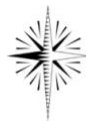


Sunday, November 28, 2021
First Sunday of Advent
"Homesick" ~ Hope



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!"*

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 28, 2021 ~ *First Sunday of Advent*
First Sunday of Advent
“Homesick” ~ Hope

Prelude:

Divinum Mysterium

13th century plainsong
setting by Dorothy Howell Sheets

As we begin Advent with the “Little Apocalypse” in Luke 21, we remember how far from home we are. The world is not as it should be. Many have lost their physical homes, many feel alone, and many are isolated. Many of us feel as if we are wandering with no clear way forward. This first week speaks to our deep longing—for our home to be made whole, made right, and made well. With deep longing, we watch for God. Thankfully, God enters a homesick world.

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Call to Worship:

Can one be homesick for something you’ve never known?

We are homesick for a just world, for peace like rivers, for the end of suffering.

Yes, we are homesick—

for joy that is contagious, for nations that feel like neighbors, and for hospitals that run empty.

We are homesick for the world God promises.

We are homesick, but we are on our way.

God is here. God is still creating.

Let us worship Holy God.

Gathering Hymn:	<i>O Come, O Come, Emmanuel</i> ELW #257 STs 1, 2, 3 & 4
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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.

We hope for a world where all are fed.
 We hope for a world with more bridges than walls.
 We hope for a world with wide open doors.
 We hope for a world with contagious laughter.
 We hope for a world where trees grow tall and creeks run clean.
 We hope for a world where all people feel at home—in their bodies, in the church,
 in their physical homes.
 We hope for that world.
 We long for that world.
 We are homesick for that world.
 So today we light the candle of hope, because hope keeps our hearts alive as we
 wait.
 May this light be a reminder that the wait is always worth it.
 We are close to home. May we carry hope with us. Amen.

Advent Hymn:

We Light the Advent Candles

Clara Parlett, soloist

(Sing 3 times: ST 1/ All ST 2/ Solo ST 1/ All)



1. We light the Ad-vent can - dles a - gainst the win - ter night,
 2. The first one will re - mind us that Christ will soon re - turn.



to wel - come our Lord Je - sus who is the world's True Light,
 We light it in the dark - ness and watch it gleam and burn,



to wel - come our Lord Je - sus who is the world's True Light.
 we light it in the dark - ness and watch it gleam and burn.

Text: Gracia Grindal

Music: German folk tune

Text © 1999 Hope Publishing Company

Let us pray. God of the stars and God of our hearts,
Our days will pass but your Word will last. The earth might fade but your Word will last. Our memories might blur but your Word will last. The grass will wither but your Word will last. The sky could go dark and your Word would last. So as we listen today, help us hold onto what will last. Help us hold onto you. Through Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Upon Timothy's report from the congregation at Thessalonica, Paul is exuberant with gratitude for them. In this passage from his letter, Paul voices overflowing thanks, joy, and blessings for the people of this growing church.

⁹How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? ¹⁰Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

¹¹Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. ¹²And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. ¹³And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Special Music:

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

arranged by Lloyd Larson

Katherine Jefferis & Anna Jefferis, vocalists; Jim Jefferis, piano

The gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Luke 21:25-36

God will fulfill God's purposes and, already, hidden signs of that fulfillment abound. On that great day there will be dismay, perplexity, confusion, and terror, but God's people shall be given strength to stand boldly and receive God's promised redemption.

[Jesus said:] ²⁵“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. ²⁶People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the

world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. ²⁸Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

²⁹Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; ³⁰as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. ³¹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³²Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. ³³Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³⁴“Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, ³⁵like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”
The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day:

Home Is Home, However Lowly

set to the tune of *NETTLETON*

*1. Home is home, however lowly,
Home is sweet when love is there,
Home is home when hearts are holy,
Earth has ne'er a spot so fair.
Jesus makes our home a heaven,
Sacred in the fireside warm;
After battling through the long day,
Home's a shelter from the storm.*

*2. To a little home in Bethany
Jesus loved to wend his way;
Tender hearts were waiting for him
In the evening of the day.
Jesus there dispelled the sadness,
There the humble meal he blessed;
There they worshipped him with gladness;
There his sacred form would rest.*

3. *Let us make our home the threshold
Of the city bright and fair,
Each the other's joy possessing,
Each the other's burden share.
In the storm of deep affliction
Let us seek the heavenly balm,
In life's tempest just remember
Prayer will make the storm a calm.*

Text: Arthur Smith Arnott
The Song Book of the Salvation Army, 1986

The Prayers of the People:

*Our prayers are always offered on behalf of the whole community.
Where indicated the congregation will respond:*

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

Text: Taizé Community
Music: WAIT FOR THE LORD, Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994
Text and music © 1984 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent, 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638.
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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.

God of the weary and waiting, Scripture tells us that where two or more are gathered, you are there. So we trust that you are here – listening to these words, drawing us close, stirring hope awake in us. And for that we are grateful. We are so grateful.

Today, Holy God, we feel close to home, close to you when
the choir sings,
when the candles are lit,
when we enter this space and someone knows our name.
We feel close to home when our children are curious,
when we find moments of true connection,
when we are brave enough to be who you call us to be.

Thank you for these glimpses of home, even as we long to be at home always with you. We wait for you, Lord.

(Wait for the Lord...)

Holy God, we are homesick, longing for this world to be a secure place of love and belonging for all people. We are homesick for a world where oceans are clean, trees are green, and animals are not endangered. We are homesick for a life where days feel expansive and Sabbath feels possible. We are homesick for days where mental health is not stigmatized, time is not a commodity, and self-worth is not a scarcity.

God who never leaves us alone, we are carrying both hope and homesickness all at the same time. Hold these two sides of the same coin tenderly, and fan the flame of both. For we realize, hope is a gift and homesickness is a reminder. For each conviction, we give you thanks, even as we wait for you, Lord.

(Wait for the Lord...)

We long to find our home in you, Lord. We remember the people and places who are hurting today. We pray for...

Those who are grieving, especially the family and friends of:

- Doris (mother of Jeff) who died on 11/21
- Betty who died on 11/19
- Edwin (father of Lori) who died on 11/15
- David (son of Mary's dear friends Carol & Dean)

Those in need of healing, especially:

- Brian who is recovering from surgery following a fall
- David (brother of Donna) who is sick with Covid-19, and Suzi (sister-in-law of Donna), who is hospitalized with Covid-19
- Melanie S (colleague of Mike), who has been diagnosed with cancer
- 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
- And those we name before you . . .

We give you thanks for all who have made their home in this community of faith. Today, we pray especially for Laura (Thomas), Karen (Jonathan), Martha, Jacob & Rachael (Clara & Levi), John & Laurie, and Dorothy.

We trust that you know all that we need. Thank you for always inviting us home so that we might find our place with you. Through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, we pray and sing...

(Wait for the Lord...)

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:

Prepare the Royal Highway

The Chancel Choir (Jim Jefferis, Director)

text by Frans Mikael Franzén

Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.

setting by James H. Laster

Offertory:

Refrain

The King of glo - ry comes, the na - tion re - joic - es.

O - pen the gates be - fore him, lift up your voic - es.

Who is the King of glo - ry; how shall we call him?

He is Em - man - u - el, the promi - sed of ag - es.

To Refrain

The musical notation is written on four staves in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The notes are simple, using quarter and eighth notes, with some beamed eighth notes for a rhythmic feel. The lyrics are placed directly below the corresponding notes.

Offertory Prayer:

Let us pray. Holy God,

We are homesick. We long for the day that you spoke of when swords will be beaten into plowshares, the lion will lie down with the lamb, and justice will roll like waters. Until that holy day comes, take these gifts and use them to build that world here. We are hopeful. Amen.

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.

With this bread and wine
draw us together into a community of hope.
Be among us in this meal.
And form us to be your home in the world.

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:

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.

And let these gifts to us be blessed!

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:



O Lamb of God you take a-way our sin; have mer-cy on us, give_ us your
peace. Pre -pare us to re - ceive_ your grace and teach us how to fol - low your ways. Re-
joice! Re - joice! E - man - u - el has come to you, O Is - ra - el.

Hymns sung during communion:

As the Dark Awaits the Dawn

ELW #261

See Fig Leaves Now Sprouting

set to the tune of *ES IST EIN ROS*

*See fig tree leaves now sprouting soon summer comes again
Creation groans in labor for God's reign to begin
We wait with bated breath,
Homesick for God's true kingdom, age without hate or death*

*Sun, moon, and stars above us speak of God's promised day
To make space for our new home this world must pass away
When we are filled with dread,
The words of Christ uphold us: "Arise and raise your head"*

Text: Anna Strickland
©A Sanctified Art, 2021

Table Blessing:

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

Amen

WE LEAVE TO SERVE:

Benediction:

If our life together were a house:

May God's love be the foundation, Jesus – the cornerstone, the Holy Spirit – the windows, ushering light in, and hope be the walls that hold us together. May the blessing of God: Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit be yours, now and always.

Amen.

Sending Hymn:

Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying

ELW #436

Dismissal:

Go in peace. Christ is near.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude:

Vom Himmel hoch
(From Heaven Above)

setting by Ernst Flügel

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!*

Happening today (11/28):

- 8:55 am Worship with Communion (in-person and livestream)
- 10:15 am Family Advent Activities
- 6:30 pm 5th Annual Tree Lighting

Portions of the liturgy adapted from prayers by Rev. Sarah Are, A Sanctified Art LLC, sanctifiedart.org
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Today's reflection comes from this year's Close to Home Advent Devotional. B&W copies are available in the Narthex. Electronic or color copies can be available through the church office.

Read Luke 21:25-36

Commentary Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri

"...Mi corazón se quedó frente al mar en mi Viejo San Juan..."

The famous Puerto Rican song, "*En mi Viejo San Juan*"¹ has described the sentiments of many in the Puerto Rican diaspora. The song, written in 1943 by Noel Estrada for his brother stationed in Panamá, recounts memories of life in San Juan and the long-awaited return: "My heart remained at the seafront in Old San Juan." Listening to this song sometimes makes me a little **homesick**, but, most of the time, it evokes warm, nostalgic feelings and brings forth memories of the cobblestone streets and blue seas of my hometown.

When hurricane María hit Puerto Rico in 2017, the news footage of the massive category 4 storm contrasted with the lovely memories of the island. The words of the song resonated; my heart was, indeed, at the seafront in Old San Juan. The storm passed, and we anxiously awaited news from our families on the island. Homesickness crept in as we were far away from loved ones and wished to be close to them in the moment of need. Days later, *el silencio de la espera*² was finally broken by the buzz of a text message: "*Estamos bien*" ("We're OK"). Those two words were hope in the midst of chaos. Those words were **home**.

Images of distress, confusion, and fear emerge in Luke 21. In many ways, the feelings that these words evoke mirror the past almost two years of pandemic crisis—a world in turmoil suffering from disasters, both natural and human-made—speaking to the realities and injustices of a chaotic world. Thankfully, Jesus enters this world offering words, not of foreboding, but of **hope** to a homesick people that felt far away from God and longed to be close to kin in the middle of the crisis. "Stand up and raise your heads," Jesus said, "because your redemption is near . . . So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near" (v. 28-31). Even in *el silencio de la espera*, we are reassured that God's kin-dom is near. Kin-dom, in Ada María Isasi-Díaz's definition, is "interconnected community, seeing God's movement emerge from *la familia*, the family God makes."³ God is close. These are words of hope for a homesick world. These words are **home**.

¹ Listen to "*En mi Viejo San Juan*" sung by composer Noel Estrada here: youtube.com/watch?v=VFf7Oz80Xx4.

² “The silence of the wait.”

³ Ada María Isasi-Díaz quoted in “The Kin-dom of Christ” by Melissa Florer-Bixler. *Sojourners*. Nov. 20, 2018. sojo.net/articles/kin-dom-christ.
SANCTIFIED ART CLOSE TO HOME DEVOTIONAL | HOMESICK | 2