



Sunday, January 29, 2023
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany



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, January 29, 2023 ~ *Fourth Sunday after Epiphany*

Prelude

All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly

HOLY MANNA
setting, Edwin T. Childs

Announcements

Who are the blessed ones of God? For Micah, they are those who do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. For Paul, they are the ones who find wisdom in the weakness of the cross. For Jesus, they are the poor, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who mourn, and those who hunger for righteousness. In baptism we find our blessed identity and calling in this countercultural way of living and serving.

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who makes all things new, whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy One, source of our renewal,

we confess that we are wrapped up in sin, and cannot free ourselves. We have not practiced your righteousness. Our hearts have turned away from you. For the sake of the world you so love, forgive us, that we may be reconciled to one another for the glory of your holy name. Amen.

Thus says our God: “The former things have come to pass and new things I now declare.” God’s mercy makes us new. We are forgiven in the name of † Christ our Savior.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

Dearest Jesus, at Your Word

ELW 520

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.

HYMN OF PRAISE



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God’s peo-ple on earth.



Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al - might-y God and Fa - ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



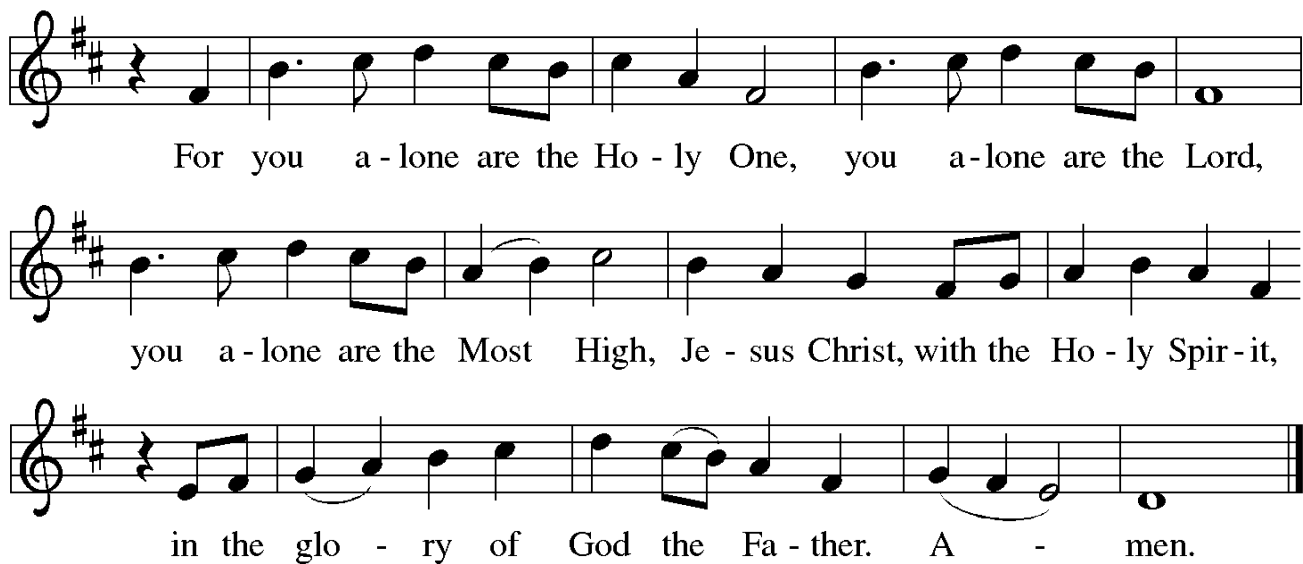
Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

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: Micah 6:1-8

With the mountains and the foundations of the earth as the jury, God brings a lawsuit against Israel. God has "wearied" Israel with a long history of saving acts. God does not want or expect lavish sacrifices to attempt to earn divine favor. Rather God empowers the people to do justice, to love loyalty to God, and to walk shrewdly in God's service.

¹Hear what the Lord says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

²Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the Lord,
and you enduring foundations of the earth;
for the Lord has a controversy with his people,
and he will contend with Israel.

³“O my people, what have I done to you?

In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

⁴For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,
and redeemed you from the house of slavery;
and I sent before you Moses,

Aaron, and Miriam.

⁵O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the Lord.”

⁶“With what shall I come before the Lord,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?

⁷Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

⁸He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le-lu - ia! Lord and Sav - ior: o - pen now your sav - ing word.



Let it burn like fire with - in us; speak un - til our hearts are stirred.



Al - le - lu - ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 5:1-12

Jesus opens the Sermon on the Mount by naming those who are blessed in the reign of God.

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY	Lead Me Lord
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Stanzas 1: choir

2, 3: all

LEAD ME, LORD

John D. Becker



1. Bless - ed are the poor in spir - it, long - ing for their
2. Bless - ed are the mer - ci - ful, for mer - cy shall be
3. Blest are they who through their life - times sow the seeds of



1. Lord, for God's com - ing king - dom shall be theirs.
2. theirs, and the pure in heart shall see their God.
3. peace, all will call them chil - dren of the Lord.



1. Bless - ed are the sor - row - ing, for they shall be con -
2. Blest are they whose hun - ger on - ly ho - li - ness can
3. Blest are you, though per - se - cu - ted in your ho - ly



1. soled, and the meek shall come to rule the world.
2. fill, for I say they shall be sat - is - fied.
3. life, for in heav - en, great is your re - ward.



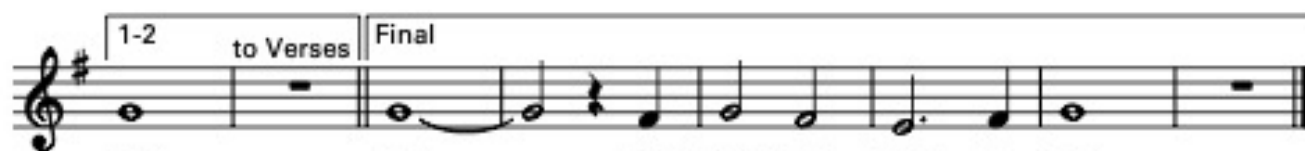
Lead me, Lord, lead me, Lord, by the light of truth to



seek and to find the nar - row way. Be my way;



be my truth; be my life, my Lord, and lead me, Lord, to -



day. day. And lead me, Lord, to - day.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

Called together to follow Jesus, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

#1 Cultivate humility in your church. In gatherings of every size, teach us to boast only in the cross. Shape your church to be people of kindness, generosity, and justice. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

#2 The foundations of the earth bear witness to your faithfulness; the mountains and hills echo with your holiness. When we mistreat your creation, show us the error of our ways. Inspire us with reverent awe to honor all you have made. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

#3 You make foolish the wisdom of the world. Raise up honorable leaders who seek justice, love mercy, and pursue peace. Frustrate plans that are corrupt, wicked, and self-seeking. Prosper the work of peacemakers in every community. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

We follow you in sharing love and care in our world. We pray for these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: Debbie & John, Paul, Rich & Sue, Anita, Bethany, and Luke. Be with our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe as they follow where you lead. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Seek out those who are struggling in body, mind or spirit. Provide for those in any need.

We lift up prayers of thanksgiving for:

- the safe delivery and birth of Emersyn Rose G., daughter of Brian and AJ G., granddaughter of Sandy G., niece of Carol S., on 1/19

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

- Bob L., who died on 1/20

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Andy G., who is recovering from surgery
- Steve H., father of Kevin H., who is hospitalized with complications from Covid
- Bob P. as he recovers from knee replacement surgery
- Those who are caregivers for loved ones
- Those who are ill from Coronavirus and all who care for them

We pray for those we name before you in our hearts or on our voice.

Silence for individual prayer.

God of grace,
hear our prayer.

We bring to you our needs and hopes, O God, trusting your wisdom and power revealed in Christ crucified.

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

O Taste and See

Psalm 34: 8-10
Deborah Govenor

The Chancel Choir

Lord of light, your name outshining
All the stars and suns of space,
Use our talents in your kingdom
As the servants of your grace;
Use us to fulfill your purpose
In the gift of Christ your Son.
Father, as in highest heaven,
So on earth your will be done.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Liberating God,
you break the bonds of injustice and let the oppressed go free. Receive these offerings in thanksgiving for all your works of merciful power, and shape us as people of your justice and freedom. You we magnify and adore, through Jesus our Savior, Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Friends, we come to the table
Where God intends us to be nourished.
So come, you who hunger and thirst
For a deeper faith, a better life, a fairer world.
Jesus Christ, who is present at our tables,
Now invites us to be guests at his.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Now we do as Jesus did.
We take this bread and wine, the produce of earth and fruit of human labor.
In these, Jesus has promised to be present;
through these, Christ feeds us.
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

Come and taste the joy of God!

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



1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.
e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

COMMUNION HYMN

O God of Mercy, God of Light

ELW 714

Stanzas 1, 3, 5, 6: all

2: men

4: women

COMMUNION HYMNS

Now the Silence

ELW 460

O Master, Let Me Walk with You

ELW 818

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



1 O Lord, now let your ser - vant de - part in heav'n-ly peace,



for I have seen the glo - ry of your re - deem - ing grace:



LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

The God who faithfully brings forth justice ✠ bless, strengthen, and uphold you,
today and always.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN	Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart	ELW 873
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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Follow the way of Jesus.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Sortie

L. J. T. Darwall

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: 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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Lead Me Lord -

Text: Matthew 5:3-12; 7:7, 13; John 14:6. Text and music © 1987, John D. Becker.

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A Hunger for Justice

In today's first reading, God cries, "O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me!" (Micah 6:3). The people of God have forgotten God's deliverance and who God has called them to be. Like a shrewd prosecutor, God has placed them on trial and is examining their actions, recounting the signs of mercy and loving kindness shown to them from generation to generation and searching for a sign that they are living into who God has called them to be. And so, they are reminded that this is how you shall live: do justice, love kindness, walk humbly.

A Latin American prayer asks: "Lord, to those who hunger, give bread. And to those who have bread, give the hunger for justice." The words of this more modern-day prayer do not sound so different from the ancient words spoken by the prophet Micah to God's people. "What does the Lord require of you," asks Micah, "but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). The hunger of God's people has already been filled by the mercy of God, and so they are called by God to feed the hunger of others through lives of justice, kindness, and humility.

In the Sunday assembly, God surrounds the gathered people with reminders of who and whose they are: we splash in the waters of baptism, are brought to new life in the word, are fed and forgiven through bread and wine. Around the table, hunger is satisfied, and a hunger for justice is renewed. From the table, God sends the gathered assembly, blessed and broken, to feed the hunger of others as, together, we await the fulfillment of the kingdom.