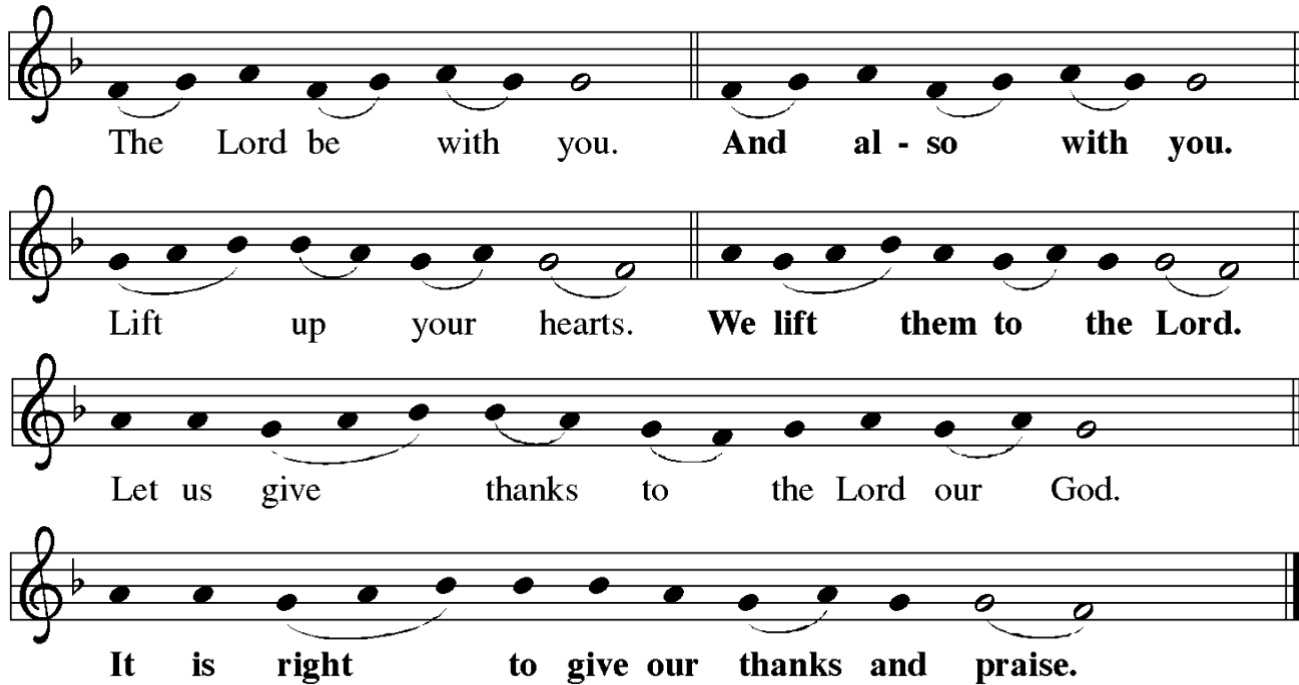
Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

Offertory Prayer:

Let us pray. Holy God,

the earth is yours and everything in it, yet you have chosen to dwell among your creatures. Come among us now in these gifts of bread and wine, and strengthen us to be your body for the world through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving:



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

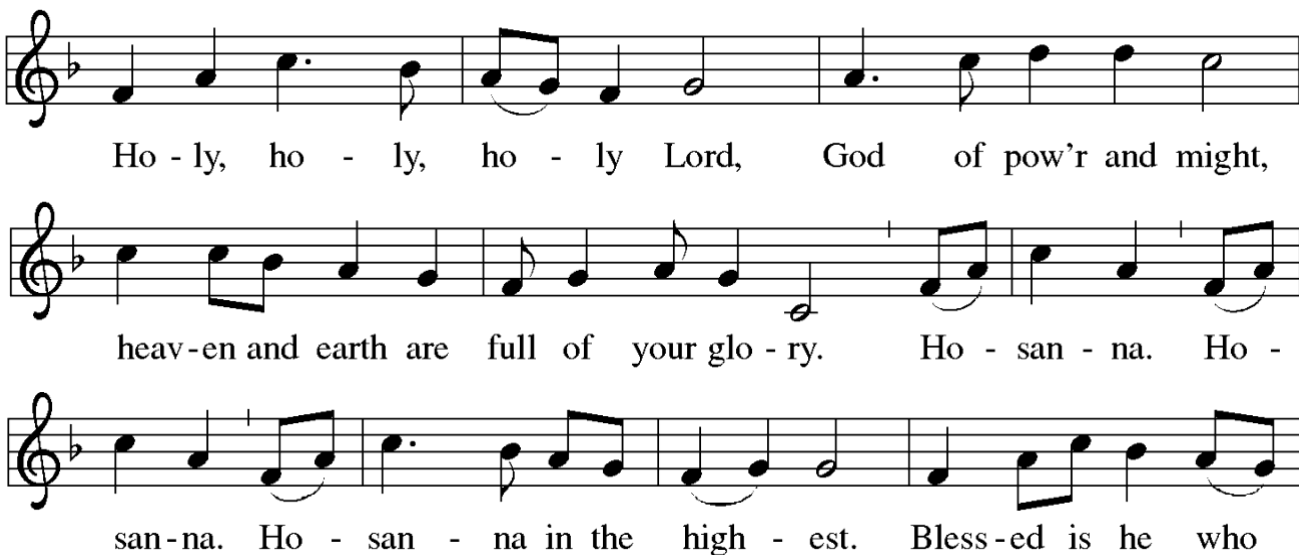
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The musical notation is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, using half notes and quarter notes with slurs. The lyrics are printed below the notes.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Sanctus:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,

heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -

san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who

The musical notation is written on three staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is more rhythmic than the previous section, featuring eighth and sixteenth notes. The lyrics are printed below the notes.



comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

Words of Institution:

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer:

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those who
 sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial
 and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours,
 now and forever. Amen

Invitation to Communion:

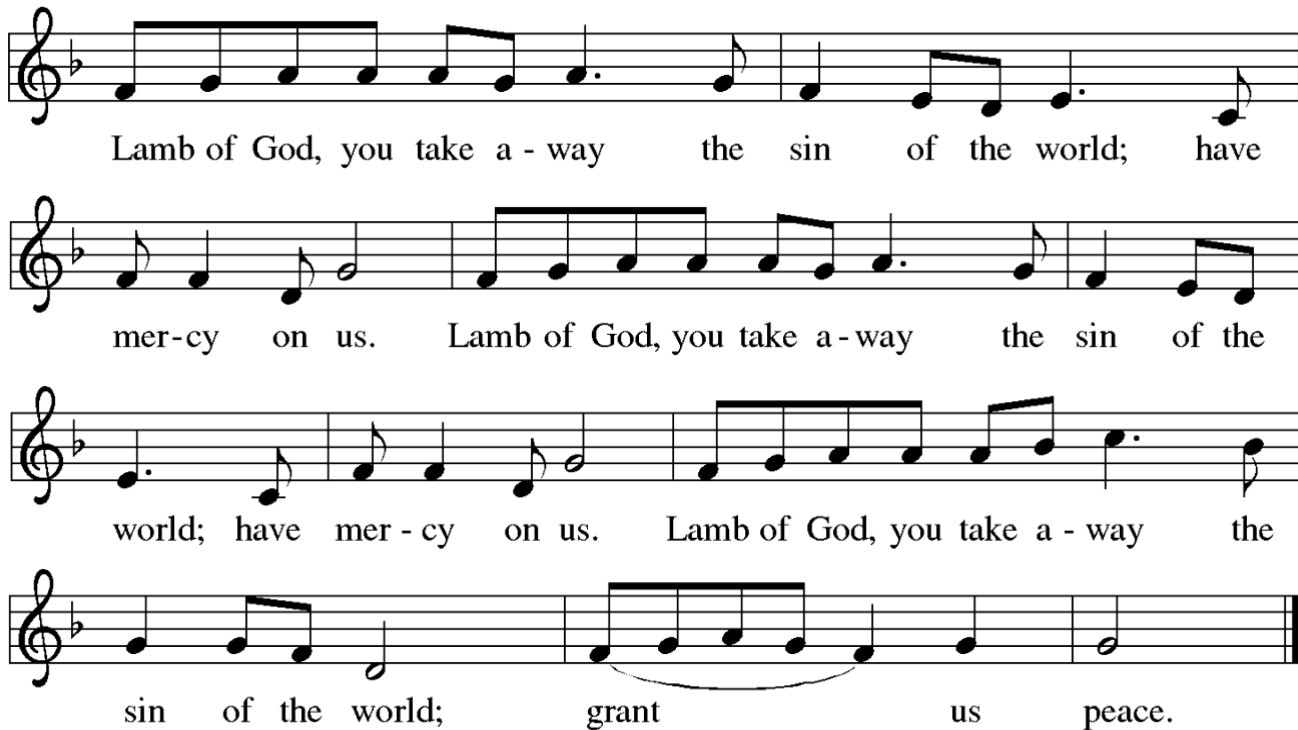
All who hunger and thirst, come. The table is ready.

Thanks be to God!

Distribution of Communion:

Please come forward at the direction of the worship leaders. All are welcome to share in Christ's meal of forgiveness and grace. Children who do not yet commune are welcome to come forward for a blessing. (If you feel your child is ready to receive or have additional questions, please contact one of the Pastors.) Gluten-free wafers and grape juice are available; please indicate your need to the pastor or communion assistant. You may lower your mask as you receive communion. If you worship through the Livestream and wish to receive communion, please reach out to one of the pastors.

The Communion:



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

Hymns sung during communion:

Shall We Gather at the River

ELW #423

Give Thanks for Saints

ELW #428

Table Blessing:

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in God's grace.

Amen

Post-Communion Prayer:

Blessed Jesus, at this table, you have been for us both host and meal. Now send us forth to extend our tables and to share your gifts until that day when all feast together at your heavenly banquet.

Amen

WE LEAVE TO SERVE:

Benediction:

People of God, you are Christ's body, bringing new life to a suffering world. The holy Trinity, ☩ one God, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Sending Hymn:

Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones

ELW #424

Dismissal:

Go in peace. The living Word dwells in you.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude:

Rejoice in the Lord

James Mansfield

Thank you *to all those who participated in worship this Sunday! If you would like to learn more about participating in a worship role, please speak to one of the co-pastors or contact the church office!*

Portions of the liturgy adapted from prayers by Rev. Sarah Are, A Sanctified Art LLC, sanctifiedart.org
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Happening today (11/7):

- 8:55 am Worship with weekly communion! (Livestream or In-person!)
- 10:00 am Fellowship (outside)
- 10:15 am Faith Formation for All!
 - Pre-K to 5th grade gathers in the Sunday School Wing
 - 6th-8th grade gathers in the Confirmation room
 - 9th-12th grade gathers in the LYO Room
 - Everyone else gathers in the Fellowship Hall!
- 10:55 am Final Blessing for Everyone (Fellowship Hall)
- 11:15 am Children's Choir (Choir Room)

*Sunday, November 7, 2021 ~ For all the Saints...
We give thanks and praise to God for their life and witness.
Specifically, we remember these family and friends of BLC members
who have died since All Saints' Day 2020.*

+ + +

John Adler (son of former BLC pastor Dallas Adler)

Gary Almeter (husband of Marilyn Almeter, a coworker of Mike Koncilja)

Betty Hobson Becker (mother of Juli Klie)

Rev. V. Theodore Benson (cousin of Sue Towsley)

Nancy Bornemann

Albert Boutross (former neighbor of George Feth)

Judy Buck (mother of Mary Osgood's friend)

Karen "Casey" Carlsen (daughter of Victor & Carol Carlsen)

Cathy (niece of Ruth Kurtz)

Steven Crane (close friend and mentor of Kathy Moragne)

Kathy Daugherty (distant cousin of George Feth)

Steve Donner

Willard Ekegren (father of Kay Slattery)

Joanne Goethals (mother of Vicki Beutel)

Ed Hahne (uncle of Ruth Hedin)

Hans Haible (father of Andy Gates' cousin Birgit)

Anne Heinonen (aunt of Marja Roney)

Doug Hemingway (father of Beth Schoenfeld)

Father George Heyman (priest of the parishes of Assumption and Resurrection)

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+ + +

Darrell Kilburn

Laura Kruspe (friend of Chris & Lisa Meetze)

Doris Kupchella (mother of Al Kupchella)

Dottie Langenstein (mother of Kathy Forney's brother-in-law, John Langenstein)

Gregory Lietz (brother of Jennifer Wideman)

Charles Levene (father of Terri Pries)

Cheryl Maggio (wife of Gerry, longtime friend of Bob Stolze)

Gloria Meixell (aunt of Ruth Gates)

Karen Miller (friend of Carol Schrader)

Marjorie Miller

Ronald Miller (brother of former BLC member Bob Miller)

Richard Milhouse (uncle of Bob Stock)

Sue Murphy (friend of Hans & Pr. Amy Walter-Peterson)

Mr. Nyathi (father of family Beth & Rick Walker stayed with in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe)

Carolyn Olsen

Bob Paoni (father of Sherry & Jim Cook's son-in-law)

Jim Peterson (father of Hans Walter-Peterson)

Susan Pobjoy (longtime friend of Ruth & Jeff Hedin)

Richie (friend of Chris Meetze)

Robert (friend of Bob & Julie Stolze's son, David)

Gerhard Schlueter (father of Gabriele (Frank) Nardozzi and Opa of Kristen (Jason) Pilcher and Ur-Opa of Kaitlynne)

Bryon Schmidt (family friend of David & Marsha Gerhardt)

Alva Schumacher (mother of Dale Schumacher)

John Schwamb (longtime friend of George Feth)

Helen Scott (sister of Pr. Richard Hembrock)

Kenneth Scott (brother-in-law of Pr. Richard Hembrock)

Chris Skinner (brother-in-law of Jim Jefferis)

Kevin Sleeman (brother of Alan Sleeman)

*Sunday, November 7, 2021 ~ For all the Saints...
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+ + +

Jack Slaybaugh (brother-in-law of Bill Antell)
Lynsay Smith (friend of Jackie Stivers)
Ken Strecker (stepfather of John Perry)
Bernice Stevens (mother of Kathy Moragne)
Verlyn Streng (father-in-law of Mike Higgins' cousin Brandon)
Thomas Totman (cousin of Toni Thompson)
Paul Turner (friend of Mary Osgood)
Walter Zagorski (father of Glen Zagorski)

We remember all those from BLC's Twinned Parish in Zimbabwe

Ms. Helen Msokomi

Mr. Stanford Mabhonga

and the residents of the Advent House who have died in the past year.

Calendar for November 7 – November 14

(Last updated on 11/3/21 at 12 noon, visit <https://blcfairport.org/event-directory/> for updates)

Sunday, 11/7

Daylight Savings

Time Ends

All Saints' Sunday

8:55 am Worship with
Communion (in-person
and livestream)
10:00 am Fellowship
10:15 am Faith
Formation for All

Monday, 11/8

1:00 pm Ruth Circle

Tuesday, 11/9

2:00 pm Support Group
for Caregivers
6:30 pm BSA Troop 2019
Meeting

Wednesday, 11/10

9:30 am Bible Study –
Hybrid (In-person or
[Join](#) via Zoom –
ID 943 3691 2942)
6:30 pm Mission &
Social Concerns
6:00 pm Chancel Bells
6:15 pm Folk Group
7:30 pm Chancel Choir

Thursday, 11/11

6:30 pm Girl Scout
Troop Meeting

Friday, 11/12

Pastor's Sabbath
2:30 pm Dulcimer Group
Rehearsal

Saturday, 11/13

9:15 am Property
Committee

Sunday, 11/14

100th Anniversary Sunday

8:55 am Worship with
Communion with
guests Pastor Greg
Brown and Catherine
Rodland, organist
(in-person and
livestream) with
reception following (in
Fellowship Hall)!
10:15 am Faith
Formation for pre-K
through LYO
12:30 pm 2nd Sunday
Dinner Ministry
(delivery only)

Church Office Hours: We continue to hold remote office hours M, W, Th & F from 9 am to 12 noon. Our co-Pastor's schedules vary from week to week. Both are available for scheduled appointments.

Zoom Meetings at BLC: The easiest way to join is to use the direct link available in the [Calendar of Events](#) on our website. If you don't see your meeting in the Calendar of Events or have questions, please contact your group leader or the church office for assistance or additional details!

In-Person Meetings at BLC: To help us schedule and plan for our increased facility use requests, we now require scheduling with this simple form (found at <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>) for each planned meeting, event and activity at BLC. Please complete the form so that we can check for availability, reserve the space, and plan accordingly. If you have any questions, or do not hear back within 3 business days of submitting a form, please call the church office to check on the status of your request.

Unbinding the Living

On All Saints Sunday we remember loved ones who have been laid in the tomb. We know the acute grief of Mary, Martha, and Jesus. We know the reality of death that lies so close. We know that at any moment the phone call could come with news we dread. We live forever in the shadow of death.

At the same time, we also know the little deaths that take place every day. We know the daily disappointments, the betrayal of a friend, a failure at work, a difficult and tumultuous marriage, the loneliness and pain of one longing for something more from life. Beyond that there are the near-constant reminders that much of this world is far from God's kingdom. How easy it is to look and see poverty and injustice, disease and despair all around. Like Lazarus, we are bound tightly in death's clothes: grief, disappointment, hopelessness.

Yet Jesus speaks the last word for us: "Unbind him, and let him go" (John 11:44). This promise is bursting with resurrecting life. This word is spoken by the one who became human and was put in a tomb, but broke through the pervasive stench of death. In the waters of the font, we hear our God speak this word to us. Lifting us out of the waters, God frees us from the binding rags of death and dresses us in the royal clothing of Christ. At the table, we feast with the God in whom we have waited, the God who swallows up death forever. The last word is not death, but life as a beloved child of God.

Clothed in the righteousness of Christ, God's people are called forth from the grave. Fellow saints rush forward to remove the rotting grave clothes. Together the people of God celebrate the hope and promise of resurrection, rising each new day to joyfully serve in the name of the one who is beyond death, Jesus our Savior.