



*Wednesday, December 24, 2025
Christmas Eve
7:30 pm Worship*



BETHLEHEM
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

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.

GATHERING HYMN	O Come, All Ye Faithful	ELW 283
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arr. 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. Son of God, Child of Mary, born in the stable at Bethlehem, be born again in us this day that through us the world may know the wonder of your love.
Amen.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

READING: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

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!

² The people who walked in darkness

have seen a great light;

those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

⁶ For 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.

⁷ Great will be his authority,
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.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

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.

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph 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. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And 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 in the guest room.

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

¹⁵ When 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." ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made

known what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, ¹⁹ and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

CHRISTMAS CAROL	Once in Royal David's City	ELW 269
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Stanzas 1: Cantor

2, 3, 4: All

1. Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ, her little child.
2. He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and meek and lowly,
lived on earth our Savior holy.
3. And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heav'n above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.
4. Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him; but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high;
there his children gather round,
bright like stars, with glory crowned.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

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 times 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.

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

SHARING GOD'S MEAL

OFFERING OF MUSIC

Pavane for a Silent Night

words, Jean Anne Shafferman
music, Maurice Ravel / arr. Patrick M. Liebergen

The Chancel Choir

OFFERING

As we sing our Offertory, offering plates are passed throughout 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.

What child is this, who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary!

Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you;
hail, hail the Word made flesh,
the babe, the son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high,
the virgin sings her lullaby;
joy, joy, for Christ is born,
the babe, the son of Mary!

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. God of glory,
great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior. 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

God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!

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

COMMUNION HYMN	I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve	ELW 271
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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.

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.

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door,
and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born for this!

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye need not fear the grave;
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us.

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 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.

(Candles may be extinguished.)

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

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

Postlude on 'Mendelssohn'
(‘Hark! The Herald Angels Sing’)

David Willcocks
tune, Felix Mendelssohn

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

Hans Walter-Peterson, cantor

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!

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: John Francis Wade / tr. Frederick Oakeley; Music: attr. J. F. Wade

Arranger: David Willcocks © 1961 Oxford University Press

“Pavane for a Silent Night” – based on *Pavane pour infante défunte* Words: Jean Anne Shafferman;

Music: Maurice Ravel; Arranger: Patrick M. Liebergen © 2006 Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.

“Postlude on *Mendelssohn*” - (Hark! The Herald Angels Sing) Music: Felix Mendelssohn

Arranger: David Willcocks © 1995 Oxford University Press

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

Kim Kulik in memory of Mom, Dad, Don, Terri & Christopher
Frank and Gabriele Nardozi in memory of Erna and Gerhard Schlueter, Frank
Nardozi, and Irene Cortini
GerryAnn and Wayne Westcott in honor of Our Family
Antoinette Thompson in memory of Gerald A. Thompson
David H Olson
Rolf Maxa in memory of William & Margaret Walsh & Erich & Anna Maxa
Kathy Moragne in memory of George and Bernice Stevens
Sandy Goehle in honor of Loved ones
Judy Lohr in memory of Bob Lohr
Howard & Jan Sharp in memory of Our parents and Loved ones
Ruth Hedin in honor of Our Family
Ginny Schumacher in memory of Barbara Williams
Justin and Kelly Runke in memory of Our parents, Peter Runke and George and
Diane Keep
Doris Hausin in memory of my father, Volker Hausin
Hans and Amy Walter-Peterson in honor of Maddie, Izzy, Nate, and Micah
Hoffman
Lucina Brogan in memory of Eino & Tellervo Laine
Nancy Fehse in memory of Frank and Anna Steuerwald and in memory of Erich,
Connie and Greg Helbig

***ELCA World Hunger Special Offerings were made
to the glory of God by the following:***

Kim Kulik in memory of Mom, Dad, Don, Terri & Christopher
David & Sandra Moczarski in memory of Dr. Paul Moczarski
Kathy Moragne in memory of George and Bernice Stevens
Judy Lohr in memory of Bob Lohr
Ginny Schumacher in memory of Barbara Williams
Sandy Joyce in memory of Noel Kaiser
Andy & Ruth Gates in memory of Elmer & Alice Yeakel, Sandy Gates
Doris Hausin in memory of my father, Volker Hausin
Lucina Brogan in memory of Eino & Tellervo Laine

***Our Christmas tree** is given to the glory of God by **Jim and Donna Berner** in honor of their family.*

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

We regret any errors or omissions.

Baptism Celebration Splash Party

Sunday, January 11th
1pm - 3pm
at the Perinton Rec Center



**Celebrate Jesus' baptism- along with our own- with
swimming, games, and cupcakes!**
Suggested donation \$5 per person, not to exceed \$20 per family.
RSVP to Patty Chaffee

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS)

SAVE THE DATE!

JULY 20-23, 2026

AT ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN IN PITTSFORD

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

Glory Enough for Everyone

To maintain the machinery of empire, people must be counted; not to be valued as individuals, but to assess tribute. It is the census. Lists of family members, and decisions about them, must be made. As your life, family, and records are audited, so also is your future decided. What sacrifice will be required for the glory of Rome?

If he has listened to Mary's song (Luke 1:46–55), Joseph, as the state-recognized head of the household, can safely allow himself and his family to be among the counted. He would know that Imperial Rome's time is short, that God brings down the "powerful from their thrones" and "sends the rich away empty." Although in temporary bondage, God's people will receive the promises made to Abraham for the sake of his descendants. If Joseph has listened to Mary (Luke 1:32–33) he knows that this son will sit on David's throne, and cannot be removed. He may not understand how and when these things will come to pass, only that they will. Why not be counted?

Shepherds, however, cannot expect to be counted. While the rest of the world is engaged in the games of empire, they watched their flocks, unnoticed by census-takers. But they were not unnoticed by God. Beyond the view of the watchful eye of Caesar, God was doing a new thing, forging true peace to upset the sham *pax* of imperial domination, a new kingdom whose only army is that of angels singing, rank upon rank, of God's saving work. It all begins with the unforeseen birth of a child and the wonder of a mother. We, like shepherds, stand in awe at God's gracious surprise. There is glory enough for all.