



*Words for the Beginning
Provoked to Love
Sunday, November 17, 2024*



BETHLEHEM
LUTHERAN CHURCH

48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ www.blcfairport.org

PRELUDE

“Veni, Emmanuel”

French processional, 15th cent.
setting, David Schack

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Advent is a season of endings and beginnings. As the calendar year comes to a close, a new church year rushes in. Christ’s birth ushers us into new ways of living and loving—and yet, we feel the weight of many things coming to an end. The world as we know it spins madly on. As we move through new chapters, may these words for the beginning renew us and remind us of the ways we are called to live out our faith. No matter what you are facing, no matter what this new day brings, let love be your beginning.

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, our refuge, our delight, our beginning and our end.

Amen.

Let us come in truth before the one who loves us and has freed us from our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Eternal One, robed in majesty and mercy,
we confess that sin has taken hold of us and we are complicit in its power. We are disturbed in spirit and our hearts cannot rest. Unbind us and set us free. Lead us again to the waters of rebirth, that we may live just and generous lives for the good of your world and the care of our neighbors, following in the servant way of Jesus. Amen.

These words are trustworthy and true: Christ bore our sins once, for all, on the cross, swallowing up death forever. For his sake, you are † forgiven and God remembers your sin no more. Let your heart be glad again, and rejoice in your salvation.

Amen.

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.

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Almighty God, your sovereign purpose brings salvation to birth. Give us faith to be steadfast amid the tumults of this world, trusting that your kingdom comes and your will is done through 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: Hebrews 10:11-14 [15-18] 19-25

Images of worship and sacrifice are used throughout Hebrews to highlight what Christ has uniquely accomplished through his death. Because we have received forgiveness through Christ's death, we live with sincere hearts by trusting in God's promises and encouraging love and good works from each other.

¹¹ Every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacrifices that can never take away sins. ¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, "he sat down at the right hand of God," ¹³ and since then has been waiting "until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet." ¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. [¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for after saying,

¹⁶ "This is the covenant that I will make with them
after those days, says the Lord:

I will put my laws in their hearts,
and I will write them on their minds,"

¹⁷ he also adds,

"I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more."

¹⁸ Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.]

¹⁹ Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

5
We are called to pon - der mys - t'ry and a - wait the com - ing Christ,
to em - bod - y God's com - pas - sion for each frag - ile hu - man life.
God is with us in our long - ing to bring heal - ing to the earth, while we
watch with joy and won - der for the prom - ised Sav - ior's birth.

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

GOSPEL: Mark 13:1-8

In the last week of his life, Jesus warned his disciples concerning trials that were to come upon them and upon the world. He exhorts the listener: Do not be alarmed.

¹ As [Jesus] came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!” ² Then Jesus asked him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.”

³ When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴ “Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?” ⁵ Then Jesus began to say to them, “Beware that no one leads you astray. ⁶ Many will come in my name and say, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. ⁷ When you hear of wars

and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. ⁸ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.”

The gospel of the Lord.

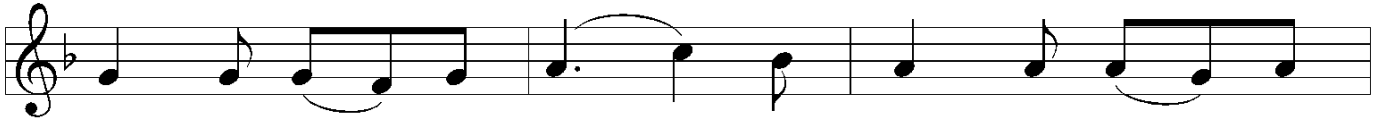
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

By Grace We Have Been Saved



1 By grace we have been saved through faith and
 2 For all have sinned and fall - en short. God's
 3 God gave to earth a per - fect love through
 4 We know the wage of sin is death; thank
 5 Set free, we now have peace with God. Sal -



not by keep - ing law. God's saints be - lieved by
 plan, not one o - beyed. Christ has for all ful -
 Je - sus on the cross. While we were foes, Christ
 God, we shall re - vive. For just as Je - sus
 va - tion is se - cured. How beau - ti - ful the



what they heard and not by what they saw.
 filled the law. Be - lieve, con - fess, be saved.
 died for us. We gained by God's own loss.
 rose a - gain, we too are made a - live.
 feet of those who share this gos - pel word.

Refrain

Oh, how I love Je - sus! Oh, how I love Je - sus!



Oh, how I love Je - sus, be - cause he first loved me!

PRESENTATION OF THOSE AFFIRMING THEIR BAPTISMS

Today we have the privilege of witnessing as these siblings in Christ affirm their faith as well the promises made at their baptism. I invite each of you to stand where you are when you are named.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Congregation stands

Together with your siblings in Christ, you wish to profess your faith in God and reject sin. We make these bold statements not because we are absolutely certain about these things, but because we are always becoming faithful to them and learning to wrestle with these claims about our relationship with God. We join our voices with yours to remind you that we are all in this together.

People of God: Do you reject the devil and all the forces that defy God, the powers of this world that rebel against God, and the ways of sin that pull us away from God? If so, say, “We do!”

We do!

Do you promise to continue supporting these children of God, affirming them through all circumstances with their first and forever name: Beloved? If so, say, “We do!”

We do!

Do you promise to hold space for them to keep growing in faith, so they learn to trust there is nothing they can do to make God love them any more or any less than they are already loved in Jesus? If so, say, “We do!”

We do!

Do you believe in God the Father?

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

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**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.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**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.**

Congregation is seated

AFFIRMATION IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ASSEMBLY

Will you join us in practicing your faith and keeping these responsibilities:

to live among God's faithful people, to pray,
to hear the word of God and share the Lord's Supper,
to learn the prayers, creeds, and commandments, to open the holy Scriptures,
to be nurtured by the faith and prayers of others,
so that you learn to trust God, proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for
others and the world God made and work for justice and peace?

I will ask each of you to respond by saying, *"I will, and I ask God to help me."*

People of God, do you promise to support these siblings and pray for them in their
life in Christ?

We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.

PRAYER FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT

After all confirmands have been prayed for:

Join me in celebrating with these siblings in Christ.

We celebrate your faith, your voice, and your unfolding story as beloved children of God! On behalf of the whole church on earth, we will continue to pray for your faith and give thanks for you. God bless you!

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

A brief silence.

#1 O God, in the washing of water you set us free from the power of sin and death. Unite all the baptized in the covenant you have made with us, as we strive for your justice and peace in all the earth. Lord in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

#2 By your merciful might you sustain all creation. Stir us from complacency with the harm we inflict on the earth, and urge us to adopt sustainable ways of life that protect and restore our planet. Lord in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

#3 With a selfless power you protect all who take refuge in you. As nations rise against nations, defend all who are displaced or affected by war or violence. Empower all people and nations to pursue peace. Lord in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Gracious God, in this season when we remember that you came to earth as a child, help us to better know and care for these children, youth and young adults: Jonathan, Julia, Josie, Julia, and Kaitlynn. Strengthen the connections we share with the ministries we serve, especially the ministry of our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. Lord in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Gracious God, you are near to all who call upon you.

We lift up prayers of thanksgiving for:

- the youth who affirm their faith today: Josie H, Ilana S, and Corinne S

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

- Dominic L, the cousin of Melissa B, who died on 9/25
- Gary, friend of Bob S, who died on 11/8

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Amanda Y, friend of Chris M, who has entered hospice care
- Carol M, mother of Chris M, who is having heart problems and facing surgery
- Doug M, brother of Ron M, who is recovering from surgery that took place on 11/8
- Wayne W who is recovering from surgery on 11/9
- Daniel D, son of Susie and Dick D, who is recovering from anticipated surgery on 11/12

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

Silence for individual prayer.

Lord in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of 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

Thank you for your offerings that support the ongoing ministry that we share. 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 or scan the QR (quick response) code on the right and you'll be brought to BLC's mobile giving page.



OFFERING OF MUSIC

Make My Life an Alleluia

Ruth Elaine Schram

The Chancel Choir

OFFERTORY



Not as we ought but as we are a - ble, we
of - fer our thanks as we come to your ta - ble. Through
Word and Spir - it bless us; through bread and wine re - fresh us that
we may be filled, that we may be filled with love.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. God of new beginnings,
as we prepare to come to this Table, pour out your spirit in this room. Bless our offerings. Make this meal a new beginning of faith, hope, and love. Allow us to experience welcome here. Allow for all to be fed here. Allow for all to sense your presence here. With hope we gather. With hope we begin again. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

Loving God, we come to this Table today with our longings.

In a world that so often feels like it's ending,

we crave the hope of a new beginning.

We long to heal from the endings of our hurting world and start again,

rooted in your good news.

Week by week, and bit by bit, we repeat the truths that we so often need to hear,
trusting that by your grace, it is never too late to start again.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

So in this spirit of beginnings,

we come to your Table and we ask that you would meet us here.

Pour out your Spirit on this ordinary meal, that in this bread and cup we may glimpse a new day.

Meet us here with a taste of your new beginning. Allow this joyful feast to be the start of something new. Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

With joy and hope, we weave our voices together to pray the words your son 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

Come. This good news is for you. All are welcome here.

Thanks be to God.

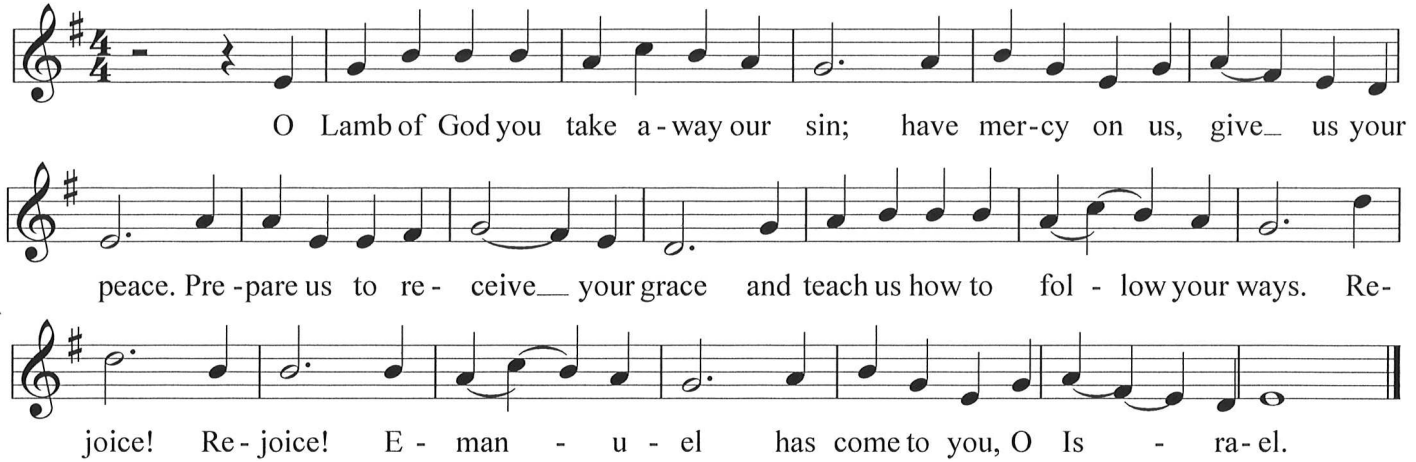
JOY – JESUS, OTHERS, YOU

Once a month, kids in Grades 3-5 are invited to come forward first for communion and then leave worship for a special activity time until 10:15 am. During this time they will work on a project together and use the Faith 5 practices (Share, Read, Talk, Pray, Bless). The next gathering will be on December 8th.

DISTRIBUTION

Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant.

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.

Spirit of the Living God

Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a - fresh on me.

The first system of the hymn consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, providing a harmonic foundation for the vocal line.

Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a - fresh on me.

The second system of the hymn consists of two staves, identical in notation and lyrics to the first system, continuing the musical and textual progression.

Melt me; mold me; fill me; use me.

The third system of the hymn consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, providing a harmonic foundation for the vocal line.

Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a - fresh on me.

The fourth system of the hymn consists of two staves, identical in notation and lyrics to the first system, concluding the musical and textual progression.

COMMUNION HYMNS

I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light
Spirit Descend upon My Heart
(Instrumental)

ELW 815

F. C. Atkinson / David Cherwien

TABLE BLESSING**POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Let us pray. Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name.

Amen.

LEAVING TO SERVE**BENEDICTION**

As you leave this place, may you have the wisdom to lean on one other. May you have the courage to hold onto hope, the compassion to do the good that is yours to do, and the confidence to trust that God sees you as a blessing. For in a world full of dead ends, Advent invites us to begin again. So start here. Start now. Start with love and begin again. In the name of † Christ, our new beginning, go in peace.

Amen.

Stanzas 1: Cantor

2, 3, 4: All

5: sing the final "halleluia" 3 times

Oh, When the Saints Go Marching In

1 Oh, when the saints go march-ing in, oh, when the
 2 Oh, when the Lord in glo-ry comes, oh, when the
 3 Oh, when the new world is re-vealed, oh, when the
 4 Oh, when they gath-er round the throne, oh, when they
 5 And on that hal-le-lu-jah day, and on that

saints go march-ing in, O Lord, I want to be in that
 Lord in glo-ry comes, O Lord, I want to be in that
 new world is re-vealed, O Lord, I want to be in that
 gath-er round the throne, O Lord, I want to be in that
 hal-le-lu-jah day, O Lord, I want to be in that

num-ber when the saints go march-ing in.
 num-ber when the Lord in glo-ry comes.
 num-ber when the new world is re-vealed.
 num-ber when they gath-er round the throne.
 num-ber on that hal-le-lu-jah day.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Celebration

James Mansfield

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Confirmation 2024



Josie Henry

Hebrews 12:1 "...let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

The verse was really chosen FOR Josie by us, her family, because it embodies everything about her true spirit. She has faced so many incredible obstacles in her life, none that she had any control over, and yet, she has persevered through it all, and has become stronger through it all. She is a force of nature to be reckoned with and has never backed down from a challenge, despite how hard it is for her,

or how long it will take. "Try again" is her motto in life and what you will often hear her say.

Ilana Schoenfeld

Hebrews 13:16; "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."

Ilana shared: I chose this verse because I like to help others, but sometimes I still need to be reminded why I'm doing it. For example, I volunteer at Lollypop and I love to help the animals, but there will always be those couple of days where I'm really tired and don't want to go, and I just need to be reminded why I do it.





Corinne Sousa

Ephesians 4:29

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

Corinne shared: Our words matter. It makes me uncomfortable when I am around people who swear and put others down. We should use our words to lift people up and share God’s love.

BLC Pastors

The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

BLC Musicians

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Chrisanne Gates, Chancel Choir Director

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

Additional musical leadership provided by:

James Berner, harmonica Richard DePasquale, trumpet

Emerson Schaeber, double bass

Rich Towsley, guitar Neil Vokes, percussion

Dave Wideman, cantor / percussion

Glen Zagorski, trombone

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 one of the pastors following worship or send an email to volunteersupport@blcfairport.org and we'll follow up!

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.

Real Strength in Community of Faith

What makes something strong? Is steel strong because of its ability to withstand stress from many directions? Is wood strong because of its ability to absorb impact while remaining intact? Is the material of a spider's web strong because of its tensile strength-to-weight ratio? Things are strong for many reasons. The temple in Jerusalem was thought to be stronger and more permanent than anything, yet Jesus says in Mark, "Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down" (Mark 13:2). Jesus shows hearers that true strength is not built upon the oppression of widows (Mark 12:41-44).

Many of the world's most prized structures are built on the shoulders of the poor and oppressed. How many homes in poorer areas of cities have been destroyed by the need for a new or wider highway? How many workers living in poverty died building the Golden Gate or Brooklyn Bridges, the Hoover Dam or the Empire State Building? In order for human beings to build structures of great strength, they must rely on sacrifice and compromise. Can any human standard of strength be achieved without making something else weak?

Real strength, however, is not shown in things built by human hands. Real strength is found in the hands themselves. True strength is shown in workers reporting to work day after day in impossible conditions because it's the only way to feed their family. It is shown by an entire community of God's people linking their trembling hands as they share the "confession of our hope without wavering" (Heb. 10:23). The new, true temple, Jesus' faithful strength, succumbs in weakness to human-made nails. While the nails lie rusting away, the wounded hands and body rise again to break bread with all on the journey down the path of life.