



This week'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 3:1-18

Commentary Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri

"No te duermas en los laureles."

The scripture for this week focuses on John's prophetic message. Though his words might sound harsh ("You brood of vipers!" (v. 7)), it is a message of good news—of change, forgiveness, and justice—to a suffering people. God called John for a specific place and time (v. 1-4), and his cry from the wilderness, as written in Isaiah, proclaimed leveled valleys and righted wrongs. This was, and is, a message of **joy**, especially for those who had lost hope, hurt by the inequities and injustices perpetrated by the empire and the religious authorities aligned with it. The world as they knew it was about to change.

Crowds came to John to be baptized, and he charged them with "bearing fruit worthy of repentance" (v. 8), not relying on past glories, heritage, or lineage, but producing their own fruit, living and acting in ways that demonstrated true change. Resting on their laurels for far too long, the crowd wasn't quite sure how to do that, and John offers words of wisdom. Instead of accumulating, share with others what you have. Instead of being indifferent or selfish, show consideration and compassion. Instead of taking advantage and preying on the vulnerable, be satisfied with what you have and treat others fairly and with dignity. . . even if you work for the empire (v. 12-14).

What implications does John's message have for us kin-dom builders today? If "all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (v. 6), we all have a part to play in the salvation story, in leveling valleys and righting wrongs. Like John, we are also called for a specific place and time: Here and now. Be at the ready, *no te duermas en los laureles*,¹ and bear fruit worthy of repentance, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, giving voice to the silenced and oppressed, speaking truth to power, and protecting and empowering the vulnerable. Let our collective voice cry out in the wilderness—and everywhere—with exhortations and good news. And, as the message is heard, more and more people will join us in building the kin-dom of God, making it truly a **home** for all.

¹ "Don't rest on your laurels."

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

ARE YOU READY FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP?

Worship with Communion (in-person and online) will be at 8:55 am (no reservations required!)

1. [Facebook Live](#)
2. [Watch On YouTube](#) – Subscribe to our channel
3. [Livestream on the website](#)



Worship the Living God

Lessons for Sunday, 12/12

Zephaniah 3:14-20 and Luke 3:1-18

Lessons for Sunday, 12/19

Luke 1:39-55

Worship: Our worship time each week is on Sunday at 8:55 am (both in-person and livestream). Visit [Share in Worship](#) for information on how to participate in the livestream. If you are joining us in-person, we ask people to wear masks while moving through our facility, in worship, and during Sunday morning faith formation activities. Look at the [Gathering Again](#) page on our website, for the latest updates.

Altar Flowers: Do you enjoy seeing flowers on the altar? Flowers may be donated to memorialize or celebrate a special event or person. *Contact the church office to place your order!*

Poinsettia Order Forms are due on Sunday, **December 12**. Visit <https://blcfairport.org/poinsettia-sale/> (the link is also in the 'Right Now' menu on our website) to place your order for poinsettias and/or make a donation to support Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) in honor or memory of your loved one. (LIRS). LIRS is the largest faith-based nonprofit dedicated to serving vulnerable immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees in the U.S. **Simply put, we resettle refugees, reunite children and parents, and rekindle the American Dream.** For more than 80 years, LIRS has been a champion for migrants and refugees from around the globe. Our legacy of compassionate service has made a difference in the lives of more than 500,000 people who have sought safety and hope in America's communities. Our history reflects our own deep immigrant roots and passionate commitment to welcoming newcomers, especially those who are most in need. (<https://www.lirs.org/about/>)

Christmas Eve Worship ~ Friday, December 24

BLC will offer 2 worship services on Christmas Eve this year.

5:30 pm (in-person only), be part of re-telling the story of Christmas in our Pop-Up Christmas pageant! No rehearsal required! We are all part of sharing the good news this night in story and song!

7:30 pm (in-person or livestream), we'll sing carols, share communion, and welcome the good news of great joy for all people!

Come & Worship Christ the Lord!

100th Anniversary News

100 YEARS

Our thanks to Rev. David Gerhardt who led us in worship last week. What a joy to have retired pastors as part of our congregation so willing to share their time and gifts! Next month, we will welcome Rev. Lori Nickoloff on January 9 and BLC member Rev. Jeff Hedin on January 23. Meanwhile, do check out the display of BLC Musicians in the narthex.

Apart from these Star articles, are you wondering how to stay informed of upcoming Anniversary guests and events? Here are three easy ways to be sure you keep up to date.

The first is the Anniversary bulletin board next to the Sacristy in the narthex. It shows events for our current month (now in December) and the following month (January).

Secondly, there is the Anniversary website. Go to blcfairport.org and click on the 100th Anniversary link in the top right corner of the BLC home page. The Calendar button will roll out all the upcoming events through the end of our celebration in June 2022.

Lastly, events and photos will come up on a private Facebook page called "BLC Fairport Members and Friends." To preface, this assumes you already have a Facebook account or are willing to establish one.

Some basic steps for using Facebook on your phone follow:

1. On an iPhone, go to the App Store. On an Android phone, go to Google Play.
2. Search for and download the Facebook app to your phone.
3. Once the app is installed, you can log in using the same Facebook user name and password credentials you would use on your computer.
4. Search for the "BLC Fairport Members and Friends" Facebook group using the magnifying glass image. If you are already a member, once you find the group, you can view the full page and all posts.
5. If you are NOT already a member of the private group, once you search for and find the group, you will need to request to join using the blue "Join Group" button. A window will pop up with a screening question asking "What is your connection to Bethlehem Lutheran Church?" Please answer that question (ex: I am a member.) and hit the "Submit" button. One of the Facebook admins will approve your request to join and then you will be able to view the full page and all posts.

If you are looking to use Facebook on a computer rather than phone, you would open your web browser and go to [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com). Feel free to share these steps with anyone who might want them!



Grow in Faith and Discipleship

Faith Formation in December: Gather for conversation and activities around our Advent theme, *Close to Home*. LYO and Confirmation meet in their rooms, pre-K to 5th grade in the Sunday School wing and adults in the fellowship Hall on **December 12 & December 19** at 10:15 am! No Faith Formation will be held on December 26 or January 2. We'll resume in the New Year on January 9.

Wednesday Morning Bible Study: Join us weekly at 9:30 am in person in the Fellowship Hall at BLC or on Zoom - use the 'join now' button in the [Calendar of Events](#) to join via Zoom. Throughout the month of December, we will continue to meet in hybrid fashion to study Adam Hamilton's book *The Journey*. This includes a video tour of the places Mary and Joseph traveled on their way to Bethlehem. We will not meet on December 29. Beginning January 5, we will continue to study the **I AM** statements of Jesus as found in the Gospel of John. Join us when your schedule allows! If you have questions, or would like more information, contact Kathy Moragne - kathymoragne@gmail.com



Live Our Faith in Daily Life

★ **Dulcimer Concert at BLC!** Christmas Music and more on Friday evening, December 10 at 7 pm. Rich Towsley will be directing our BLC Dulcimer Ensemble and Senior Strummers Ensemble. Linda Taggart will be directing a hammered dulcimer ensemble. Admission is free. A freewill offering will be collected to support the Perinton Food Shelf. Wear your mask!

★ **Holiday Pies!** The holidays can be such a busy time of the year! Let BLC LYO help by taking one thing off your plate... your dessert plate. Order a delicious homemade apple or chocolate pie to be baked by the youth of BLC. All proceeds will support our LYO. Please submit your order at <https://blcfairport.org/pie-order/> by Wednesday, December 15th! Thank you!

Devotional resources: The January - March editions of Portals of Prayer and Christ in our home are available in the sanctuary and narthex. We also usually have extra copies of Spark Family Magazine and the Living Lutheran Magazine available at the welcome table in the narthex. If you have questions about any of these resources, please contact the church office!

Care for One Another

★ **One More Gift (Will you come and help tie quilts?):** Have your Christmas celebrations come and gone by December 30? Do you have time for one more gift? We have several quilts ready to tie for Lutheran World Relief. Can you help? Needles supplied. Small scissors helpful. Join us at BLC in the Adult Education Room on Thursday, **December 30** at 7 pm. With masks.

★ **Prayer Squares are available in the narthex!** So what is a Prayer Square? It's a knitted square that can function as a small version of a prayer shawl. Prayer squares give us an opportunity to bless others through a simple, personal encounter designed to leave a lasting impression of God's love. They provide prayers for the people that need the warmth of God. Placed in a pocket or backpack or purse, the prayer square serves as a reminder: that someone has already prayed for you, and also a reminder to pause and pray. Put it in your backpack, briefcase, purse, or car. When you need reassurance, pull it out and you will know that God is everywhere. So grab a square and a prayer, add a message, or write your own prayer and give it to someone you know who may need some of God's comfort. (Prayer Squares are a great way to connect with your BLC prayer partners that were included in the last Quarterly Mailer!)

Angel Tree: Share God's love by fulfilling a need from the Angel Tree! Look for the Angel Tree in the narthex with angel tags listing the requested gift item! Take a tag (or several if you'd like), purchase the gift, wrap and affix the angel tag to the outside of the package. Please contact the church office if you would like a tag mailed to you. There will be boxes in the fellowship hall to collect the gifts. All gifts should be returned to church by **December 19 by 9 am** so they can be delivered on time!

Holiday Greetings! We have a wonderful card ministry to remember our homebound members throughout the year. In this season of Advent, you are encouraged to take a moment to send notes of encouragement to any and all of the people in our BLC community. If you would like to join the Card Ministry, contact [Donna Berner](#) or 585-314-5732

Thank you! My dear Brothers and Sisters, I want to thank you for your prayers and words of care, love and compassion over the past couple of months as Amy and I walked with my family through the last days of my father's journey, as well as for the lovely plant at Dad's funeral. The love that we felt from our community at Bethlehem supported and sustained us, and I cannot thank you enough for that. Dad was so appreciative of the fact that people he didn't even know were caring about him and his family and surrounding us with so much love. I am also truly grateful that this congregation was so encouraging and supportive to Amy so she could be with us for most of that time as well. I have felt blessed to be a part of this community, but even more so in these recent days and weeks. Thank you for your presence and your love. They have been manna to us.

~ Hans Walter-Peterson

Hats off and a big thank you to all the people at BLC and the Penfield Community Center Knitting Group who knit and crocheted hats and scarves to donate. 225 hats were collected along with a number of scarves! They have been donated to Learning Links at the Pines of Perinton, Saints Place in Pittsford and Open Door Mission who all greatly appreciated them. We will continue to collect and donate hats and scarves throughout the winter months. Any questions please feel I free to contact Cathy Gottermeyer at cgotterm@rochester.rr.com. Happy Holidays!

Thank you to BLC: We want to thank our Bethlehem Lutheran Church family for your love and concern for Jerry's fight with leukemia these past several weeks. Your calls, cards, inquiries and hugs have meant such a great deal to us as we have coped with a prolonged hospital stay and a major change in lifestyle. Jerry has been blessed with skilled, caring medical people who have brought him to remission, and we credit much of it to the power of prayer from all those surrounding us. We still have a lot of work to do and a lot of challenges to face, but with your support and God's grace we are able to move through it. Love in Christ, Toni and Jerry Thompson

Call for more BLC Hospitality Team Members: As we continue to live into our new Sunday morning schedule, we're hoping to bring more people into the hospitality team rotation. We aim to have a team of 4-6 people in place each Sunday who welcome members and guests into our worship space, help them navigate our space and ensure that they have what they need to participate in worship. There is a checklist of tasks and an assigned leader each week. We would love to have you try this role. Contact the office or submit your info at <https://blcfairport.org/hospitality-team-at-blc/> to let us know that you are willing and able to serve in this way. Not sure if this is right for you? Try a week shadowing someone who has been serving or come to a training session to learn more! Date and time for training will be coming soon.



Serve Our Neighbor

2nd Sunday Dinner Ministry on December 12! *"I was hungry and you gave me to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in."* -Matthew 25:35. As disciples of Jesus we are called to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, and welcome the stranger. On the second Sunday of every month the dedicated volunteers of the Second Sunday Dinner Ministry prepare and deliver a hot meal to individuals in the Perinton community. We have an urgent need for one more delivery person to ride along with a delivery driver and deliver meals to the Fairport Apartments. If you would like more information or would be able to help, please contact Paulette Costanza at 585-223-9255 or p.stanza@hotmail.com. A HUGE "Thank You" to all those who have given their time, treasures, and talents to serve our neighbors in Christ. You are such a blessing!

The M&SC Committee explores social and justice issues and has conversations within the committee to understand our individual and world view. Our collective goal is a congregation actively engaged in our local and world communities by being allies, advocates and activists (AAA) with our mission partners. ***New members or visitors to the M&SC committee, ideas about new ministries, and different views and paradigms for engaging in mission are welcome and encouraged.*** Join us for one or all of our upcoming meetings. We offer an opportunity to meet in person at BLC in the Fellowship Hall as well as virtually through a link in the calendar of events on BLC's website. Meetings are typically held the second Wednesday of every month at 6:15 pm. Please reach out to Julie Owen at jowen@heritagechristianservices.org with interests or questions.

Habitat for Humanity Work Day: Efforts are continuing to build a core group of about a dozen congregation members willing to commit to a quarterly Habitat for Humanity work day. To date about six have stepped forward. Volunteers at least 16 years old are welcome, particularly those LYO members. Please send your contact information to Mike Joyce at 713.882.4471 or mjoyceusa@yahoo.com. In addition to house building, Flower City Habitat recently purchased a van and tools to enable building of accessibility ramps. Volunteers are needed for that task as well.



Council News

★ **Sharing Our Blessings Team:** As a result of a financial surplus in FY 2021, the BLC congregation voted at their October 31 Annual Meeting to distribute \$30,000 beyond the walls of Bethlehem. The Council charged an ad hoc committee, now known as the Sharing Our Blessings Team, to develop criteria, seek congregational input, and make recommendations to the Council for distributing funds. The team consisting of Cathy Gottermeier, Alli O'Malley, Julie Owen, Lisa Rosenbauer, Alan Sleeman (chair), and Pastor Amy have begun meeting and expect to make recommendations to Council on distribution criteria by the January Council meeting. Once affirmed, the team will seek input from the Bethlehem congregation to determine qualifying recipient(s). Amidst a period of great uncertainty, our congregation was blessed by our member's faithful stewardship. It is a privilege to share these gifts. We ask for your prayers and support in offering these blessings in Jesus' name. Please reach out to a member of the Sharing Blessings Team if you have any questions.

★ **The Re-Opening Team** met on December 7 to review our current protocols in light of the State of Emergency that was recently declared by the Monroe County Department of Health. Given the high rate of community spread, the team continues to affirm that our current protocols are appropriate for our present circumstances. At BLC, we continue to wear masks at all times when moving through the building, as well as on Sunday mornings in worship and during faith formation activities. We continue to avoid sharing food fellowship indoors. Knowing the deep longing for opportunities to share conversation and build connections and relationships through food fellowship, the Re-Opening Team is committed to continuing to meet in the weeks following the Christmas season to monitor and adjust BLC's protocols, as warranted by circumstances in the wider community. As has been the case throughout the pandemic, we encourage people to stay at home if they are sick or are experiencing any Covid-related symptoms. The Re-Opening Team includes: Matt Beutel, Brian Edwards, Margie Gaul, Kristina Henry, Julie Owen, Bob Stolze, Rick Walker, and Pastor Amy.

Support BLC While Doing Your Christmas Shopping! Did you know that BLC can benefit from your online shopping? Sign up for AmazonSmile and choose Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fairport, NY as your designated charity. The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible items to BLC. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages. With the Christmas shopping season ramping up, this would be a great opportunity to participate in this program! To get more information or to sign up and shop, go to <https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/community/how-to-sign-up-for-amazon-smile> from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. Contact [Glenda Lockard](#) for more information.

Offering Envelopes: In an effort to be good stewards of our paper resources, we will not order offering envelopes for you this year, unless you specifically request them on or before the end of 2021. Doing so is easy! Visit <https://blcfairport.org/request-2022-offering-envelopes/>, contact the church office or Dave Wideman (dwideman5@gmail.com or 585-309-3618) to request envelopes. Envelopes should be available before the end of the year.

Financial Statements: As year-end 2021 approaches, this would be a good time to review your financial commitment to BLC. If you would like to see a summary of your giving so far this year, please feel free to request a preliminary financial statement so you can plan your giving for the rest of the year. Please contact the BLC financial secretary, Dave Wideman, in person or by email: dwideman5@gmail.com, or by phone at 585-309-3618.

Community News

The Perinton Concert Band will present ***Sounds of the Season*** on **Friday, December 10, 2021 at 7:30 pm** in the **Perinton Community Center Gymnasium**, 1350 Turk Hill Road, Fairport, NY. Musical selections will include "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree," "A Chanukah Celebration," Jose Feliciano's "Feliz Navidad," music from *The Polar Express*, along with many other holiday favorites. **The performance will even include a visit from Santa!** The concert is **free** and is sponsored by the Town of Perinton Recreation and Parks. Masks are recommended. **For More Information:** Find us online at <https://www.perintonconcertband.org> or on Facebook and Instagram at Perinton Concert Band.

★ **Fairport's Pop-Up Christmas Market:** Come visit us indoors! We will have vendors indoors at 20 S Main Street in Fairport. New vendors will join the Pop-Up each week! Hours of Operation listed below are for December 9-12 (additional dates and times from December 16-23, visit <https://finditinfairport.com/> for more info!)

- Thursday, December 9 – 4pm-8pm
- Friday, December 10 – 10am-5pm
- Saturday, December 11 – 10am-5pm
- Sunday, December 12 – 11am-5pm

Pet Sitting: Some of you may remember Zainab Moya, the youngest child of the family that BLC sponsored from Somalia. She was in second grade when she came and is now a Fairport High School alumni and student at MCC. She is looking to supplement her income by pet sitting. If you have a need for a pet or plant sitter, you can call me for arrangements, Marcy Adams, 585-370-6878 or retiredmarcy@gmail.com, or see me at church. *Occasionally, needs and opportunities are brought to the attention of the church office. While we are not in a position to endorse any specific person or service, we are happy to make connections!*

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



BETHLEHEM
LUTHERAN CHURCH

48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ www.blcfairport.org



<https://www.facebook.com/BLCfairport/>

We Ask Your Prayers: *We pray for those whose thanks or needs are known to us.*

We lift up prayers of thanksgiving for:

- The birth of Apollo Thor Osgood on 12/5/21. Apollo is the son of Zachary and Melody and the step-grandson of Mary Osgood

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

- Ivan Berg (father of Chris Berg) who died on 12/2

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Doris Walter (mother of Amy Walter-Peterson) who is recovering at home following a hospitalization for pneumonia
- Carrie Falzone who is recovering from surgery on 12/3
- 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

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

Calendar for December 12 – December 19

(Last updated on 12/8/21 at 12 noon, visit <https://blcfairport.org/event-directory/> for updates)

Sunday, 12/12

3rd Sunday in Advent

8:55 am Worship with
Communion (in-person
and livestream)

10:15 am Faith

Formation for All

11:15 am Children's
Choir

12:30 pm 2nd Sunday
Dinner Ministry
(delivery only)

Monday, 12/13

Tuesday, 12/14

2:00 pm Support Group
for Caregivers

6:30 pm BSA Troop 2019
Meeting

Wednesday, 12/15

Office Closed

9:30 am Bible Study –
Hybrid (In-person or

[Join](#) via Zoom –

ID 943 3691 2942)

1:00 pm Men's Lunch at
Penfield Wegmans

6:00 pm Chancel Bells

6:15 pm Folk Group

7:30 pm Chancel Choir

Thursday, 12/16

Office Closed

6:30 pm Church Council

([Join](#) via Zoom –

ID 818 7910 2136)

Friday, 12/17

Office Closed

Pastor's Sabbath

2:30 pm Dulcimer
Group Rehearsal

Saturday, 12/18

10:00 am LYO Holiday

Pie Baking

Sunday, 12/19

4th Sunday in Advent

8:55 am Worship with
Communion (in-person
and livestream)

10:15 am Faith

Formation for All

11:00 am LYO Holiday

Pie pick-up

11:15 am Children's
Choir

Time Away: Beth Schoenfeld will be away December 15 – 17.

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: Submit details at <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/> for each planned meeting, event and activity at BLC. This allows us to check for availability, reserve the space, and plan accordingly. Please contact the church office to confirm or with any questions following your submission.
