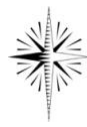


*Sunday, December 19, 2021
Fourth Sunday of Advent
"Seeking Sanctuary" ~ Love*



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, December 19, 2021 ~ Fourth Sunday of Advent
“Seeking Sanctuary” ~ Love

Prelude:

Pastorale

Janet Correll

After receiving the angel’s extraordinary news, Mary retreats to Elizabeth and Zechariah’s home to digest her new calling. She seeks refuge—physical safety and emotional protection. She receives a safe haven, a home for her heart to soon sing praise. Sanctuary and safe space is so crucial for everyone, especially the mother of Christ while she prepares to become a home for God. Sanctuary is anywhere God’s love dwells freely and abundantly.

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Call to Worship:

We are seeking—

deeper faith, a place to belong, the feeling that God is here in this room.

We are seeking—

joy that overflows, the movement of the Spirit, a hand to hold, when alone in the dark.

We are seeking—

the freedom to be, the courage to love, the conviction to act in the face of injustice.

We are seeking, but here in this space,

We are found.

Take a deep breath. This is your sanctuary.

God is here. We are found. Amen.

Gathering Hymn:	<i>Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers</i>	ELW#244
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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.

God's love is like an open door.

God's love is the streetlight that guides us home.

God's love is a warm bed to fall into.

God's love is a table with room for you.

God's love is a crackling fireplace.

God's love is the sun that streams through the windows.

God's love is the roof over our heads and the floor beneath our feet.

God's love is a home for you and me, for neighbors and strangers, for family and friends, for enemies and partners.

God's love is a home for all.

Today we light the candle of love to remind us of this truth.

May it burn brightly in this space and even brighter in our hearts.

Amen.

Advent Hymn:

We Light the Advent Candles

Madeleine Hoffman, 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. Four can - dles burn - ing bright - ly an - nounce that Christ has come,



to wel - come our Lord Je - sus who is the world's True Light,

pre - pare, my heart, be - lieve it, and give the Christ child room,



to wel - come our Lord Je - sus who is the world's True Light.

pre - pare, my heart, be - lieve it, and give the Christ child room.

Text: Gracia Grindal

Music: German folk tune

Text © 1999 Hope Publishing Company

Prayer of the Day:

Let us pray. Holy God,

just as Elizabeth opened the door to welcome Mary, open the door to our hearts so that we might find sanctuary in your Word. Through Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen

Special Music: “*Preludio*”

J. S. Bach

(from Violin Partita No. 3 in E Major, BWV 1006)

transcr. by Frank Koonce

Austin Wahl, guest guitarist

WE HEAR GOD’S WORD

The gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Luke 1:39-55

Elizabeth, John’s mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, are two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. In Elizabeth’s inspired greeting and Mary’s song of praise we hear of a saving God who remembers, scatters, lifts up, and fulfills all things.

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

⁴⁶And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day:

Sanctuary

(see the following page for music)

Paul O'Malley, tenor

Austin Wahl, guest guitarist

Refrain/ Solo: Paul O'Malley

Refrain/ All

ST 1 & Ref. /All

ST 2 & Ref./ All

Ref./ All

Sanctuary

Repeat the *Refrain* after each stanza.

Refrain: O, Lord, pre - pare me, to be a sanc-tu - a - ry, pure and
1. Lord, teach Your child - ren to stop the fight - ing, start u -
2. You were the One, Lord, who sent the Sav - vior, heart and

ho - ly, tried and true; With thanks - giv - ing I'll be a
ni - ting all as one; Let's get to - geth - er, lov - ing for -
soul, Lord, for us all; It is You, Lord, who knows our

liv - ing sanc-tu - a - ry for You.
ev - er, sanc-tu - a - ry for You.
weak - ness, You re - fine us with Your hand.

WORDS & MUSIC: J. W. Thompson & Randy Scruggs, 1982

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The Prayers of the People:

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

The musical score is written for two voices, Soprano and Alto, in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!" The first system covers the first line of lyrics, and the second system covers the second line. The music features a simple, hymn-like melody with a steady bass line. The lyrics are printed below the staves.

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.

Holy God,

Our prayers are often one lovely act of seeking.

We bow our heads, we close our eyes, and we seek— we seek you, we seek belonging, we seek sanctuary. And what is lovely is that we know, deep in our bones, that if we knock, we will find you.

(Wait for the Lord...)

Today we pause our seeking to simply give you thanks. Thank you for the Elizabeths in our lives—the ones who have been there when we needed them most, the ones who have blessed us with joy, allowing our happiness to take up space, the ones who have opened the door for us and ushered us in.

And thank you not only for the Elizabeths in our lives, but for the strangers who have cared for us, for those older and wiser who paved the way before us, and for individuals who share no relation to us, but love us like family. Our lives are undoubtedly better because of them.

Gracious God, we also pray for those without an Elizabeth in their life. We pray for those in life transitions who carry that fear and anxiety alone, and we pray for all who know loneliness in the face of these hardships.

(Wait for the Lord...)

God our sanctuary, we lift up prayers of thanksgiving for:

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

Wrap your arms around those who are hurting or alone. Circle back, again and again, dwelling tenderly in the wounds of their hearts until healing might be found. Open our eyes so that we might see the need in our own backyard.

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

- Iona who died on 12/11
- Ivan (father of Chris) who died on 12/2

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Robin who is recovering from a surgical procedure
- 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

We give you thanks for all who make your love known in and through Bethlehem. Today, we pray especially for Marlene, Dylan, Marja & Ronald, Lee, Lisa, Bob & Wendy, and Justin & Kelly (Aaron, Allison & Andrew)

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:

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

ES IST EIN ROS
arr. by Tull Glazener

The BLC Dulcimers (Rich Towsley, director)

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*

Text: Willard F. Jabusch
Music: Israeli traditional
Text© 1968, 1995 Willard F. Jabusch, admin. OCP Publications

Offertory Prayer:

Let us pray. Good and gracious God,

We give these gifts for the seekers. We give these gifts for those who need sanctuary. We give these gifts for those who build sanctuaries. We give these gifts for those who have lost sanctuary, and for those who find sanctuary all over the place. Use these gifts to bring us closer to home. With joy and hope in our hearts we pray, 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 love.
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:



Words: David Eck, copyright ©2011
Tune: VENI, EMMANUEL

Hymns sung during communion:

An Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

ELW #265

Of the Father's Love Begotten

ELW #295

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:

Most High God, you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest.

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 love 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:

People, Look East

ELW #248

Dismissal:
Go in peace. Christ is near.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude:
Sortie in G Major

Théodore Dubois

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 (12/19):

- 8:55 am Worship with Communion (in-person and livestream)
- 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!
- 10:45 am Hospitality Team Training (Sanctuary)
- 10:55 am Final Blessing for Everyone (Fellowship Hall)
- 11:00 am LYO Holiday Pie pick-up (Fellowship Hall)
- 11:15 am Children's Choir (Choir Room)

Portions of the liturgy adapted from prayers by Rev. Sarah Are, A Sanctified Art LLC, sanctifiedart.org
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Calendar for December 19 – December 26

(Last updated on 12/16/21 at 12 noon, visit <https://blcfairport.org/event-directory/> for updates)

Sunday, 12/19

4th Sunday in Advent

8:55 am Worship with
Communion (in-person
and livestream)
10:15 am Faith
Formation for All
10:45 am Hospitality
Team Training
11:00 am LYO Holiday
Pie pick-up
11:15 am Children's
Choir

Monday, 12/20

Tuesday, 12/21

Wednesday, 12/22

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

Thursday, 12/23

Friday, 12/24

Christmas Eve
No Dulcimer Practice
5:30 pm Worship with
Pop-Up Christmas
pageant (in-person
only)
7:30 pm Worship with
Communion and
candlelighting (in-
person and livestream);
Musical Prelude begins
at 7 pm

Saturday, 12/25

Merry Christmas!

Sunday, 12/26

1st Sunday of Christmas

8:55 am Worship with
Communion (in-person
and livestream)
No Children's Choir

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.

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! Musical Prelude begins at 7:00 pm.

Come & Worship Christ the Lord!

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.

Commentary on Luke 1:39-55 | by Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri

When thinking about "sanctuary," the lyrics of a Carrie Newcomer song hit close to home...

*"Will you be my refuge, my haven in the storm,
Will you keep the embers warm when my fire's all but gone?
Will you remember, and bring me sprigs of rosemary,
Be my sanctuary 'til I can carry on, carry on, carry on. . ."17*

In the song, Newcomer lists places, experiences, and metaphors to define sanctuary: "rest here in Brown Chapel... with a circle of friends... a quiet grove of trees... between two bookends." We can imagine these as safe spaces, uplifting and welcoming. My own list would include grandma's kitchen, watercolor paints, and the arms of a loved one. What would your list include? If you close your eyes, can you picture yourself there? Wherever it is, a place where God's love dwells freely and abundantly is sanctuary.

Hearing the news of her pregnancy, Mary sought such a place. As a pregnant teenager, poor and unwed, dangers and uncertainty—both physical and societal—surrounded her. With haste, she journeys to Elizabeth's house. Elizabeth—and the child in her womb—welcome and affirm her. Mary then bursts into a song of praise: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior" (v. 46-7).

For three months, that home and the arms that received Mary became her safe haven. Elizabeth's welcome, blessing, and care were safe space, just what she needed as she prepared for the important call ahead. Mary would give birth to Jesus and would educate him in his formative years. The world saw the imprint of this young woman in the life and teachings of her son, Jesus. Mary herself was sanctuary and Jesus' first home.

Sanctuary is not only a place. It is also the people who say, "Here I am," striving to create and to become a safe place for others. Will we be a refuge, someone's haven in the storm, sanctuary? In the spirit of these two holy women, Mary and Elizabeth, may we offer ourselves as sanctuary for anyone in need of one—glorifying, with our actions, the One whose love, freely given, is our sanctuary, our home.

17 "Sanctuary." Words & music by Carrie Newcomer. From the album, "The Beautiful Not Yet." ©2016 Carrie Newcomer Music (BMI), Administered by BMG Chrysalis. youtube.com/watch?v=HjOioWTVAl4