



Tuesday, December 24, 2024
Christmas Eve
7:30 pm Family Worship



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

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christ's birth makes the vastness of God personal. The God who made the seas and the stars is also the God who made our beautiful hair and your striking eyes. The God of creation takes on flesh, which means you are fully known. When the angels visit the shepherds in the fields, their message is global but also personal: "To you . . . a savior is born." This birth is good news for everyone, especially for those who are ignored or disenfranchised. On this night, God is born, and this God of love knows your name.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?
**Let us begin with hope. Let us begin with peace. Let us begin with joy.
Let us begin with love.**

Yes, let us begin with love, for surely love knows your name. Surely God is in this place. Surely the Spirit is near.

Surely love knows our name. May we rest in that good news. Unto us a child is born. A light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it. Glory to God in the highest heaven! Amen.

GATHERING HYMN	O Come, All Ye Faithful	ELW 283
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descants by David Willcocks

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him, born the king of angels:

Refrain: O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

The highest, most holy, light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father now in flesh appearing!

Refrain

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God in the highest:
Refrain

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
Refrain

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace— We always long for you, but on this holy Christmas Eve, we long for you to feel as close as possible. So as we prepare to hear this ancient story once again, we ask that you would awaken something new in us. Awaken in us a fire for your Word. Awaken in us proof of your proximity. Awaken in us your love, which is bigger than the sky, and as close as our very breath. We are listening. We give thanks.

Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

HEARING GOD'S WORD

READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

²The people who walked in darkness

have seen a great light;

those who lived in a land of deep darkness—

on them light has shined.

³You have multiplied the nation,

you have increased its joy;

they rejoice before you

as with joy at the harvest,

as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL HYMN

Angels We Have Heard on High

ELW 289

sts. 1, 3

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain: Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king. *Refrain*

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

GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20

God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

CHRISTMAS CAROL

Love Has Come

ELW 292

Love has come—a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;
what is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers;
Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.

Love has come and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

A brief silence.

Glory to you, God, for the song of the angels, proclaiming to the world Christ's holy birth. Give your church a joyful song to sing, that we bring the good news of peace and salvation to all people. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Glory to you, God, for the stars that shine in the depth of the night. Provoke awe in our hearts at the expansive mystery of the cosmos. Open us to find beauty in the clear darkness of night and in the first glimmers of dawn. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Glory to you, God, for the child born to us who establishes a kingdom of justice and righteousness. Break bonds of oppression, bring reconciliation to warring lands, and establish peace from this time onward and forevermore.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Glory to you, God, for the faithfulness of the shepherds in their vocation. Grant rest to any who feel exhausted from their work during this season: parents and all who bring Christmas to life for others, retail and restaurant workers, church musicians and staff, organizers of charitable-giving events, and service workers doing essential tasks. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Glory to you, God, for Mary's loving care. Lead us to tend to one another in time of need. Share the comfort of your presence with all people tonight who are alone or separated from loved ones due to estrangement, incarceration, or illness, especially those we name before you silently or out loud.

Silence for individual prayer.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

Amen.

SHARING GOD'S MEAL

OFFERING

Offering plates are placed at each entrance to the sanctuary. 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

In the Bleak Midwinter

words, Christina Rossetti
music, Robert C. Clatterbuck

The Chancel Choir

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.

THE 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

With this bread and wine

Build us into a lasting community of hope, peace, joy and love.

Be among us in this meal.

And form us to be your presence in the world today.

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 TO COMMUNION

A child has been born for us, a Son given to us. Come, receive the gift of Jesus.

Thanks be to God.

Distribution of Communion:

Please come forward at the direction of the ushers. All are welcome to share in Christ's meal of forgiveness and grace. Children who do not yet commune are welcome to come forward for a blessing. Gluten-free wafers and grape juice are available; please indicate your need to the pastor or communion assistant.

THE COMMUNION

I am so glad each Christmas Eve,
the night of Jesus' birth!
Then like the sun the star shone forth,
and angels sang on earth.

The little child in Bethlehem,
he was a king indeed!
For he came down from heav'n above
to help a world in need.

He dwells again in heaven's realm,
the Son of God today;
and still he loves his little ones
and hears them when they pray.

I am so glad each Christmas Eve!
His praises then I sing;
he opens now for ev'ry child
the palace of the king.

And so I love each Christmas Eve,
and I love Jesus too;
and that he loves me ev'ry day
I know so well is true.

arr. by Ricky and Julie Valadez

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming; but, in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heav'nly music floats
o'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hov'ring wing,
and ever o'er its babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

And you, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow:
look now, for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing;
oh, rest beside the weary road
and hear the angels sing!

For lo! The days are hast'ning on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and all the world give back the song
which now the angels sing.

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. Merciful God, we thank you for Jesus, who is our heavenly food. Strengthened by this goodness, send us forth to announce your peace, comfort the afflicted, and share the good news of great joy.

Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE LIGHT

The pastor will light a candle from the Christ Candle and share the flame with ushers who will then move down the aisle lighting the candles of the congregation in this manner: the worshiper nearest the center aisle will receive the light and in turn give the light to the one by their side. The lighted candle is never tilted, but is always held upright when passing the light to another so that the hot wax will not be spilled.

CHRISTMAS CAROL	Silent Night, Holy Night!	ELW 281
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Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar, heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from your holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

(Hum fourth stanza)

THE PRAYER

Gracious God, bathe us always in the light of your Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child. Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

(Candles may be extinguished.)

Please return your candle to an usher as you leave the sanctuary.)

SENDING HYMN	Joy to the World	ELW 267
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descant by Richard DePasquale

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

DISMISSAL

Christ is born! Go in joy and peace!

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella

French carol
arr. Keith Chapman

BLC Pastors

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

BLC Musicians

Raelynn Clare, Director of Music and Organist

Chrisanne Gates, Chancel Choir Director

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

Additional musical leadership provided by:

Richard DePasquale, trumpet

Jane Morale, violin

Merry Christmas!

We wish you and yours a blessed Christmas!

Worship: We worship each Sunday at 8:55 am (both in-person and livestream). Visit our website – blcfairport.org – for information on how to share in worship with Bethlehem!

Today's altar flowers are given by Bob Anderson in joyful celebration of Cathy Anderson's birthday.

Learn about upcoming events and activities... please sign-up to receive communication from Bethlehem, including Between Sundays (Mondays), the Weekly Star (Thursdays) and Ready for Worship (Saturdays). To subscribe, go to www.blcfairport.org and scroll down to sign up for reminders and special announcements. (*Let the office know if you prefer your information in paper copies.*)

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"O Come, All Ye Faithful", Words and Melody: J. F. Wade, Arranger: David Willcocks, © Oxford University Press 1961

"In the Bleak Midwinter", Words: Christina Rossetti, Music: Robert C. Clatterbuck

"O Little Town of Bethlehem", Music: Lewis H. Redner, Arranger: Ricky and Julie Valadez

"Joy to the World", Tune: English melody, 18th cent., Arranger (descant): Richard DePasquale, © 2024 Richard DePasquale

"Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella", Tune: French carol, Arranger: Keith Chapman, © 1979 (1996) McAfee Music Corp.

***Christmas Poinsettia Donations
were made to the glory of God by the following:***

Tom Allen in honor of Karen Allen.

Bill and Gunnar Antell in memory of all our loved ones who have passed.

Sherry and Jim Cook in honor of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and in memory of our parents Jane & Rod Johnson and Myrtle & Howard Cook.

Nancy Fehse in memory of Frank & Anna Steuerwald and Connie & Erich Helbig.

Kathleen Forney in honor of Charles Forney and in memory of my parents Ralph and Betty Deuel.

In honor of ***Sandy Joyce***.

Judy Lohr in memory of Bob Lohr.

Rolf Maxa in memory of Erich & Anna Maxa and William & Margaret Walsh.

Kathy and Jim Moragne in memory of our parents.

Gabriele and Frank Nardozi in memory of Gerhard & Erna Schlueter, Irene Cortini, and Frank Nardozi.

Patricia Olson in memory of Gerard Van Hassent.

Janet and Howard Sharp in memory of our parents Gene & Grace Garvey and Irving & June Sharp.

GerryAnn and Wayne Westcott in memory of our parents.

***Contributions to Zimbabwe Ambulances
were made to the glory of God by the following:***

Sherry and Jim Cook in honor of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and in memory of our parents Jane & Rod Johnson and Myrtle & Howard Cook.

Ruth and Andy Gates in memory of family members.

Ruth and Jeff Hedin in honor of our family.

Judy Lohr in memory of Bob Lohr.

Sandra and David Moczarski in memory of Dr. Paul Moczarski.

Kathy and Jim Moragne in memory of our parents.

Janet and Howard Sharp in memory of our parents Gene & Grace Garvey and Irving & June Sharp.

Marjorie Yeager in honor of family and friends.

Amy and Hans Walter-Peterson in honor of children, youth and young adults in the BLC community.

Anonymous in honor of her LYLAS Pastor Amy.

Christmas Wreaths

The wreaths which decorate the doors are given in memory of Karen Bigenwald by Brian and Bev Edwards.

The wreaths which decorate the sanctuary are given in memory of Tom and Gert Edwards and Morey and Ann Rasbeck by Brian and Bev Edwards.

Our Christmas tree is given to the glory of God by ***Jim and Donna Berner*** in honor of their family, with extra thanks to ***Dave Wideman*** and to ***Rich Towsley*** for years of support in setting up the tree and donning it with lights!

Baptism Celebration Splash Party

Sunday, January 12th
1pm - 3pm
at the Perinton Rec Center

See the STAR for details!

And what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8 NRSV

Mission and Social
Concerns Team

monthly meetings hybrid
in-person and through Zoom

Contact Julie Owen
(jowen@heritagechristianservices.org) to learn more!

BLC Quilters

*1st & 3rd Thurs each
month: Cut, Sort, Sew
5th Thurs: Quilt Tying
7 PM*

Women's Fellowship

Meets one Tuesday
each month at 7:00 pm
in the BLC
Living Room





BLC Music Groups Rehearsals

Children's Choir- Sundays at 10:15am
 Chancel Bells- Wednesdays at 6pm
 Folk Group- Wednesdays at 6:15pm
 Chancel Choir- Wednesdays at 7:30pm
 Dulcimers- Fridays at 3pm

Hat Ministry

Knit, crochet, loom made, or store purchased are all appreciated. Yarn & patterns available in Narthex or use your own.

Please find donation bins in the Narthex.



1ST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH!

BLC MEN'S BREAKFAST!

8 AM AT THE LANDMARK RESTAURANT IN EAST ROCHESTER



PROPERTY COMMITTEE

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New members are always welcome to help maintain our church building and grounds!

No major time commitment required, help as you are able!
 Contact the church office or Bob Stolze to get involved!

***Join BLC's email list
to receive our weekly
STAR e-newsletter
and other
announcements!***



between sundays 



Find episodes of our
podcast here!



Second Sunday Dinner Ministry

BLC prepares and delivers hot meals on the 2nd Sunday each month to those in need in our community.



Contact the church office to help with cooking or deliveries!

Altar Flowers

Order by calling the church office at 223-0634 or order online here:



Support Groups

Next meeting January 14



**GRIEF SUPPORT
GROUP,
11 AM**



**CAREGIVER
SUPPORT
GROUP,
2 PM**

Meet every two Tuesdays

Check out BLC's ONLINE DIRECTORY!



Find full details and
instructions to get
started here!

breeze



Midweek Bible Study

Wednesdays at 9:30 am

**In-person in the BLC
Hybrid Conference
Room & via Zoom**

(join here)



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS)

**SAVE THE DATE:
JULY 28-31, 2025
AT BLC**

BLC is partnering with St. Paul's, Pittsford again
for this summer's VBS program!

More details to come!

Hope Born in a World of Humbugs

Dressed up with presents, lights, TV specials, extra concerts, parties, and spending money, there is a sense that Christmas is the time to feel good, do good, and perhaps live a little better than the rest of the year. Even the most cynical get swept up in the idea that the world and their lives shine a little brighter. It is a sugar-coated holiday rush only to be met days later by an emotional crash. Yet these signs point to a deep-seated hope that is lodged in the hearts and minds of those moving into this season. There is a longing and fervent hope that God will enter in and counter the challenges and humbugs of our days and world. And to this longing and fervent hope we look to one who claims us from marginal lives and engages us in a central story of hope and promise.

Wrapped in every breath, song, and action is God's direct connection with the earth and her peoples. This night counters voices and theologies that view God as distant and unengaged with humanity and the world. From old, the promise of God drawing near has been uttered; in the gospel we witness the birth of God's yearning presence through a teenage girl; throughout we are invited to join the song of creation, hope, and salvation. Tonight we pulse with the exhilaration of Mary and the shepherds, and those who have lived at the margins, as we experience and proclaim, that "God dwells with us." While people may often talk of the "magic" of Christmas, it is our call to speak to the *incarnation* of Christmas. As people come together to hear a familiar story and sing familiar hymns, the blessing and challenge is to witness again to God's promise and promise-keeping with vitality and to join the chorus of joy in what God has done and continues to do in being made real among us.

Into the lights and presents, the music and gatherings, even the wars, poverty, little empires, and tumult of the world, God meets and claims us in that spirit of hope. God calls us to dream and live into a new reality as we encounter this babe at Bethlehem and find this Christ-child born in our lives again. Christmas speaks to our greatest longing, and turns the "humbugs" to carols of joy.