



*Words for the Beginning
The Word for All Seasons
Sunday, November 24, 2024*



BETHLEHEM
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

PRELUDE

Come, Thou Almighty King
(ITALIAN HYMN)

Felice de Giardini
setting, Nigel Williams

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.

LESSONS AND HYMNS

God speaks to us through scripture reading, preaching, and song.

Advent: Who are you looking for?

Advent is a time of waiting and preparing for the birth of the Christ child, for the divine to become fully present in the fully human. God deigns to be imminent, accessible, and knowable in this child. In Advent we await the greatest mystery to be realized.

LITANY

Into our world as into Mary's womb,
Into the forgotten places, as into the stable,
Come, Lord Jesus.

Into the lives of the poor, bring hope;
Into the lives of the powerful, bring caution;
Into the lives of the weary, bring rest;
Into the lives of the wise, bring restlessness;
Into our lives and longings,
Come, Lord Jesus.

Christ is coming. Blessed are those who wait.
Come quickly, humble God, and reign.

HYMN	Come Now, O Prince of Peace	ELW 247 – sts. 1, 4
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Christmas and Epiphany: Who are you looking for?

A child is born in hymn surroundings; in an out of the way place, and will be adored as Emmanuel, God with us. Soon after his birth his family will flee with him from Herod. Jesus will confront the realities of the human situation and respond to the challenge. He brings light and life.

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READING: John 1:1-5

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

HYMN	Of the Father's Love Begotten	ELW 295 – sts. 1, 2, 3
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Transfiguration of our Lord: Who are you looking for?

Jesus is blessed and called on the mountaintop. He descends, prepared to meet whatever will come in order to realize his task to usher in the Kingdom of God.

And we are invited to join him.

READING: Mark 9:2-9

²Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁶He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved listen to him!" ⁸Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

⁹As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

HYMN	Holy God, Holy and Glorious	ELW 637 – sts. 1, 2, 3
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Lent: Who are you looking for?

Lent is a journey, for both the church and individuals, of self-examination, of penitence for alienation from God and neighbor, and for preparation for restoration. The season is a journey in which one realizes the complete gift of Christ for others. It is a journey that takes us to the cross, and facing that cross, where Jesus will suffer.

READING: Psalm 31:9-16

⁹Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress;
my eye wastes away from grief,
my soul and body also.

¹⁰For my life is spent with sorrow,
and my years with sighing;
my strength fails because of my misery,
and my bones waste away.

¹¹I am the scorn of all my adversaries,
a horror to my neighbors,
an object of dread to my acquaintances;
those who see me in the street flee from me.

¹²I have passed out of mind like one who is dead;
I have become like a broken vessel.

¹³For I hear the whispering of many —
terror all around! —
as they scheme together against me,
as they plot to take my life.

¹⁴But I trust in you, O LORD;
I say, "You are my God."

¹⁵My times are in your hand;
deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.

¹⁶Let your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your steadfast love.

HYMN

There in God's Garden

ELW 342 – sts. 1, 2, 3

Easter: Who are you looking for?

The season of Easter lasts for fifty days, culminating in the festival of Pentecost. The walls of death are not strong enough to prevail against the power of God. This is the power of resurrection. Love incarnate is the victory, and history is forever changed because of God's gift through the Savior.

READING: Mark 16:2-7

²And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" ⁴When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you."

HYMN

Day of Arising

ELW 374 – sts. 1, 2, 3

Pentecost: Who are you looking for?

The long season after the festival of Pentecost is called "ordinary" time. It's a time when growth in discipleship is gradual, multifaceted, and integrating. Roots are set deep to grow. This is the time of making connections, of bridging the words and witness of Jesus with our own words and witness. The common acts of living and relating are made holy. Common bread and wine are the presence of the living Christ. A child lifted by Jesus, is given holy significance.

READING: Hebrews 4:12-16

¹²Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account. ¹⁴Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

HYMN

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

ELW 587

Reign of Christ Sunday: Who are you looking for?

In John's gospel, the story of Jesus and Pilate presents two different ways of exercising power: through force or with love.

READING: John 18:33-37

³³Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" ³⁵Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" ³⁶Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." ³⁷Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

OFFERING OF MUSIC

At the Name of Jesus text, Caroline Noel, alt. / Edward Perronet
(Incorporating CORONATION by Oliver Holden) music, Lloyd Larson (ASCAP)

The Chancel Choir

Congregation please join as directed

All hail the pow'r of Je-sus' name! Let an-gels pros-trate
fall; bring forth the roy-al di-a-dem, and
crown Him, Lord of all; bring forth the roy-al
di-a-dem, and crown Him, Lord of all!

SHARING GOD'S MEAL

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 Revive our congregations, synods, and national church body to reflect the love, justice, and kinship of your kingdom. Raise up diverse leaders who teach and serve your people. Lord in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

#2 Nourish parched lands and bring relief to flooded places. Protect wildlife habitats and endangered species, that the chorus of creation's praise resounds with joy. Nourish, relieve and protect your flock who live and interact in that creation where fires, floods and natural disasters have occurred. Bring them strength of endurance and recovery. Lord in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

#3 Grant us strength, Lord, to move ahead in mind, body and spirit, to work in harmony toward peace, even in the presence of confusion and discord. Grant us the wisdom to look and work forward, together. 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: Katie, Kevin, Lauren, Leah and Lily. 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 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
- Paul T, son of Anita T, who died on 11/13
- Gary P, brother of Donna K, who died on 11/15

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 anticipating surgery on 11/27
- 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 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.

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

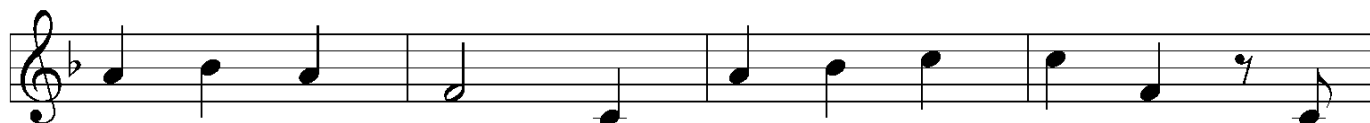
Thank you for your offerings that support the ongoing ministry that we share.

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.



DEDICATION OF SATCHELS FOR SEAFARERS

OFFERTORY



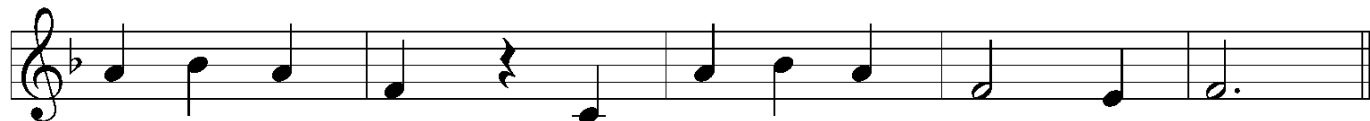
Not as we ought but as we are a - ble, we



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**

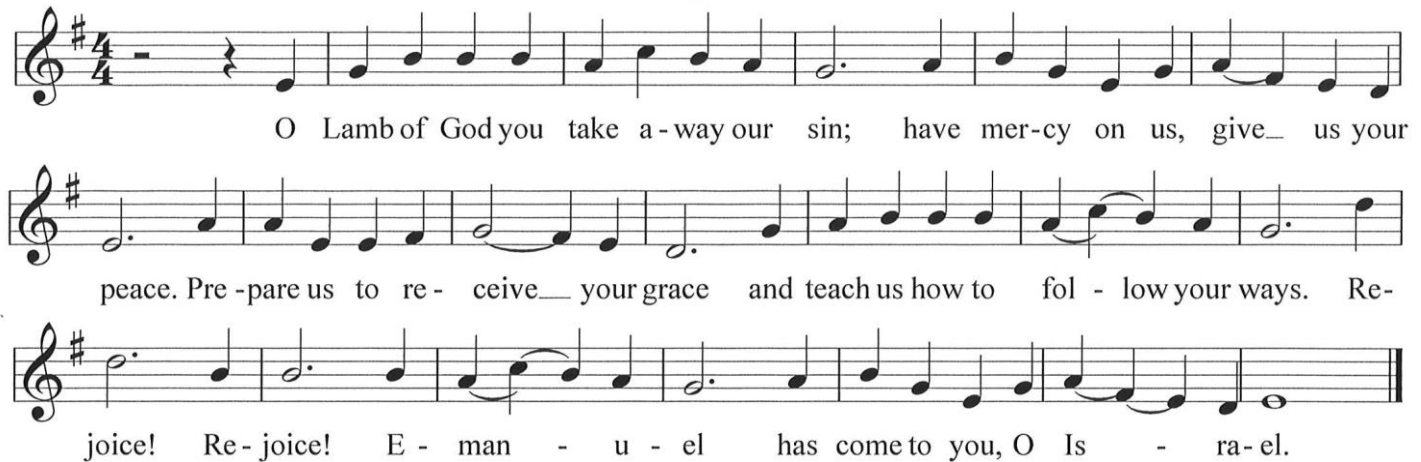
INVITATION

Come. This good news is for you. All are welcome here.
Thanks be to God.

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.

SPECIAL MUSIC

A Medley of Three Hymn Tunes

OLD HUNDREDTH – “Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow”

WIR PFLÜGEN – “We Plow the Fields and Scatter”

KREMSEK – “We Gather Together”

arr. Rich Towsley

attr. Louis Bourgeois

Johann A. P. Schulz

Dutch folk tune / arr. Eduard Kremser

BLC Dulcimers

COMMUNION HYMNS

Beautiful Savior

Simple Gifts

ELW 838

American folk tune / arr. John Carter

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. Faithful God, you have spread before us a feast of rich food and drink in the body and blood of your Son. Now send us out to labor with you, in service to the world you have made, and among the people you have made your home, in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

Christ in our minds

That we may see what is true;

Christ in our mouths

That we may speak with power;

Christ in our hearts

That we may learn to be touched;

Christ in our hands

That we may work with tenderness;

Christ in our arms

That we may embrace without fear;

Christ in our faces

That we may shine with God.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN	For the Fruit of All Creation	ELW 679
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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Thanksgiving

(KREMSER – NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT)

setting, Charles Callahan

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"At the Name of Jesus", Words: Caroline M. Noel, alt. and Edward Perronet,
Music: Lloyd Larson (ASCAP) incorporating CORONATION by Oliver Holden, © 2016 Beckenhorst Press, Inc.
"A Medley of Three Hymn Tunes", Arranger: Rich Towsley
"Simple Gifts", Tune: American folk tune, Arranger: John Carter, © 1987 Hope Publishing Co.
"Thanksgiving", Tunes: KREMSER and NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT
Arranger: Charles Callahan, © 1988 MorningStar Music Publishers

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

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!

Today's altar flowers are given by Karen Donahower in memory of Cliff and Linnea Donahower on their 62nd anniversary.

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.

Love Redefines Power and Dominion

In fairy tales, kings live in a castle, usually located on a hill (a safe place), surrounded by a moat for the utmost protection for the king and family. Modern political leaders often have more technologically advanced means to provide a similar level of safety against would-be attackers. Because of these preconceived notions of what kings are, hearers will need to be reminded that Jesus redefined the title "king." Psalm 93 says, "The waters have lifted up, O Lord, . . . the waters have lifted up their pounding waves. Mightier than the sound of many waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea, mightier is the Lord who dwells on high" (Ps. 93:3-4). While a king might have the ability to sail atop a roaring, chaotic sea, Christ the King is one who stills the waves (Mark 4:35-41).

In John's gospel for today, Jesus says "For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth" (John 18:37). Perhaps the 'this' Jesus is referring to is a motioning with his hands to the cross, the most clear demonstration of God's love for humanity and the truest definition of kingship. Jesus redefines what power is and what people think God's power looks like to fight evil and suffering in the world. Jesus does not resist the way of the cross with force.

Rather than protecting himself from harm in any way, the vulnerable King Jesus dares to demonstrate God's love for all people. Jesus does not run from pain, anguish, or suffering. Rather, the risen Jesus, "the ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5), rushes to the places of disaster and suffering in the world. Jesus goes where storms are ravaging and have ravaged lives and brings life and calm into the chaos.