

*O Come, O Wisdom
Sunday, December 11, 2022*



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

Sunday, December 11, 2022 ~ O Come, O Wisdom

Announcements

Call to Worship

Savior of the Nations, Come

NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND
arr. Cathy Moglebust

The Chancel Bells
assisted by BLC Percussion Ensemble

For centuries, Christians have sung O Come, O Come Emanuel and lifted up the titles for the Messiah that are named in scripture. Today's readings points to Messiah – Wisdom – who creates and sustains creation.

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Come, Lord Jesus.

On this day and in this place, be our guest.

Now is the time to wake from sleep.

And confront our sins, confessing them to God who is merciful and just.

Silence for reflection

God for whom we wait,

We confess that we have grown complacent with the world as it is and lost a vision for how you created it to be. We fail to see you in the face of our neighbor. We rely on our own will instead of listening for your Wisdom. Come to us with forgiveness and mercy.

People of God, a new thing is growing in our midst. By water and the Spirit you are joined to this wonder. You have put on ☩ Christ, and your sins are washed away. Rejoice in the way of the Lord.

Amen

GREETING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Eternal God, your Word of wisdom goes forth and does not return empty: Grant us such knowledge and love of you that we may perceive your presence in all creation and every creature; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, now and forever.

Amen.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

The Advent wreath will be lit as we sing O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

ELW 257

st. 2

O come, O Wisdom from on high,
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
teach us your will and guide our way

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

PRAYER FOR LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Messiah, Holy Wisdom, come and teach us your way.

Jesus everybody's waiting for you to teach us: how to care, how to live, how to play, how to share, how to give, how to love just like you. O Come, Lord Jesus.

Amen.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

DISMISSAL TO WORSHIP FOR KIDS

All kids ages 3 through elementary are welcome to a special time of hearing the Word, conversation and activity! Parents can remain in the sanctuary while the kids gather in the room across the hall from the side entrance to the sanctuary. Kids will return during the offering so they can participate in Communion.

READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

³Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
“Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;

⁷the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

assisted by cantors: Alison Henry, Paige O'Malley

Cantors: st. 1

All: sts. 2, 3

Now the Heavens Start to Whisper



1 Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is grow - ing thin.
2 Heav - y clouds that block the moon - light now be - gin to drift a - way.
3 Christ, e - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of wis - dom's seed,



Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten to the stir - ring, faint with - in:
Dia - mond bril - liance through the dark - ness shines the hope of com - ing day.
come to bless with fire and fra - grance hours of yearn - ing, hurt, and need.



seed of prom - ise, deep - ly plant - ed, child to spring from Jes - se's stem!
Christ, the morn - ing star of splen - dor, gleams with - in a world grown dim.
In the lone - ly, in the strang - er, in the out - cast, hid from view;



Like the soil be - neath the frost - line, hearts grow soft to wel - come him.
Heav - en's em - ber fans to full - ness; hearts grow warm to wel - come him.
Child who comes to grace the man - ger, teach our hearts to wel - come you.



THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

A brief silence.

#1 Loving God, as the Advent lights increase, stir up in us the strength and wisdom to be your light in the world. Give us calm and patient hearts as we gather with family and friends. Keep us mindful of those for whom this season is not happy. We pray for those who suffer depression, loneliness and anxiety, especially during the holidays. We ask God to help us be attentive to people around us who are struggling, that they might find understanding, hope, support, inclusion and caring companions in our communities of faith. God of Wisdom,
Hear us, we pray.

#2 Gracious God, we rejoice in the gifts of your Spirit. Equip the global church to magnify your love and peace in every land. We pray for the work of the Lutheran World Federation and ELCA Global Mission. God of Wisdom,
Hear us, we pray.

#3 Abundant God, we rejoice in your creation. Revive lands we have squandered and depleted. Make gardens flourish in cities and neighborhoods. Cleanse polluted air and water so living things may breathe, drink, and praise you. God of Wisdom,
Hear us, we pray.

Come, Lord Jesus to neighbors far and near. We pray for these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: Jim, Jim & Mary Jane, John & Pat, Joe & Kathy, and Beth & Kevin (Autumn & Ilana). Be with our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe as they receive your presence in new ways. God of Wisdom,
Hear us, we pray.

Come, Lord Jesus, to all in need of your hope and healing.

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Jerry, friend of Kathy M., who is recovering from valve replacement on December 2
- Those who are caregivers for loved ones
- Those who are ill from Coronavirus and all who care for them

We also remember those we lift before you, silently and aloud...

Silence for individual prayer.

God of Wisdom,
Hear us, we pray.

God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

SHARING GOD'S MEAL

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Share the peace in a way that cares for friend and neighbor.

If you worship virtually, share the peace through the comments section or text.

OFFERING

Information about supporting Bethlehem's ministry with your offerings is available in the Welcome insert in your pew rack or by visiting

blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry.

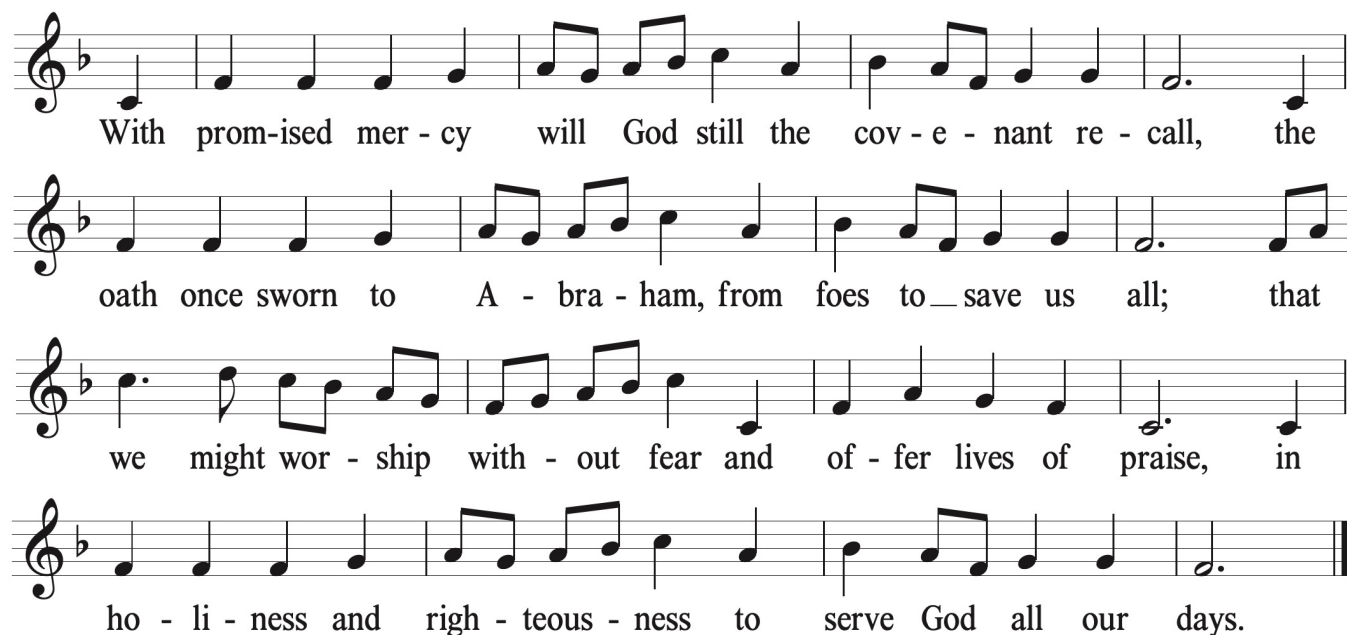
OFFERING OF MUSIC

Visit Us, Emmanuel

referencing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"
words and music, Pepper Choplin

The Chancel Choir

OFFERTORY



With prom-ised mer - cy will God still the cov - e - nant re - call, the
oath once sworn to A - bra - ham, from foes to save us all; that
we might wor - ship with - out fear and of - fer lives of praise, in
ho - li - ness and righ - teous - ness to serve God all our days.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

We pray. Holy One,

we wait in hope. And we give with hope. Hope for your coming reign; hope because you are present with us even now. Receive these generous offerings, and use them for your work of healing and hope in the world. Amen.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Spirit and the church cry out:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

All those who await his appearance pray:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

The whole creation pleads:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Lord Jesus,

open our hearts to believe that you come in this meal of grace. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

One in body, one in Spirit, we pray:

**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

Be strong, do not fear. Here is your God who has come to save you.

Thanks be to God.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant. If you worship through the Livestream and wish to receive communion, please reach out to one of the pastors.

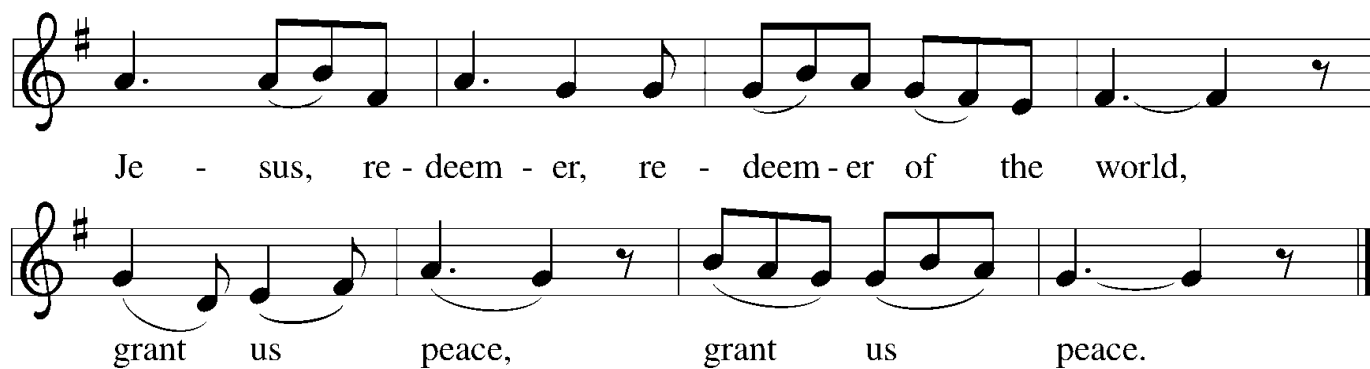
THE COMMUNION



Je - sus, Lamb of God, have mer - cy on us.



Je - sus, bear - er of our sins, have mer - cy on us.



COMMUNION HYMNS
The King Shall Come
All Earth Is Hopeful

ELW 260
ELW 266

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

The God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus for whom we wait.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN	Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers	ELW 244
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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Wait for the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

People, Look East!

French carol
setting, Kristina Langlois

BLC Musicians

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Dr. Jim Jefferis, Director of The Chancel Choir

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

Thank you to all those who participated in worship this Sunday! Want to learn more about what roles are needed in worship or sign-up for a pre-scheduled role? Fill out the survey on the table in the narthex and place it in the basket or speak with a pastor.

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.

What's happening at BLC this week? Visit the Calendar of Events at www.blcfairport.org. Zoom links for virtual meetings are also found there. If you would like to schedule a meeting or event, please email the church office at office@blcfairport.org or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

Church office hours: Thank you for your patience during this transition without office support staff. Our co-Pastors are available Sunday-Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling (585)223-0634 or emailing pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org or pastor.amy@blcfairport.org

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Prayer of the Day is from *What Are We Waiting For* by William H. Petersen
Offertory Prayer – by Rev. Joanna Harader from SpaciousFaith.com
Hymn of the Day: Now the Heavens Start to Whisper
Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953
Music: SŪO GÂN, Welsh melody
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Living In the Now and the Not Yet

In this season of Advent we stand in the discomfoting quiet of waiting for the salvation of the Lord while simultaneously seeing that very salvation breaking into the world around us. Like John the Baptist we ask Jesus “are you here, or should we still wait?” The answer to this question is “yes.” Yes, Jesus is here among us in his body and blood at the eucharist. But we wait for the day when he returns. Yes, Jesus is here among us bringing peace and reconciliation. But we wait for the day when he will make *a//* things new. The new life promised by the coming of a savior is both realized and still to come. We who live in the Christian faith do so as people searching the world around us for signs of God’s kingdom. Gathering as Christ’s body on earth, we have a sort of dual-citizenship in the now and the not-yet as we both proclaim that Christ is among us and also fervently pray “even so, come Lord Jesus.” As believers, our hope does not rest in the efforts of our piety or in the comfort of the hereafter. Rather, our hope is in the promises of a gracious, faithful God; promises fulfilled before our eyes and those not yet seen. We long for the day in which, like Isaiah’s vision of what will be, the blind see and the lame leap like deer. Yet we tell what we see and hear around us: that the dead are raised and the poor receive good news. The day is here and yet still we wait. Even so, come, Lord Jesus