



The Road Isn't Straight
Sunday, January 5, 2025



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

PRELUDE

Noël

Claude Balbastre

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The feast of Epiphany (“manifestation”) concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God’s glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah 60:1-6 and Ephesians 3:1-12, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God’s love to all people.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

How did you get here?

Organ side: I walked, eyes looking up, following the star.

Tree side: I ran, lunging for a love that is bigger than me.

Organ side: I tumbled and fell, tender step after tender step.

Tree side: I ambled like a river, caught up in God’s flow.

All: I crawled, kissing the earth below me.

Tell me again. How did you get here?

I am here by God’s grace and love’s pull.

Welcome home. This is God’s house. There is room for you here.

Let us worship our gracious God.

GATHERING HYMN	Rise, Shine, You People!	ELW 665
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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.

HYMN OF PRAISE:

We Three Kings of Orient Are

WOV 646

Sts 1, 5

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Let us pray. God of starlight, We long to follow you. Like the Magi, we want to pick up the hems of our robes and run in your direction. Like the Magi, we want to kick up dust with our feet and make a joyful ruckus following your guiding star. Unfortunately, the stars can be hard to see from here. Your still, small voice can be hard to hear from here. So just as you guided the Magi, guide us. Draw our attention to your Word. Reveal what it is you want us to hear today, so that we can follow you. With hope in our hearts we pray,

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: Isaiah 60:1-6

Jerusalem is assured that nations will make a pilgrimage to her because the light of God's presence is in her midst. The bountiful food of the sea and the profits of international trade will come streaming to Jerusalem and thereby declare God's praise.

¹Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

²For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.

³Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

⁵Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



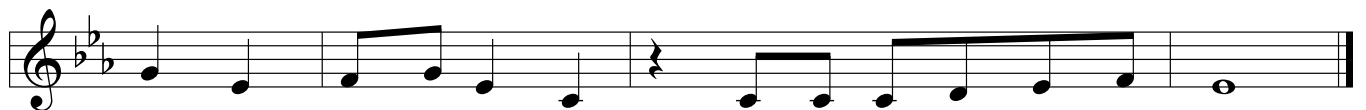
We are called to pon-der mys - t'ry and a-wait the com-ing Christ,



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.

GOSPEL

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

READING: Matthew 2:1-12

God's promise shines bright in the night as magi follow a star to honor a new king. Strangers from a faraway land, they welcome the long-awaited messiah of Israel.

¹ In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, "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." ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They 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.’ ”

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then 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.” ⁹ When 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. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On 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. ¹² And 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.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

As with Gladness Men of Old

ELW 302

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 Dear Lord, help us to be aware of people around us who are not as fortunate. Give us the will to understand people of other traditions, faiths, and races. Do what we can do to reach out to strangers we meet in our busy lives, especially the people of Evergreen East in Fairport and Open Door Mission in Rochester. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

#2 In this New Year, we pray that Federal and State officials and leaders will remember the people of our world and work for a path of justice and truth. Lord stand beside activists and strengthen those who work to block the plans of tyrants and oppressors. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

#3 Dear Lord, you created our beautiful earth. We need to solve many problems that threaten its ability to sustain life. Stand beside and encourage those who work to restore and preserve ecosystems and natural habitats. 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: Parker, Preston, Quinn, Rachel, Raedyn, and Reagan. Strengthen the connections we share with the ministries we serve, especially the ministry of our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Gracious God, be near to us as we call upon you today. Many are mourning the loss of loved ones, and others have deep concerns regarding illness or surgery of family members or friends. Dear Lord give us strength and trust in your constant care.

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

- Jim C, who died on 12/29
- Ray N, stepfather of Mary O, who died 12/11
- Charlyne H, wife of David H, former member of BLC C, who died on 11/23

We pray for those in need of healing.

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.

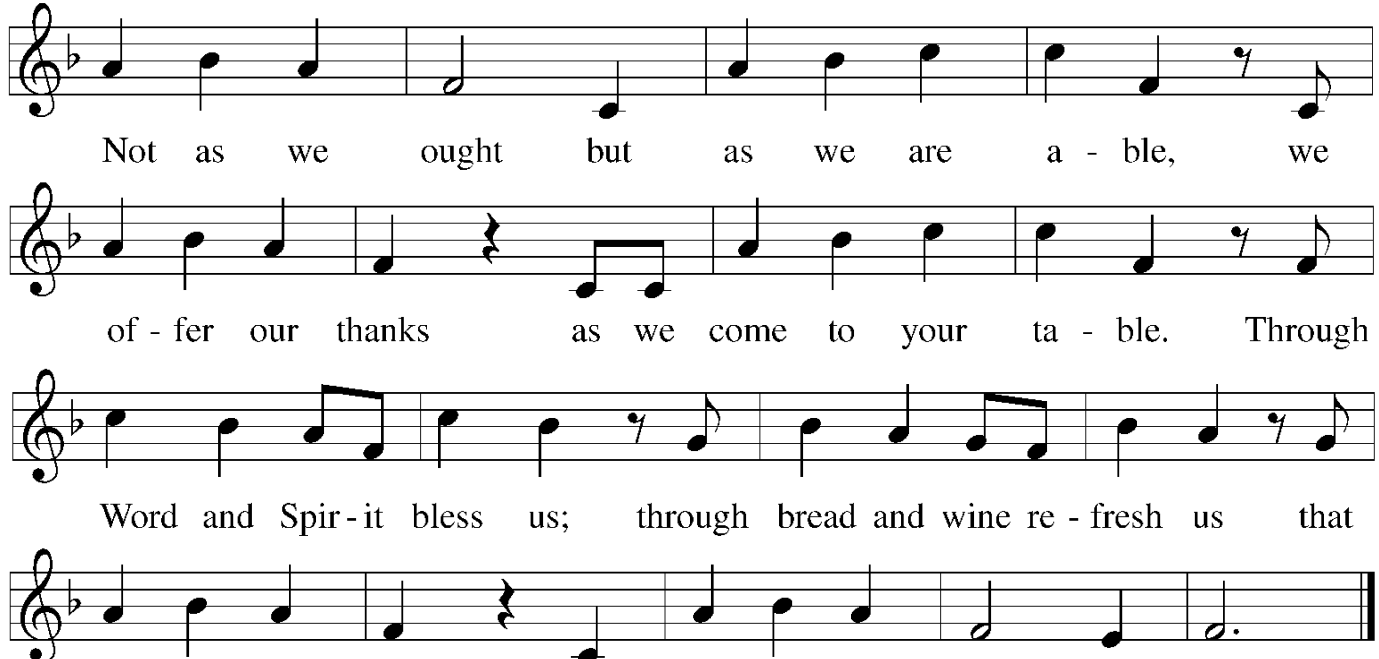
OFFERING

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

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.

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 hope in our hearts and gratitude in our lungs, we unite 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

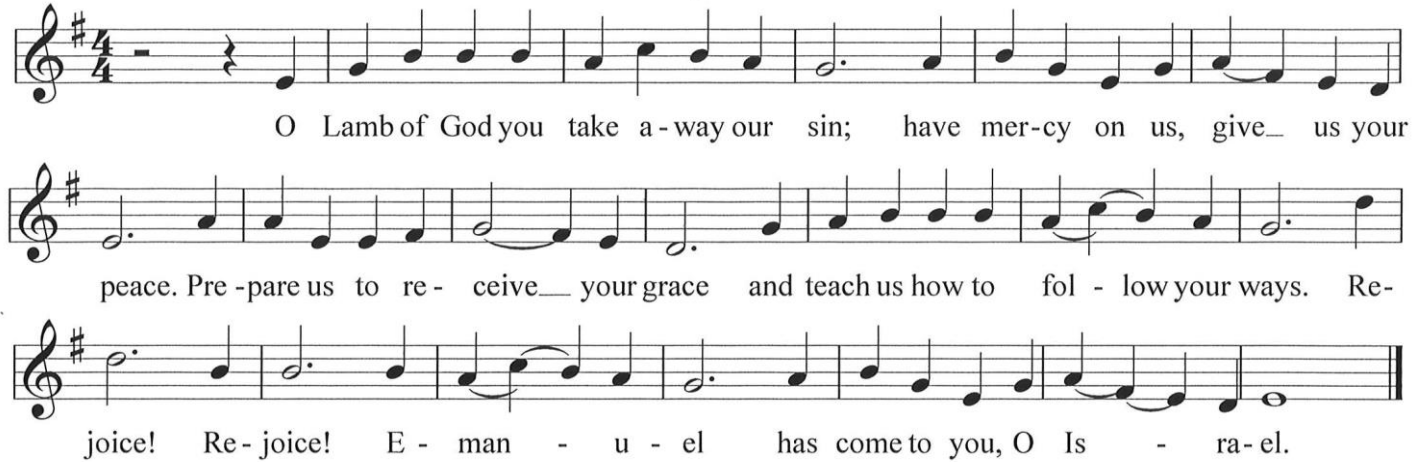
A child has been born for us, a Son given to us. Come, receive the gift of Jesus.

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

'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime

ELW 284

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 we journey, may God bless our wanderings, bless our path, walk beside us and hang stars in the sky to guide us each step of the way. In the name of † Christ, our new beginning, go in peace.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Go, Tell It On the Mountain

Setting by Emma Lou Diemer

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 Rev. David Gerhart, for proclaiming the word and presiding at worship today.

Thank you to Chrisanne Gates, for serving as our 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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Introduction to the season, Call to Worship, Prayer of the Day, Offertory Prayer, Communion Liturgy and Benediction Adapted from a prayer by Rev.
Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

Field Notes

With tears in your eyes,
you name all the bumps
and zigzags your life has taken.
With clenched teeth
and a hummingbird pulse,
you wake up
and wonder—how did I get here?
In the last 40 days of
desert wandering, you say
you haven't heard God's voice once.
You say you miss when God was close,
when God used to sing the harmony line.
So you yell at the sky,
begging God to drop a pin,
to name the road,
to draw you a map.
You lament the way this life isn't easy.
You ask me—was the road ever straight and narrow,
or was that all a lie?
But then you crest the mountain,
and I don't hear from you for a while,
because God was growing
in the lilac field
on the other side of the hill.
God was scattered
among the pebbles
of the road you never planned to take.
Isn't it amazing, you say,
there are a million roads home
and God walks every single one of them.