



*Words for the Beginning
We Can't Go Alone
Sunday, December 8, 2024*



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

PRELUDE

“Divinum Mysterium”

(Of the Father’s Love Begotten)

Plainsong mode V, 13th cent.
setting, Dorothy Howell Sheets

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

He Came Down

tune, Cameroon traditional
arr. John L. Bell

The Chancel Choir

In a world that is lonely,

we will save a seat for you.

In a world that is anxious,

we will light candles against the gloom.

In a world that is weary,

we will sing songs of joy and truth.

I am not alone.

We are not alone.

For here in this place, God is weaving us together.

Light the candles! Sing with joy!

We are a three-cord strand, not easily broken.

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.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Savior of the Nations, Come

(NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND)

tune, *Sacred Song Booklet*, German, 1524

setting, Cathy Moglebust

The Chancel Bells

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE - PEACE

In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?

Let us begin together.

Let us begin arm in arm.

Let us begin by holding each other up, instead of tearing each other down.

Let us begin with words of peace.

Yes, let us begin with peace.

Today we light the candles of hope and peace.

May these lights remind us of what could be. May these lights mark a new beginning. May peace flow like a river, and may it start with us.

Arm in arm, hand in hand, side by side. May we begin again. Amen.

The Advent candles will be lit as we sing:

(Sung 3 times: st. 1/ All st. 2/ Cantors st. 1/ All)



1. We light the Ad - vent can - dles a - gainst the win - ter night,
2. We light the sec - ond can - dle, and hear God's ho - ly Word,



to wel - come our Lord Je - sus who is the world's True Light,
it tells us, cling to Je - sus, pre - pare to meet your Lord,



to wel - come our Lord Je - sus who is the world's True Light.
it tells us, cling to Je - sus, pre - pare to meet your Lord!

HEARING GOD'S WORD

DISMISSAL TO WORSHIP FOR KIDS

During this Advent season kids are invited to bring forward an offering to support Ambulances for Zimbabwe before leaving for 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: Ruth 1

¹In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and two sons. ²The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. ³But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. When they had lived there about ten years, ⁵both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her

husband.

⁶Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had considered his people and given them food. ⁷So she set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. ⁸But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back each of you to your mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹The LORD grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband." Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. ¹⁰They said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." ¹¹But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? ¹²Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, ¹³would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the LORD has turned against me." ¹⁴Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵So she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." ¹⁶But Ruth said,

"Do not press me to leave you
or to turn back from following you!

Where you go, I will go;
where you lodge, I will lodge,
your people shall be my people,
and your God my God.

¹⁷Where you die, I will die —
there will I be buried.

May the LORD do thus and so to me,
and more as well,
if even death parts me from you!"

¹⁸When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

¹⁹So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them; and the women said, "Is this Naomi?" ²⁰She said to them,

"Call me no longer Naomi,
call me Mara,
for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me.

²¹I went away full,
but the LORD has brought me back empty;
why call me Naomi
when the LORD has dealt harshly with me,
and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?"

²²So Naomi returned together with Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, who came back with her from the country of Moab. They came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



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 Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Luke 1:68-79

⁶⁸"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.
⁶⁹He has raised up a mighty savior for us
in the house of his servant David,
⁷⁰as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
⁷¹that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.
⁷²Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and has remembered his holy covenant,
⁷³the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us ⁷⁴that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.
⁷⁶And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
⁷⁷to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.
⁷⁸By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
⁷⁹to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace."
The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

TO BE KNOWN

W LTH M 8.8.8.8

Words by Anna Strickland, 2024

Music by John Baptiste Calkin, 1872

Re - call the truth that we once knew: We were not made for sol - i - tude
For in the gar - den God de - clared That our brief lives on earth be shared
In ev - ery age hu - man - i - ty Re - lied on mu - tu - al - i - ty
Both you and I are in - ter - twined The warp and weft of hu - man - kind

We need comm - u - ni - ties of faith Where we can feel God's warm em - brace
With part - ners, friends, and fam - i - ly Who hold us in our joy and grief
Our God - breathed spi - rits weren't de - signed To be di - vi - ded and con - fined
So please don't try to go a - lone Your hu - man heart needs to be known

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.

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 Renewing God, transform your creation. Steer us from habits that harm what you have made, and guide us in practices that preserve and restore creatures and habitats. Lord in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

#2 Ruling God, teach the nations your ways. Strengthen organizations and communities that broker peace and care for refugees, immigrants, and all caught in the center of conflict. Lord in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

#3 Reforming God, fill this congregation with your presence. Enrich our seasonal preparations, and bless the efforts by Pastor Amy, Pastor Hoffman, Raelyn, Chris, our music ensembles, and all who prepare for your coming in the weeks ahead. 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: Marilyn, Maxwell, Meghan, Merrin, and Micah. 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:

- Riley Russell, son of Russ and Erica K, and grandson of Roger and Rosemarie K, who was born on 11/26, Riley was born early and remains hospitalized in Erie, PA

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

- Joe, brother-in-law of Pat E

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Pete K, friend of Bob R, who is experiencing complications from ALS
- Marina V, friend of John and Paulette C, who has pancreatic cancer
- Mark H, who is scheduled for surgery on 12/12
- Ken, brother-in-law of Linda M, who is scheduled for surgery on 12/6
- Olivia, granddaughter of Kathy S's best friend who is recovering from brain surgery on 11/25
- Jesse R, son of Kay S, who is recovering from a broken leg on 11/21
- Graham, 3-year-old grandson of Pat's friend, who is experiencing complications from pneumonia
- Jim C, who has moved to the Friendly Home

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

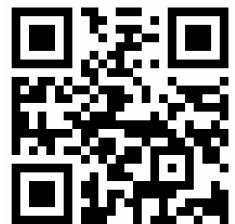
The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

*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.*

INSTALLATION OF VOLUNTEER AND MINISTRY SUPPORT COORDINATOR

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.*



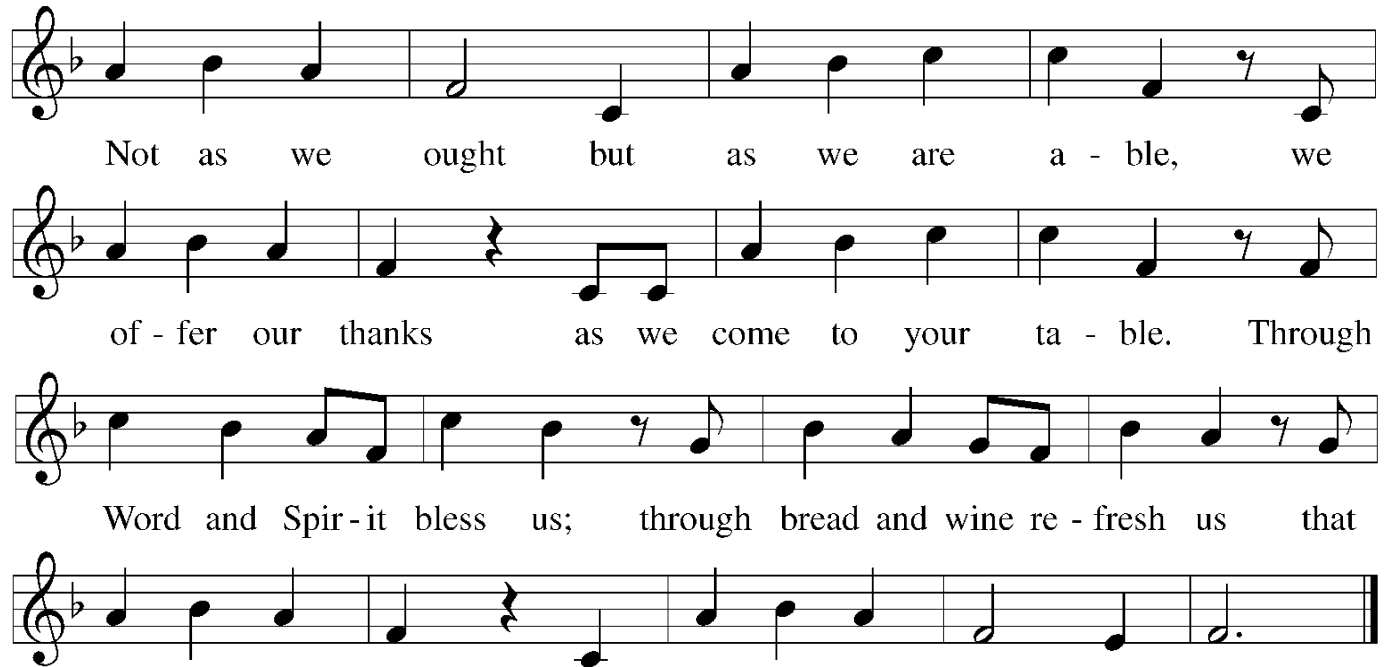
OFFERING OF MUSIC

Every Valley

Isaiah 40: 4, 5
John Ness Beck

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).

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.

COMMUNION HYMN

We Are Waiting for Jesus

ACS 905

We Are Waiting for Jesus



1 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
2 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

Sun of jus - tice, shine up - on us; we are trust - ing in your prom - ise.
Lov - ing Shep - herd, walk be - side us; stir our hearts, and gent - ly guide us.

We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

COMMUNION HYMN

O Day of Peace

ELW 711

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.**SENDING HYMN**

Hark, the Glad Sound!

ELW 239

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

Thanks be to God.**POSTLUDE**

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus
(STUTTGART)

tune, *Psalmodia Sacra*, German, 1715
setting, Robert J. Powell

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:

Cantors: Quinn Morrisette, Sarah Morrisette

Flutist: Sue Cardinal

Percussion: Rich Towsley, Neil Vokes, Dave Wideman

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.

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!

**Check out
BLC's ONLINE
DIRECTORY!**



Find full details and
instructions to get
started here!

breeze

From *Sundays and Seasons.com*. Copyright 2024 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.
Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #43732.
Permission to stream and print the music in this service obtained from One License under Annual License #A-724002
New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education
Of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America.
Bulletin Cover Art used by permission | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org
Introduction to the season, Call to Worship, Prayer of the Day, Lighting Advent Candle, Offertory Prayer, Communion Liturgy and Benediction Adapted
from a prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.
"Divinum Mysterium" Music: 13th-century plainsong; Arranger: Dorothy Howell Sheets© 1992 Selah Publishing Co., Inc.
"Savior of the Nations, Come" Tune: Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland; Arranger: Cathy Moglebust © Copyright 1966 Choristers Guild
"To Be Known" Words: Anna Strickland, 2024;© Anna Strickland, 2024 (Commissioned by A Sanctified Art, LLC)
"Every Valley" Text: Isaiah 40: 4, 5; Music: John Ness Beck © 1976 Beckenhorst Press
"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" Tune: from *Psalmodia Sacra*, 1715, adapt. by William Henry Havergal;
Arranger: Robert J. Powell © 2011 Wayne Leupold Editions, Inc.
"We Light the Advent Candles" Words: Gracia Grindal; Music: German folk tune; Words © 1999 Hope Publishing Company
"We Are Waiting for Jesus" Text: John Helgen, b. 1957; Music: JESUS BRINGS PEACE, John Helgen Text and music © 2013 Augsburg Fortress

“When will you be back?”

Yesterday I visited an old man in the hospital.

I was not the only one. We talked on the elevator ride down— *Has he gained any weight? Will he stay in that room?*

Does he like the food? Has he called?

All the man wanted to know was, *When will you be back?*

We ask that question in a thousand different ways every single day,
our hearts leaning over themselves,
bending to get closer to love.

We say, *Text me when you're home. Call me when you're free.*

One more kiss!

I love you all the time.

When will you be back?

What we really mean is—

I can't go through life alone.

Please don't let me go through life alone.