



# Beyond Human Time

*Sunday, November 12, 2023*  
*Extended Advent 1*





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, November 12, 2023**

PRELUDE

My Lord, What a Morning

African-American spiritual  
setting, Chuck Marohnic

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Today Paul urges us to encourage one another with the promised coming of the Lord. Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids. Surrounded by the faithful of every time and place, we celebrate Christ's coming in our midst in the word of life and the feast of victory—the marriage feast of the lamb.*

**GATHERING**

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather today.

**It is time to worship!**

We listen for God

**It is time to hear!**

We receive God's grace.

**It is time to be loved!**

We leave in peace.

**It is time to serve others!**

As we wait for Jesus' arrival, Emmanuel, God-with-us, is already here in this time and place.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

With God, there is always time for forgiveness. We trust God, and we confess our sins together.

*Brief pause*

Holy One,

**We have not stayed awake. We have missed you when you appeared in our neighbors, in strangers half a world away, in the suffering planet. We have wasted the time and the skills that you gave us and assumed we were powerless to mend the breaches in our world. Sometimes, we have given up on your mercy, justice, and love. Speak tenderly to our anxious hearts. Tear open the heavens and heal what we have done. Amen.**

People of God, hear this good news: In the name of † Jesus Christ, all your sins are forgiven. Forgiveness gives us the courage we need. Wherever we wait for God's time to come, we will witness wonders.

**Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN	Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying	ELW 436
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GREETING

The grace of God, who was, who is, and who is to come, be with you all.

**And also with you.**

KYRIE



Lord, have mer - cy\_\_ on your peo - ple. Christ have mer - cy\_\_ on\_\_ us.  
Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.\_\_ Chri - ste e - le - i - son.



Shine your light in\_\_ to our dark - ness. Fill\_\_ us\_\_ with your ho - ly love.  
Heal all\_\_ con - flicts be - tween na - tions. Teach us\_\_ how to\_\_ live as one.



Be our strength in times of\_\_ trou - ble. Set us free from chains that\_\_ bind.  
Show us how to love our\_\_ neigh - bor. Run to those who\_\_ cry for\_\_ help.



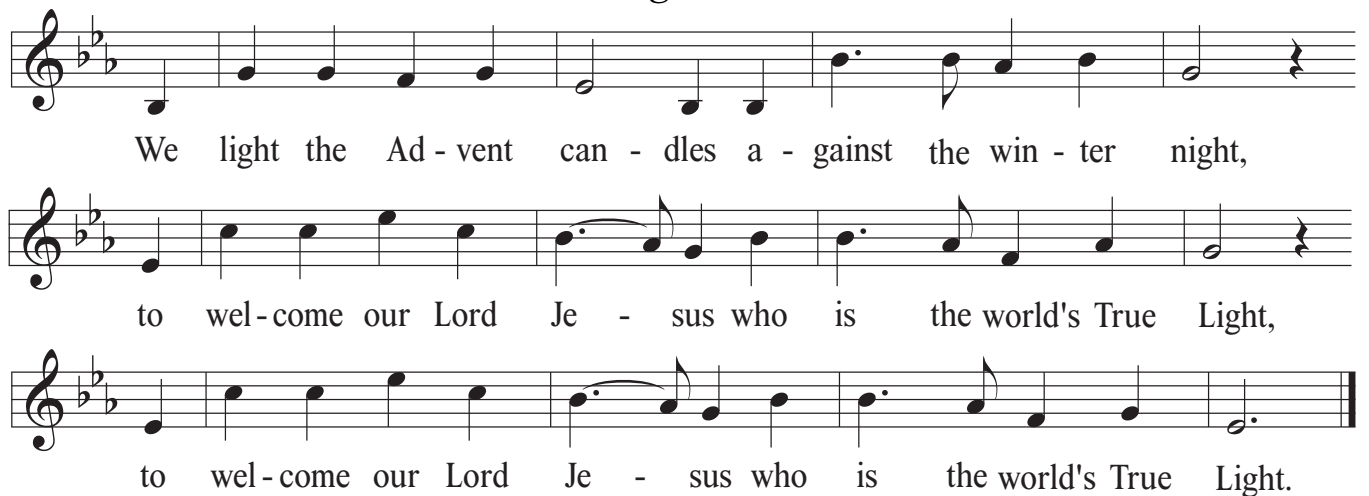
Breathe new\_ life in - to our\_\_ spir - its. Pu - ri - fy our\_\_ hearts and minds.  
Word made flesh who lives a - mong us; Christ our\_\_ Lord, Em - man - u - el.

## LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

“Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”  
(Matthew 25:13)

Let us pray. God of already's, never's, and everything in between:  
It is hard for us to sit with uncertainty.  
We do not know when you will return,  
we do not know if it's too late to prepare,  
we do not even know exactly how to get ready.  
As we light the first Advent candle,  
dwell with us in this uncertain time.  
Meet us in the space between always and never.  
Help us name our grief for what's past,  
and our hope for what's to come.  
**Amen.**

*The Advent candle will be lit as we sing:*



The image shows three staves of musical notation in a single system, all in a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is simple and consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the notes.

We light the Ad - vent can - dles a - gainst the win - ter night,  
to wel - come our Lord Je - sus who is the world's True Light,  
to wel - come our Lord Je - sus who is the world's True Light.

## **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: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

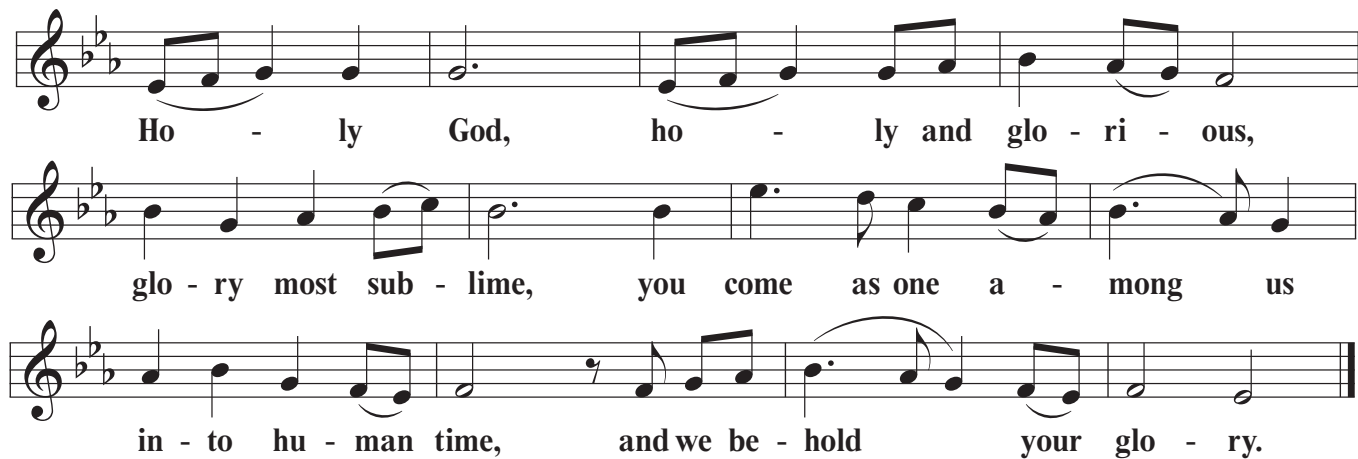
*Some of the Thessalonians are worried that dead Christians will be excluded from the resurrection to eternal life when Christ comes again. Paul reassures them with the word of hope that all Christians, living or dead, will be raised into everlasting life with Christ.*

<sup>13</sup>We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. <sup>14</sup>For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. <sup>15</sup>For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. <sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup>Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup>Therefore encourage one another with these words.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Ho - ly God, ho - ly and glo - ri - ous,  
glo - ry most sub - lime, you come as one a - mong us  
in - to hu - man time, and we be - hold your glo - ry.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 25:1-13

*Jesus tells a parable about his own second coming, emphasizing the need for readiness at all times.*

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup>“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup>Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. <sup>3</sup>When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; <sup>4</sup>but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. <sup>5</sup>As the bridegroom

was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. <sup>6</sup>But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ <sup>7</sup>Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup>The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ <sup>9</sup>But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ <sup>10</sup>And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup>Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ <sup>12</sup>But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’ <sup>13</sup>Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY	What Is the World Like	ACS 1047
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Choir: st. 1

All: sts. 2, 3, 4, 5

1 What is the world like when God's will is done?  
 2 What is the world like when God's will is done?  
 3 What is the world like when God's will is done?  
 4 What is the world like when God's will is done?  
 5 These are the sto - ries that Je - sus im - parts,

Mus - tard seeds grow more than we can con - ceive:  
 Wit - ness the wan - der - ing child com - ing home;  
 No more is neigh - bor just al - ly or friend;  
 Read - y for feast - ing, we watch through the night,  
 filled with the Spir - it who joins us as one.

roots thread the soil; branch - es reach for the sun.  
 watch as the par - ent breaks in - to a run.  
 peace thrives in plac - es where once there was none.  
 tend - ing our lamps till the new day's be - gun.  
 Born through our voic - es, our hands, and our hearts,

This is how God moves us each to be - lieve.  
 This is how God longs for us when we roam.  
 This is how God works when ri - val - ries end.  
 This is how God read - ies us for the light.  
 this is a new world where God's will is done.



## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

People of God, we are each other's kin, and we are family with all creation. As we wait and yearn for God, we pray together for our community, for the church around the world, and for every need.

*A brief silence.*

#1 O God for whom we wait, come quickly to your people, bring your salvation, and center us in hope found only in you. Deepen our faith through meaningful worship and send us out with your justice and truth. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

#2 O God for whom we watch, we glimpse your power in rushing water and your beauty in the darkening night. Restore this creation and provide clean water to all people and animals. Save us from foolish, wasteful living. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

#3 O God for whom we long, let justice roll down like waters on all nations. Bless citizens with wise leaders; save your children from war. We pray for the veterans of this community, that they are supported and loved. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Come, Lord Jesus to neighbors far and near. Deepen our kinship with these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: Andrea & Karl (Eliana, Raedyn), Becki & Bob, Morey, Dale, and Hans & Robyn (Trysta). Strengthen the ministries we share with others, especially our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Come, Lord Jesus to all who are hungry, thirsty, ill, or experiencing any struggles.

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

- Jerry T, especially wife, Toni, who died 11/4
- Jai, daughter of Jim and Jane, friends of John C

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

- Dawn W, niece of Sue T, who is recovering from multiple surgeries
- Joan B who is in rehab at Penfield Place following a recent fall
- Brian, Learning Links leader, as he undergoes treatment
- Donna B who is recovering from surgery
- David M, brother of Ron M, who has been diagnosed with cancer and will start radiation treatment
- Becky R, friend of Jim and Donna B, who recovering from a serious surgery
- Irene M, friend of Jim and Donna B, who recovering from a serious surgery
- Gary S, friend of Jim and Donna B, who recovering from a serious surgery

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

*Silence for individual prayer.*

Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

God, you are always with us. We gather these prayers together, and we entrust them to your endless love in the name of Jesus.

**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

Jubilate Deo

Psalm 100  
Benjamin Britten

The Chancel Choir

## OFFERTORY



1. Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.

2. Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.



Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.

Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Loving God, for the time we have, and for the gifts we offer, we say:  
**Thank you.**

For the chance to help others, and for the people whose lives will be better because of these gifts, we say:

**Thank you.**

For the ways you are changing the world, we say:

**Thank you.**

We pray in the name of Jesus, who appears wherever people need our help.

**Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

God, our Creator

**the abundance of your goodness overflows into creation.**

Through the generations

**your goodness continues to flow in friendship with humanity.**

From beyond time into this moment

**your goodness comes in this meal.**

When the time was right, you entered our human existence in Jesus, who was born humbly, who spent his life with the unlikely and unloved, who healed and taught and preached the good news of your way.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Whenever we share this bread and cup,

**Jesus is here with us, in this moment, in this time and place.**

Whenever we share this bread and cup,

**God takes us out of time and joins us with God's people in every time and place.**

Whenever we share this bread and cup, we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Send the Spirit of your presence on us now, O God, so that we too will overflow with goodness.

**Strengthen us by this meal, so that through us, your presence will flow out in mercy, justice, and love. Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

We prepare for you, praying as you 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

The time is now! Taste and see God's goodness!  
**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



O Lamb of God you take a-way our sin; have mer-cy on us, give\_ us your  
peace. Pre -pare us to re - ceive\_ your grace and teach us how to fol - low your ways. Re-  
joice! Re - joice! E - man - u - el has come to you, O Is - ra - el.

#### COMMUNION HYMNS

My Lord, What a Morning

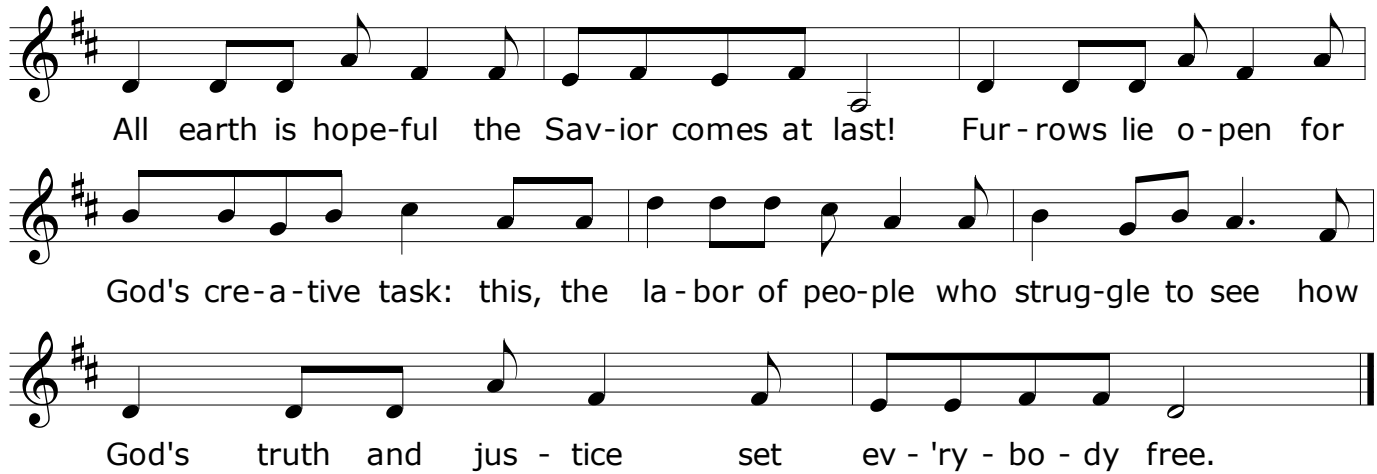
ELW 438

Oh, Happy Day When We Shall Stand

ELW 441

## TABLE BLESSING

### POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



All earth is hope-ful the Sav-ior comes at last! Fur-rows lie o-pen for  
God's cre-a-tive task: this, the la-bor of peo-ple who strug-gle to see how  
God's truth and jus-tice set ev-'ry-bo-dy free.

## LEAVING TO SERVE

### BENEDICTION

God our Creator, present before time; † Jesus our Redeemer, arriving at the right time; The Holy Spirit our Enlivener, acting in our time; Bless you now and always.  
**Amen.**

SENDING HYMN	Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers	ELW 244
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### DISMISSAL

Keep alert: trust God; go in peace.  
**Thanks be to God.**

### POSTLUDE

Wachet auf  
(Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying)

Philipp Nicolai  
setting, David Polley

## **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).

**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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What the World Is Like: Text: Adam M. L. Tice, b. 1979, Music: NEW WORLD, Sally Ann Morris, b. 1952

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## **Trusting in God, Trusting with God**

Human beings are relational creatures. We are created to be in relationship with one another and with God. No one, no matter how independent or disconnected they may feel they are, functions completely outside the context of relationships. From the moment we are born we are thrust into relationship with people around us—the people who delivered us, the people who will be taking care of us in a hospital nursery, our family, and God. When we enter this world we do so forming relationships right from the start.

Relationships, healthy relationships, require a lot of work and care to continue. In particular, relationships require trust to grow and become mature. Relationships rooted in trust can bring out the best in us. Relationships rooted in anything else can bring out the worst.

Today's readings give us the chance to consider the trust required in the relationship between God and God's people. Moreover, we are invited to give thought to the consequences of replacing trust with something else: hubris stemming from trust in one's identity or work (in Amos), or hubris stemming from trust in others to sustain us rather than God (in Matthew). Paul reminds us that our relationship with God is cause for joy, even in the midst of sorrow, since we believe (trust) God's promise of eternal life through the living Lord Jesus.