



WORSHIP



GROW



LIVE



CARE



SERVE

WEEKLY STAR FOR DECEMBER 19, 2021

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent



BETHLEHEM  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

WEEKLY  
*star*



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

*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 1 39-55

**Commentary** 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. . .”<sup>17</sup>

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.

<sup>17</sup> “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=HjOioWTVA14](https://youtube.com/watch?v=HjOioWTVA14)

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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, 12/19

Luke 1:39-55

### Lessons for Friday, December 24

Luke 2:1-20

### Lessons for Sunday, 12/26

Colossians 2:41-52 and Luke 2:41-52

**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.

↓ **Welcoming Worshipers on Christmas Eve!** We are grateful for the opportunity to share in worship at BLC on Christmas Eve this year. If you are available to assist in ushering duties on Christmas Eve (5:30 or 7:30 pm) please let us know in the office. We have experienced team leaders identified for both services, but we need additional support for those services. Training and walk-through will take place on Sunday, **December 19** at 10:45 am. If you are able to serve on Christmas Eve please contact the church office directly and let us know.

We also we have an ongoing need for more **BLC Hospitality Team Members** (formerly the role of ushers and greeters). 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 team 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/> and let us know that you are willing and able to serve in this way.

In addition to preparing for Christmas Eve, we will walk through the new Sunday morning checklist at our training on **Sunday, December 19 at 10:45 am in the Sanctuary**. Whether you are able to help on Christmas Eve or offer support on Sundays, please plan to join this training.

**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!*

### 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!*

## 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary News

100  
YEARS

Next month, on January 9, we look forward to welcoming Rev. Lori Nickoloff to lead us in worship. Pastor Lori and her family were long-time members of BLC before she obtained her Master of Divinity from Lutheran Seminary in St. Paul, MN. She was ordained at BLC in 2018 and is now serving as pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Penn Yan, NY.

On January 23, Rev. Jeff Hedin, a retired pastor and a member of our congregation, will preside at worship. He formerly was Pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Pittsford.

You know about our returning clergy and musicians, but you may not realize that anniversary invitations were sent out last summer to many of our former members – at least those for whom we had addresses. If you connect with former members, both in- and out-of-town, do extend a BLC 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary welcome of your own. There are extra Calendar of Events in the narthex that you can share with them. Or refer them to our church website for an overview of our history and upcoming events at [blcfairport.org](http://blcfairport.org). The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary link is at the top right corner. Fred and Margo Schmidt, Kevin & Lynn Ayers and former staff including Doreen Duane (intern student from Colgate Rochester Divinity School 1983-1987), Pastor Paula Roulette (interim Associate Pastor 2012-2013), and Pastor David Connor (Intentional Interim Pastor 2009-2010) have all indicated they will return for a visit. Contact Jim Berner at 585-314-9432 if you know of other friends and members who plan to join us or if you have any questions.

Remember to hang an ornament with a short prayer or written remembrance in memory of a loved one on the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tree in the narthex. Everything you need is provided next to the tree or feel free to create your own paper ornament.

We ask that you remember to include in your daily prayers the name of the individual or family printed on your Prayer Partner bookmark. Each family should have received a bookmark in the Quarterly Mailer last month. If you do not have one, please contact the church office. Know that as you are praying for your family, someone is praying for you.



## 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 5<sup>th</sup> grade in the Sunday School wing and adults in the fellowship Hall on **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](mailto:kathymoragne@gmail.com)



## Live Our Faith in Daily Life

**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

↓ **Angel Tree:** All Angel Tree gifts should be brought to church by Sunday, 12/19, at 9 am, as they will be delivered after the church service. Thank you for sharing with others during the Christmas Season.

↓ **A big “thank you”** to the folks who came out to decorate for Christmas - Bob and Phyllis, Rich and Sue, Donna and Jim, Mary Jane, Sue, Marge, Susie, Brian, John and Bob! The “un-decorating” will take place on Saturday, **January 8** at 9:30 am! We sure could use some “young” legs to climb a ladder and return the bins to the basement downstairs! Thanks for helping out! If you need information, contact Donna Berner!

**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!)



## Serve Our Neighbor

↓ **Save the date for the next Crucial Conversation (over Zoom)!** Join us on Monday, **January 24** and Monday, **January 31** at 7 pm. In partnership with St. Luke's Episcopal Church, we are hosting a presentation and conversation on "Christian Nationalism: the Intersection of Religion and Politics". Our resource for the conversation includes a webinar on the subject that features Bishop Michael Curry (Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church) and Bishop Elizabeth Eaton (Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America). Our "crucial conversations" will begin with a presentation by The Very Rev. William H. Petersen, Emeritus Dean and Professor of Bexley Hall Seminary, resident of Fairport and member of St. Luke's Episcopal. As a theologian and historian, Rev. Petersen will provide a framework for engaging the conversation, understanding what is meant by the term "Christian nationalism" and why its emergence is problematic, and how it helps us understand recent events, including what happened at the capital on January 6, 2021. The discussion will be facilitated by Rev. Petersen, Pastor Hoffman and Pastor Amy. Pre-registration is required to participate! Please follow this link to sign up: <https://bit.ly/ZoomJan2022>

**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](mailto:jowen@heritagechristianservices.org) with interests or questions.



## 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.

## Community News

**Lutheran Disaster Response - U.S. Tornadoes:** On the night of Dec. 10, a devastating outbreak of more than 30 tornadoes swept through six states. Kentucky was impacted the most, with more than 70 people reported dead. Homes and businesses were destroyed, including a candle factory in Mayfield, Ky., where first responders are still searching for survivors. More than 330,000 people are without electricity across multiple states. The full extent of the damage is expected to become clear in the coming days.

Lutheran Disaster Response is engaging with partners in the affected areas, including the Indiana-Kentucky Synod, to respond to immediate needs. Given the initial damage assessments, recovery will likely take years, and Lutheran Disaster Response is prepared to accompany survivors until the response is complete.

What you can do:

**Pray:** Please pray for the people who were impacted by the destructive tornadoes. May God's healing presence give them peace and hope in their time of need. Pray that God will deliver comfort to those who mourn the loss of loved ones and strength to those who are working diligently to care for affected communities.

**Give:** Gifts to "[U.S. tornadoes](#)" will be used entirely (100%) to assist those affected by tornadoes until the response is complete.

**Connect:** To learn more about the situation and the ELCA's response:

- Sign up to receive Lutheran Disaster Response [alerts](#).
- Check the Lutheran Disaster Response [blog](#).
- Like Lutheran Disaster Response on [Facebook](#) and follow @ELCALDR on [Twitter](#).

**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 through December 23, visit <https://finditinfairport.com/> for more info!)

**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](mailto: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!*



**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:*

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

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

- Robin Panko who is recovering from a recent 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

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

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



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

## 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

#### **4<sup>th</sup> 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

#### **1<sup>st</sup> 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.

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