



*Sunday, October 15, 2023*  
*20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost*



# BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ [www.blcfairport.org](http://www.blcfairport.org)  
The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

**Sunday, October 15, 2023 ~ 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

## PRELUDE

Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele, op. 122, no. 5  
(Adorn yourself, O dear soul)

Johannes Brahms

Prelude on “The Feast Is Ready”

R. S. Clare

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*In Isaiah 25:1-9 we are given a vision of the great feast to come, when God will wipe away death forever. In Jesus’ parable about a great banquet, those invited do not come, so the invitation is extended to others. In our liturgy God spreads a table before us. Even amid anxiety and hardship we rejoice in the peace of God which surpasses all understanding. With great joy we feast at the table of the Lord, and we go forth to share the wonderful invitation with others hungering and thirsting for the abundant life of God.*

## **GATHERING**

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be God, the one who forms us, ✠ Jesus who bears the cross, the Spirit who makes our joy complete.

**Amen.**

Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Steadfast and faithful God,  
you have revealed the ways of justice, yet we fail to follow you. We are  
overwhelmed by the world's violence and suffering. We are afraid to risk  
what we have for the sake of others. For the harm we have caused, known  
and unknown, forgive us. For the unjust demands we place on others and  
your creation, forgive us. For the ways we turn away from you and our  
neighbor, forgive us. Lead us back to you and set us on the right path; in the  
name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Beloved in Christ, God's justice stretches beyond all understanding. God's  
compassion is beyond compare. In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us.  
In ✠ Christ, you are already and always forgiven.  
**Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN    The Trumpets Sound, the Angels Sing

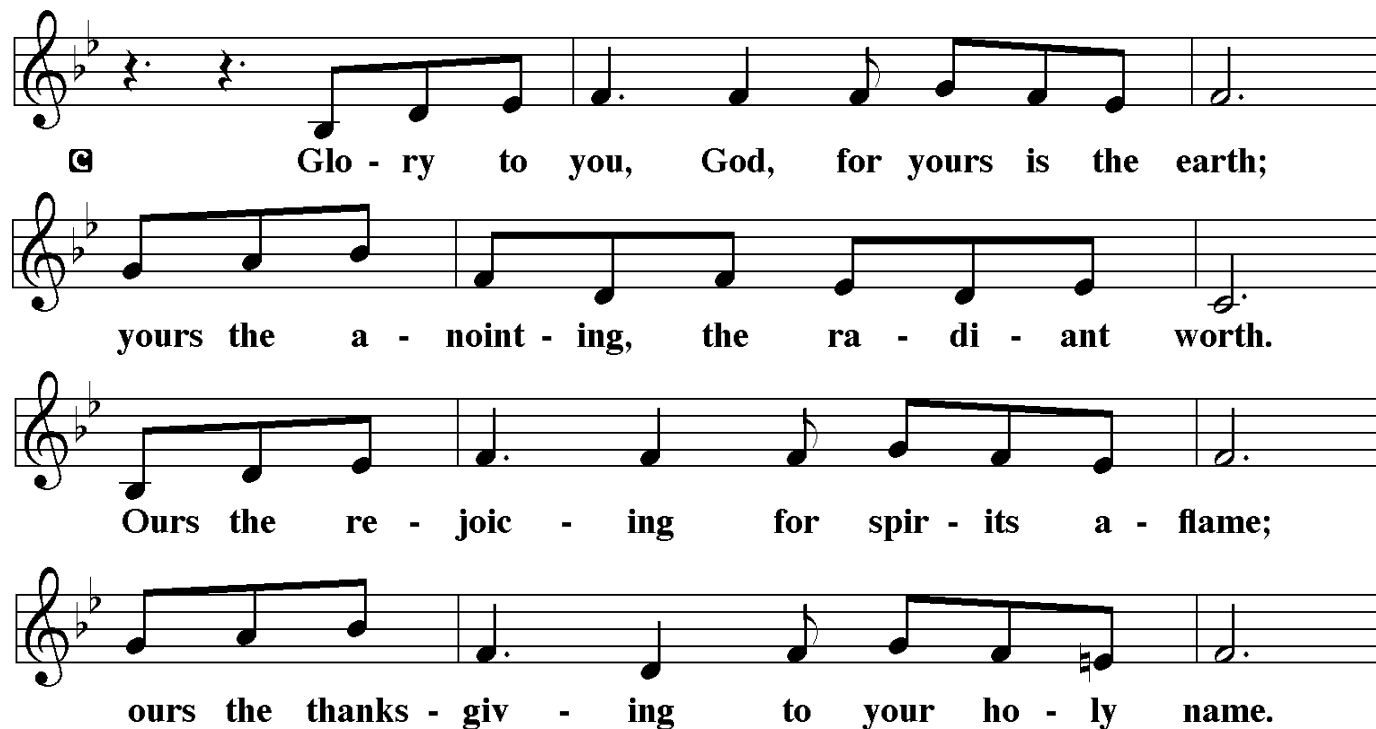
ELW 531

#### GREETING

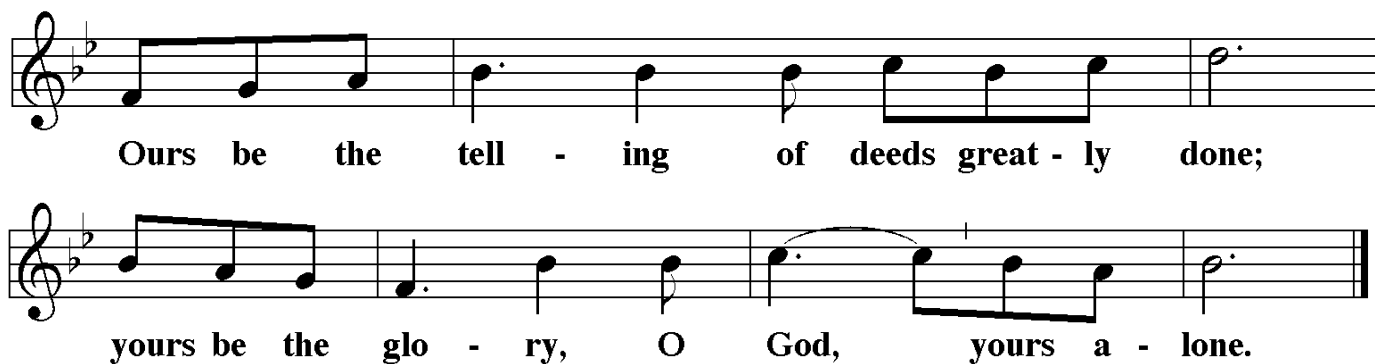
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the  
Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

#### HYMN OF PRAISE



Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;  
yours the a - noint - ing, the ra - di - ant worth.  
Ours the re - joic - ing for spir - its a - flame;  
ours the thanks - giv - ing to your ho - ly name.



### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord of the feast, you have prepared a table before all peoples and poured out your life with abundance. Call us again to your banquet. Strengthen us by what is honorable, just, and pure, and transform us into a people of righteousness and peace, through 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: Philippians 4:1-9

*Though writing from prison and facing an uncertain future, Paul calls on the Philippians to rejoice and give thanks to God no matter what the circumstance. God's peace is with us and binds together our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ, especially when things around us do not seem peaceful.*

<sup>1</sup>My brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

<sup>2</sup>I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. <sup>3</sup>Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

<sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup>Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup>Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

#### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



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

#### GOSPEL: Matthew 22:1-14

*Jesus tells a parable indicating that the blessings of God's kingdom are available to all, but the invitation is not to be taken lightly.*

<sup>1</sup>Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: <sup>2</sup>“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. <sup>3</sup>He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. <sup>4</sup>Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ <sup>5</sup>But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, <sup>6</sup>while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. <sup>7</sup>The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. <sup>8</sup>Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup>Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ <sup>10</sup>Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

<sup>11</sup>“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was

not wearing a wedding robe, <sup>12</sup>and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. <sup>13</sup>Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ <sup>14</sup>For many are called, but few are chosen.”

The gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY	For Everyone Born
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*assisted by cantor: Jim Jefferis*

Cantor: st. 1  
All: sts. 2, 3, 4, 5

# For Everyone Born

E Leader or All

A2



1 For ev - ery - one born,

2 For wom - an and man,

3 For young and for old,

4 For just and un - just,

5 For ev - ery - one born,

a place at the ta - ble,

a place at the ta - ble,

a place at the ta - ble,

a place at the ta - ble,

a place at the ta - ble,

E

A2

Bsus

B



for ev - ery - one born,

re - vis - ing the roles,

a voice to be heard,

a - bus - er, a - bused,

to live with - out fear,

clean wa - ter and bread,

de - cid - ing the share,

a part in the song,

with need to for - give,

and sim - ply to be,





a shel - ter, a space, a safe place for grow - ing,  
 with wis - dom and grace, di - vid - ing the pow - er,  
 the hands of a child in hands that are wrin - kled,  
 in an - ger, in hurt, a mind - set of mer - cy,  
 to work, to speak out, to wit - ness and wor - ship,



for ev - ery - one born, a star o - ver - head,  
 for wom - an and man, a sys - tem that's fair,  
 for young and for old, the right to be - long,  
 for just and un - just, a new way to live,  
 for ev - ery - one born, the right to be free,

*Refrain*



and God will de-light when we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice and



joy, com-pas - sion and peace: yes,



God will de-light when we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice,



jus-tice and joy!

## APOSTLES' CREED

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

*A brief silence.*

#1 For green pastures and still waters and all the beauty of the natural world, that creation flourishes and humankind lives in right relationship with all you have made. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

#2 For all experiencing valleys of illness and grief, that they be healed and comforted and find rest in the presence of the Good Shepherd who walks beside them. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**



#3 For this community of believers, that wherever there is conflict or discord, the love of Christ may keep us united and make us mindful of all that is true, honorable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable, and excellent. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

By the power of your Spirit, you build us into your beloved community. Strengthen the connections we share with these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: James & Kathy, Jason & Sarah (Logan, Quinn), Bryan & Lynn (Calvin, Emma), Frank & Gabriele, Gwen & Paul. Strengthen the ministries we share with others, especially our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of all compassion, in Christ, you lovingly poured yourself out like wine for your people. Pour out your mercy to those struggling in body, mind, or spirit.

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

- Don R., father of Kim K., who died on 10/10
- Chick F., who died on 10/8
- Ben D., best friend of Dan M., who died on 10/2
- Doug S., former BLC member, who died on 9/30
- Dylan, friend of Paul T., who died on 9/25

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

- Margaret M., who is recovering from injuries sustained in a car accident

Hear these prayers we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

*Silence for individual prayer.*

Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ.  
**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](http://blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry).*

### OFFERING OF MUSIC

O How Amiable

Psalms 84 and 90  
R. Vaughan Williams

The Chancel Choir

### OFFERTORY



☐ Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bles - sing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were



sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.



Gath - er the hopes and dreams of all; u - nite them with the prayers we



#### OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. God of power, God of plenty,  
**all things belong to you. We bring your gifts to the table, that all might be fed.**  
**Form us into the body of your Beloved, Jesus Christ, our Savior.**  
**Amen.**

#### 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

Lord Jesus, you are resurrection and life.  
**We give thanks that at your table you fill us with good things and feed us from your abundance.**  
Pour out your Spirit on us and this feast of love.  
**Build us into a lasting community that embodies your love. Strengthen us to serve you in all we do. Amen.**

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER

One in body, one in Spirit, we 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

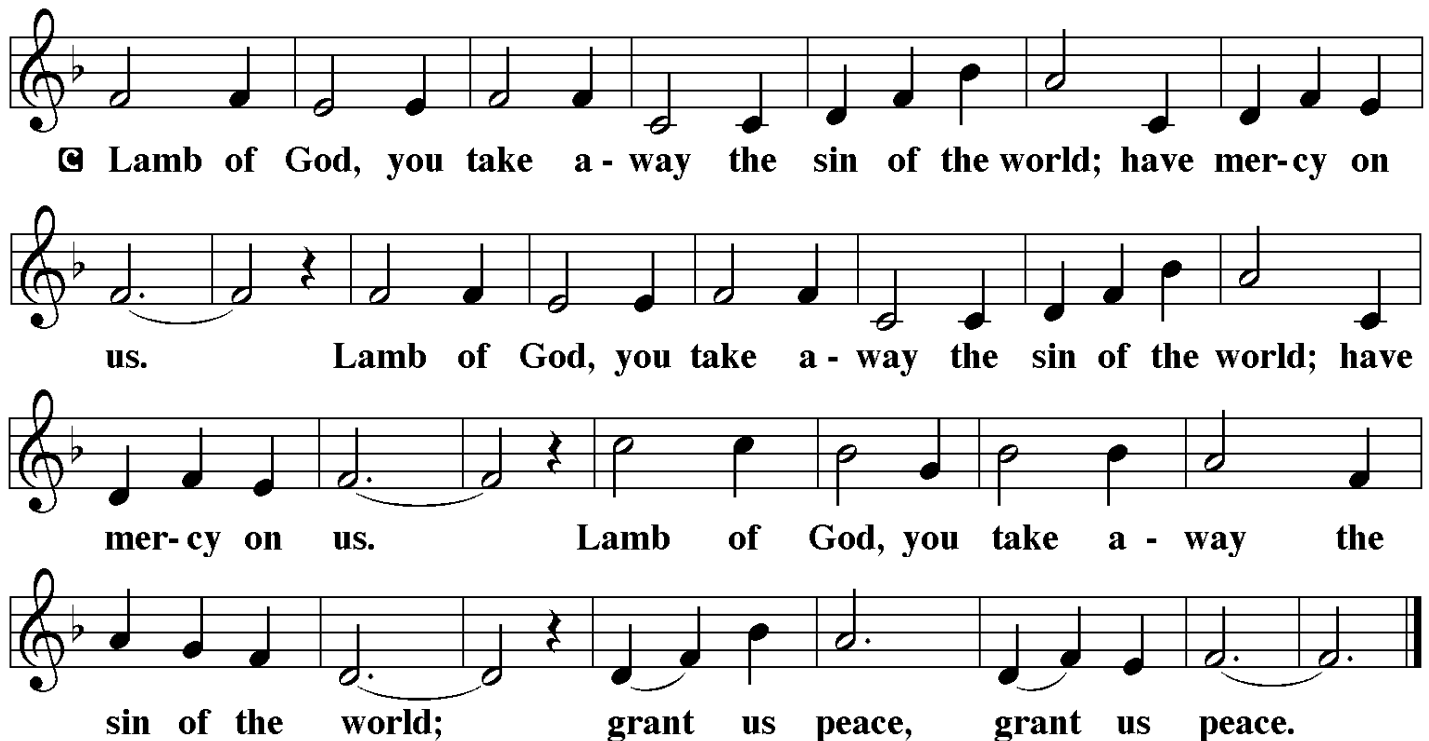
#### INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Jesus invites you to this table. Come, eat and live.  
**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



**☩ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on**  
**us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have**  
**mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the**  
**sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.**

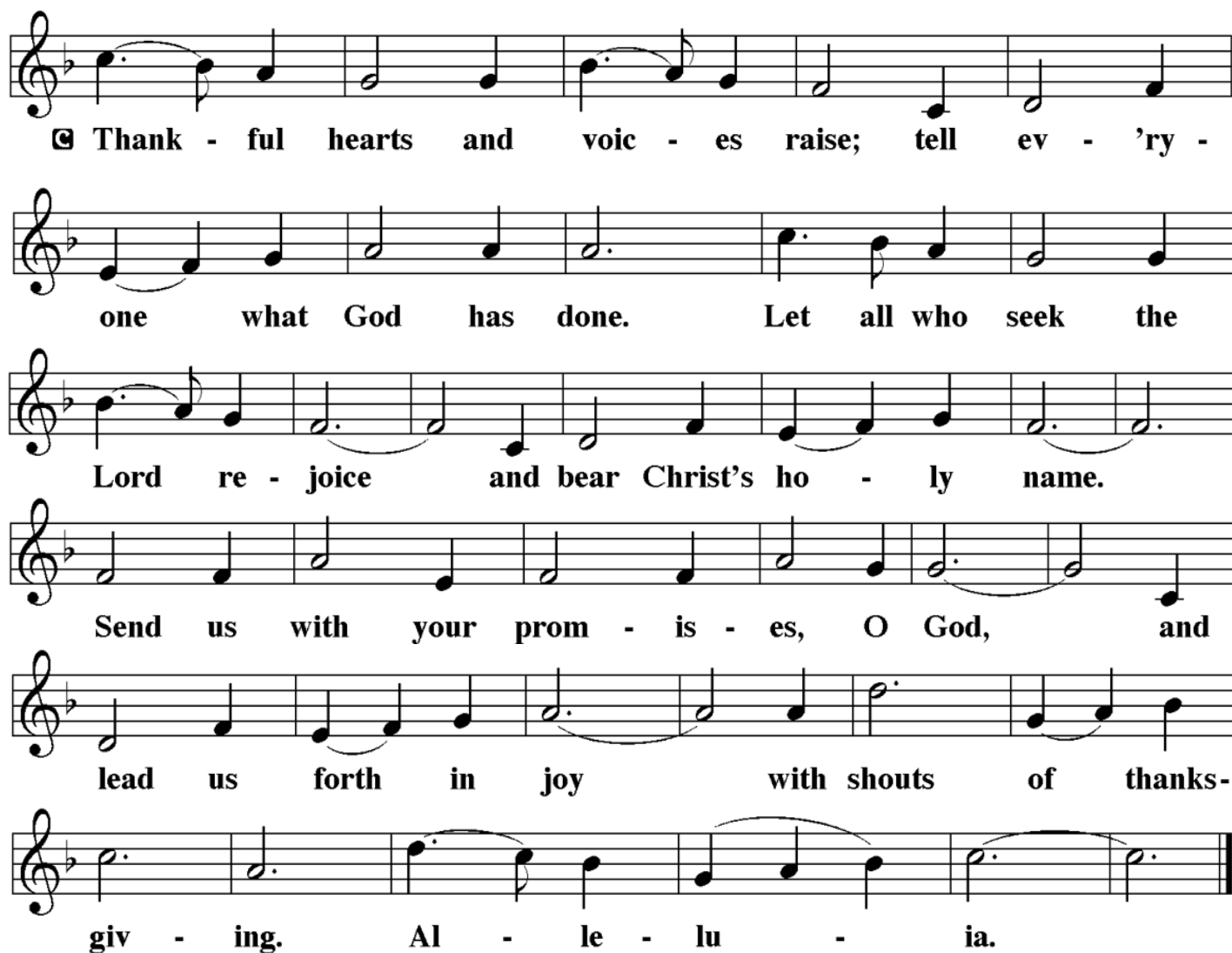
#### COMMUNION HYMNS

Now We Join in Celebration  
Around You, O Lord Jesus

ELW 462  
ELW 468

## TABLE BLESSING

### POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



☐ Thank - ful hearts and voic - es raise; tell ev - 'ry -  
one what God has done. Let all who seek the  
Lord re - joice and bear Christ's ho - ly name.  
Send us with your prom - is - es, O God, and  
lead us forth in joy with shouts of thanks -  
giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia.

### LEAVING TO SERVE

#### BENEDICTION

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in ✠ Christ Jesus.

**Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart!

ELW 873

#### DISMISSAL

Go in peace. God is at work in you.

**Thanks be to God.**



## POSTLUDE

Postlude on “Sicilian Mariners”  
(Lord Dismiss Us with Thy Blessing)

Alfred V. Fedak

## 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? Talk with Mark Finke or one of the pastors following worship or contact Mark directly at [volunteersupport@blcfairport.org](mailto:volunteersupport@blcfairport.org).

**The altar flowers today** are given in loving memory by the family of Connie Helbig, whose funeral was held at Bethlehem on October 12

**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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org) or [pastor.amy@blcfairport.org](mailto:pastor.amy@blcfairport.org).

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**Notice of congregational meeting - Sunday, October 29** following worship. Please plan to attend Bethlehem's annual congregational meeting. Your presence will help us achieve the required quorum to conduct essential business of the congregation, including adopting a spending plan for the fiscal year. This meeting is in-person only.

## **Expensive Wedding. Expensive Grace.**

On a recent reality TV show entitled *Wedding Wars*, engaged couples competed for a complete wedding wardrobe. The winning couple received the bride's dress and the groom's tuxedo as well as proper attire for their entire wedding party. The estimated cash value was \$30,000. Getting married is not cheap.

In today's gospel Jesus tells a parable about a wedding invitation, a banquet, and God's grace. Jesus teaches about a king who ultimately invites all people to a wedding banquet. At first this parable seems to portray a wide open and gracious invitation to a wedding celebration. However, by the end it is hard not to feel sorry for the poor guy who gets a last-minute invitation but gets thrown out for not wearing the correct wedding duds! He apparently wasn't a winner on that era's counterpart of that reality TV show! Again, getting married is not cheap—but neither is grace.

Jesus tells this parable as a way of teaching us that receiving God's grace changes people. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer taught, God's grace is not cheap, it comes at a great cost upon the cross. Once we receive this costly grace, our lives are never the same. This grace compels us to act and calls us to bear fruit with our lives. Ultimately we are led to share this grace with others. To continue to live in the same way after receiving this gracious invitation is not an option. So what are we to do? We simply receive the gracious invitation to the banquet and find a changing room—it's time to live a new life.