



*Christmas Lessons and Carols with
Reflections from Martin Luther
Sunday, December 29, 2024*



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

PRELUDE

Twass the Moon of Wintertime
We Three Kings
From Heaven Above

setting by Paul Manz
setting by Wilbur Held
setting by Wilbur Held

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

It is the season of Christmas! Come! Look upon the baby Jesus, cradled in the arms of his mother.

Seeing this wondrous sight, may our hearts be comforted and our spirits filled with peace.

Come! Listen to choirs of angels announcing good news to all people.

Hearing this marvelous song, may we too sing: Glory to God in the highest!

Come! Receive this ancient story in your heart, not as history but as a gift.

Opening our hearts to this great mystery, may Christ be born in us today.

<h3>GATHERING HYMN</h3>

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

READING: Luke 2:1-7

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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

LUTHER'S REFLECTIONS ON THE BIRTH OF JESUS

CAROL	Away in a Manger	ELW 278
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READING: LUKE 2:8-16

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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

LUTHER'S REFLECTIONS ON THE SHEPHERDS AND ANGELS

CAROL	It Came upon the Midnight Clear	ELW 282
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READING: MATTHEW 2:1-12

¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel."

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹When they had heard the king, they set

out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

LUTHER'S REFLECTIONS ON HEROD AND THE WISE MEN

CAROL

Bright and Glorious Is the Sky

ELW 301

READING: JOHN 1:1-5, 14-18

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.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

LUTHER'S REFLECTIONS ON THE WORD MADE FLESH

CAROL

Of the Father's Love Begotten

ELW 295

NICENE CREED

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

For us and for our salvation

**he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven**

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

Filled with good news of great joy, let us offer our prayers for the church, the earth, and all people.

A brief silence.

#1 For the ministry of Bethlehem and the congregations of this community, we pray. Let the word of Christ dwell among us. In times of conflict, clothe us in love and move us to forgiveness. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

#2 For the nations of the world, we pray. Raise up rulers who lead with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Let your peace rule in their hearts and in all lands. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

#3 For the well-being of your people, we pray. Keep watch over all who travel and work this Christmas season. Accompany those who are alone or ill. Console parents and children whose relationships are strained or severed. God of grace,
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: Owen, Olivia, Paige, Olivia, PJ, and Pearl. 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:

- Charlyne H, wife of David, former member of BLC, who died this past week
- Amanda, friend of Chris M, who died 12/11

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Ken, brother-in-law of Linda M, who was admitted to the hospital for possible infection
- Linda J who is recovering from a recent fall
- Wayne W, who is at home but has had numerous falls and is continuing to recover from his recent surgery
- Penny L, sister of Kathy F, who is recovering from bypass surgery on 12/13
- Lori N, former BLC member and Pastor at St. Paul's, Penn Yan, who has received a cancer diagnosis and is preparing to begin treatment
- Connie S, who is hospitalized following a broken leg

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

Silence for individual prayer.

God of grace,
receive our prayer.

We commend these prayers to you, O God, trusting your grace made known to all, through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

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

My Heart Is Bethlehem

arr. Richard Kingsmore

Duet by Pr. Amy Walter-Peterson and Nancy Price

OFFERTORY SONG	In the Bleak Midwinter	ELW 294
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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

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

COMMUNION HYMN

Love Has Come

ELW 292

TABLE BLESSING

LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

May the Word that Mary brought to birth carry you into new and abundant life.
May the Word that Joseph cradled in his arms enfold you with love and strength.
May the Word that angels proclaimed in song bring harmony to our world. And
the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the † Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon
you and remain with you always.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

DISMISSAL

Glory to God in the highest!

And peace to God's people on earth!

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Cold December Flies Away

setting by Donald Busarow

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

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 Chris Gates for serving as our guest organist today.

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 Alli O'Malley or one of the pastors following worship or contact Alli directly at 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. 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.

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Offertory Prayer Adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

Support Groups

Next meeting January 14



**GRIEF SUPPORT
GROUP,
11 AM**



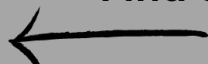
**CAREGIVER
SUPPORT
GROUP,
2 PM**

Meet every two Tuesdays

between sundays 



Find episodes of our
podcast here!



The background of the entire image is a grayscale, high-contrast pattern of water ripples, creating a textured, shimmering effect. The text is overlaid on this background.

Baptism Celebration Splash Party

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

See the STAR for details!

As we move through the anticipatory journey of Advent and step into the celebratory aftermath of Christmas, it's easy to overlook one of the most vibrant threads woven through our spiritual fabric: joy.

As refreshing and unexpected as snowflakes caught on our tongues, laughter doesn't just lighten our spirits; it invites us to see the world through a lens of divine playfulness.

Happiness is fleeting, but joy is a deep-seated feeling that comes from something bigger than ourselves. Joy remains even in the face of adversity, reminding us of the hope and love that surrounds us at all times and in all circumstances. Joy is a sacred invitation to lesson our self-seriousness and remember that the God of all things often subverts our notions of what is holy.

In our cold world, joy is a sweater we can wrap ourselves in, offering comfort and protection against the elements. If we refuse to wear the joy that Christ extends us, what does that say about who we find most important in our lives? It centers ourselves, not Christ. The One who is compassionate and knows every sorrow also knows we are not meant to absorb every ache of the world. A posture of joy releases control and allows God to be God. Yes, we must be present to the pain, but we are also invited to an invincible joy that is freely given.

When we let go of our self-important and allow joy to cover our hearts with gladness and gratitude, we bring Christ back into the center of our lives.

Blessing: As you navigate the cold complexities of our weary world, wrap yourself in joy's warm embrace. May you accept the invincible joy that Christ freely offers—a joy that assures you that you are known, loved, and forever held within God's compassionate embrace. May the joy of the Lord be your strength, helping you stay awake to wonder and awe when the darkness of the world closes in.