



Christmas Eve
7:30 pm Family Worship



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

Saturday, December 24, 2022 ~ 7:30 Family Worship

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

An unmarried teenage girl was invited—
to carry Christ into this world.

An ordinary carpenter was invited—
to be a father to a child unlike any other.

The shepherds were invited—
outcast and isolated, included at the manger.

The Magi were invited—
foreigners and seekers, included at the manger.

And if she was invited, and he was invited, and they were invited—
then we can trust that we too are invited.

This story is for us.

This love is for us.

Emmanuel, for whom we wait, has come!

O come, let us adore him!

GATHERING HYMN

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ELW 283

sts. 1, 3, 4

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O, come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him, born the king of angels:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God in the highest:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

HEARING GOD'S WORD

READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

³You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;

authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL HYMN

Angels We Have Heard on High

ELW 289

sts. 1, 3

Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply,
echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain

Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn king.

Refrain

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20

God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door,
and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born for this!

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye need not fear the grave;
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Our prayers are always offered on behalf of the whole community.

With wonder and thanksgiving for Christ's coming into the world, we pray for the church, the life of the earth, and the whole human family.

A brief silence.

Your infinite love is born to us this night. With choirs of angels the church proclaims the good news. Send us out as messengers of the hope that has come to all people. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

You are pleased to dwell with your creatures and the whole earth sings for joy. Renew the splendor of creation from the smallest cell to the widest galaxies. Guide us to be wise stewards of your gifts for the sake of generations to come. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Your authority is over the nations. Break the chains of oppression in every land and free all people from fear. Bring peace where there is war, compassion where there is suffering, and healing where there is disease. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

You cherish those who are most vulnerable. Protect infants and children, and bless those who care for them. Watch over women giving birth, attend the dying, and relieve any who are in pain. Shelter refugee families and those who have no home. Help any for whom this season is lonely or joyless. Comfort those among us, or known to us, who are experiencing distress of body or mind, missing loved ones, or grieving, especially those we name before you silently or aloud.

Silence for individual prayer.

God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Pondering the mystery of eternal love made flesh in Christ Jesus, we commend all for whom we pray to the mercy of God.
Amen.

SHARING GOD'S MEAL

OFFERING OF MUSIC
Sing We Now of Christmas

French carol
words, J. M. C. Crum
arr. Kevin McChesney

The Chancel Choir

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Good and loving God,

we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

With this bread and wine

Draw us together into a community of hope, peace, joy and love.

Be among us in this meal.

And form us to be your presence in the world today.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

One in body, one in Spirit, we pray as Jesus taught:

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
Rejoice! Emmanuel comes to you.
Thanks be to God.

Distribution of Communion:

Please come forward at the direction of the ushers. 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. Gluten-free wafers and grape juice are available; please indicate your need to the pastor or communion assistant.

THE COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMN

I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve

ELW 271

I am so glad each Christmas Eve, the night of Jesus' birth!
Then like the sun the star shone forth, and angels sang on earth.

The little child in Bethlehem, he was a king indeed!
For he came down from heav'n above to help a world in need.

He dwells again in heaven's realm, the Son of God today;
And still he loves his little ones and hears them when they pray.

I am so glad each Christmas Eve! His praises then I sing;
He opens now for ev'ry child the palace of the king.

And so I love each Christmas Eve, and I love Jesus too;
And that he loves me ev'ry day I know so well is true.

COMMUNION HYMN

What Child Is This

ELW 296

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

COMMUNION HYMN

Love Has Come

ELW 292

Love has come—a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;
what is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers;
Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.

Love has come and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas;
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. God for whom we wait, you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share. Make us ready always to make a home for Christ into our hearts, and send us forth to be your people in the world, witnessing to your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE LIGHT

The pastor will light a candle from the Christ Candle and then move down the aisle lighting the candles of the congregation in this manner: the worshiper nearest the center aisle will receive the light and in turn give the light to the one by their side. The lighted candle is never tilted, but is always held upright when passing the light to another so that the hot wax will not be spilled.

CHRISTMAS CAROL	Silent Night, Holy Night	ELW 281
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Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar, heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from your holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

(Hum fourth stanza)

THE PRAYER

Gracious God, bathe us always in the light of your Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child. Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

(Candles may be extinguished. Please return your to an usher as you leave the sanctuary.)

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

DISMISSAL

Christ is born! Go in joy and peace!

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Postlude on *MENDELSSOHN*

David Willcocks

(Hark! The Herald Angels Sing)

assisted by The Chancel Bells

BLC Musicians

Raelynn Clare, Director of Music and Organist

Dr. Jim Jefferis, Director of The Chancel Choir

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

Our Christmas tree is given to the glory of God by **Jim and Donna Berner** in honor of their family, with extra thanks to Mike Joyce for logistics support and to Rich Towsley for years of support in setting up the tree and donning it with lights!

The **wreaths which decorate the sanctuary** are given to the Glory of God by **Brian Edwards** in memory of his parents Tom and Gert Edwards, his aunt Ann Rasbeck and his grandparents Henry and Charlotte Miller. The greens were donated by Jan and Howard Sharp.

The **wreathes which decorate the doors** are given **Karen Bigenwald** in memory of her parents Isabelle and Sam Mohr.

***Christmas Poinsettia Donations
and/or contributions to
Family Promise of Wayne County
were made to the glory of God by the following:***

Bill Antell and Gunnar in memory of Georgene Antell

Karen Bigenwald in honor of Chris Cedar

Nancy Fehse in honor of Connie and Erich Helbig; in memory of Anna and Frank Steuerwald

Kathleen and Chick Forney in memory of Ralph and Betty Deuel

Ruth and Jeff Hedin in memory of Mary Hedin

Sandy Joyce

Mark and Glenda Lockard in memory of family and friends, near and far

Bob and Judy Lohr in memory of Allen and Dorothy Lohr, Edward and Loretta Baldasari

David and Sandy Moczarski in memory of Dr. Paul Moczarski

Kathy Moragne in memory of her parents

Frank and Gabriele Nardozi in memory of Erna and Gerhard Schlueter, Frank Nardozi, Irene Cortini

Patricia and David Olson in memory of Lyona and Gerard Van Hassent

Mary Osgood in memory of Bob Osgood

Julie Owen

John and Pat Schmeelk in memory of Bob Schmeelk

Howard and Jan Sharp in memory of all our loved ones

Cathy Stewart in honor of Paul Stewart

Amy and Hans Walter-Peterson in honor of our Godchildren Maddie, Izzy, Nate, and Micah; in memory of James L. Peterson

Anonymous in honor of her LYLAS Pastor Hoffman

Anonymous in honor of her LYLAS Kathy Forney

Merry Christmas!

We wish you and yours a blessed Christmas!
Our celebration of Christmas continues in the coming days.

Christmas Day - Sunday, December 25 at 11 am (note time)

In-person worship with holy communion

Refreshments following worship!

Service provided by the Upstate New York Synod will be available to view on Bethlehem's Facebook page or YouTube channel after 9 am.

New Year's Day – Sunday, January 1 at 11 am (note time)

In-person and livestream

Chili lunch following worship!

Worship: We resume Sunday worship at 8:55 am (both in-person and livestream) on Sunday, January 8. Visit our website – blcfairport.org/shareinworship – for information on how to participate in the livestream

Learn about upcoming events and activities... please sign-up to receive communication from Bethlehem, including Between Sundays (Mondays), the Weekly Star (Thursdays) and Ready for Worship (Saturdays). To subscribe, go to www.blcfairport.org and scroll down to sign up for reminders and special announcements. (*Let the office know if you prefer your information in paper copies.*)

Glory Enough for Everyone

To maintain the machinery of empire, people must be counted; not to be valued as individuals, but to assess tribute. It is the census. Lists of family members, and decisions about them, must be made. As your life, family, and records are audited, so also is your future decided. What sacrifice will be required for the glory of Rome?

If he has listened to Mary's song (Luke 1:46–55), Joseph, as the state-recognized head of the household, can safely allow himself and his family to be among the counted. He would know that Imperial Rome's time is short, that God brings down the "powerful from their thrones" and "sends the rich away empty." Although in temporary bondage, God's people will receive the promises made to Abraham for the sake of his descendants. If Joseph has listened to Mary (Luke 1:32–33) he knows that this son will sit on David's throne, and cannot be removed. He may not understand how and when these things will come to pass, only that they will. Why not be counted?

Shepherds, however, cannot expect to be counted. While the rest of the world is engaged in the games of empire, they watched their flocks, unnoticed by census-takers. But they were not unnoticed by God. Beyond the view of the watchful eye of Caesar, God was doing a new thing, forging true peace to upset the sham *pax* of imperial domination, a new kingdom whose only army is that of angels singing, rank upon rank, of God's saving work. It all begins with the unforeseen birth of a child and the wonder of a mother. We, like shepherds, stand in awe at God's gracious surprise. There is glory enough for all.

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