

*Sunday, December 14, 2025*  
*Third Sunday of Advent*



BETHLEHEM  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ [www.blcfairport.org](http://www.blcfairport.org)

## PRELUDE

“Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland”  
(Savior of the Nations, Come)

Helmut Walcha  
tune, J. Walter, *Sacred Song Booklet*, 1524

“O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf”  
O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide)

Walther Haffner  
tune, German Lutheran hymnal, 1666

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Advent marks the ending and beginning of the church year and during this time, we return to our foundation – GOD MATTERS. God’s love and faithfulness endure through all our endings and beginnings. Our weekly scripture readings ground us in the stories of God whose was, who is, and who is to come. As we encounter the familiar characters of the story of Christ’s birth – Mary, Joseph, John the Baptist, the shepherds, the magi – we see the facets of God that can help us see and understand God’s living presence in each of us and deepen our connection to our source of life.*

## GATHERING

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Come Now, O Prince of Peace

text, Geonyong Lee / tr. Marion Pope  
music, Geonyong Lee

The Chancel Choir

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Long-expected God,

**to you all hearts are open, to you all desires are known. We come to you, confessing our sins. Forgive us in your mercy, and remember us in your love. Show us your ways; teach us your paths; and lead us in justice and truth, for the sake of your goodness in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness.

✠ You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.  
**Amen.**

<b>GATHERING HYMN</b>	On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry	ELW 249
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Stanzas 1, 2: All

3: Choir

4, 5: All

### **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.**

### **LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE**

The Advent wreath is a circle with no beginning and no end. It is a symbol of God's unending love and faithfulness.

Isaiah the prophet calls us to prepare for the coming of Jesus by making straight all that is crooked.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." (Isaiah 40:3)

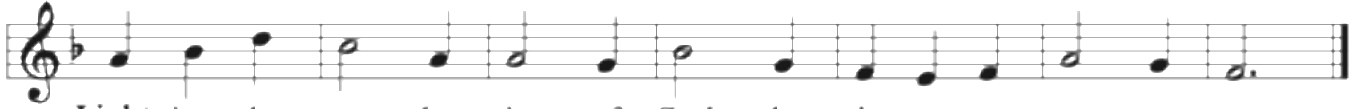
"Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it." (Isaiah 40:5)

**Let us prepare the way for Jesus, the Christ, who is anointed by God "to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners." (Isaiah 61:1)**

"For as a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations." (Isaiah 61:11)



1. Kin - dle this flame of Christ. May it burn bright and true.  
2. God's realm is our de - sire, where peace and jus - tice reign.



Light-ing the way that is of God, the jour - ney we pur - sue.  
Hea-ven and earth com-bined as one, when Christ shall come a - gain.

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### SPECIAL MUSIC

Rejoice, Rejoice!

*incorporating:* HAF TRONES LAMPA FÄRDIG  
VENI, EMMANUEL

Cathy Moglebust

Swedish folk tune  
French processional, 15th cent.

The Chancel Bells

### **HEARING GOD'S WORD**

#### DISMISSAL TO WORSHIP FOR KIDS AND JOY!

*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 designated spaces. **Worship for Kids** (Ages 3 – Grade 2) meets across the hall from the sanctuary and **JOY!** (Grades 3 – 5) meets downstairs. Kids will return during the offering so they can participate in Communion.*

## **READING: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11**

- <sup>1</sup> The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me  
because the LORD has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and release to the prisoners,  
<sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor  
and the day of vengeance of our God,  
to comfort all who mourn,  
<sup>3</sup> to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.  
<sup>4</sup> They shall build up the ancient ruins;  
they shall raise up the former devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many generations.  
<sup>8</sup> For I, the LORD, love justice,  
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;  
I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.  
<sup>9</sup> Their descendants shall be known among the nations  
and their offspring among the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge  
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.  
<sup>10</sup> I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;  
my whole being shall exult in my God,  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
<sup>11</sup> For as the earth brings forth its shoots  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



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

### GOSPEL: Luke 3:1-20

<sup>1</sup> In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, <sup>2</sup> during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup> He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup> as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;  
make his paths straight.

<sup>5</sup> Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,

and the crooked shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth,

<sup>6</sup> and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ ”

<sup>7</sup> John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? <sup>8</sup> Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>9</sup> Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

<sup>10</sup> And the crowds asked him, “What, then, should we do?” <sup>11</sup> In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none, and whoever has food must do likewise.” <sup>12</sup> Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” <sup>13</sup> He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” <sup>14</sup> Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

<sup>15</sup> As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup> John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

<sup>18</sup> So with many other exhortations he proclaimed the good news to the people. <sup>19</sup> But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, <sup>20</sup> added to them all by shutting up John in prison.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

## **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.*

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

*A brief silence.*

#1 God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**



#2 When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

#3 When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

We pray for immigrants and refugees around the world who seek safety, a welcoming community and a place to rebuild their lives, and we pray for Global Refuge and Lutheran Social Services, who serve these neighbors. We pray also for our siblings in faith in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. May our partnerships remind us of your abundance. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

We know that all people matter in your eyes and you know their cares and concerns, their hopes and joys. We pray for those whose needs are known to us.

*We pray for those who grieve, especially the family and friends of*

- Reijo H, uncle and godfather of Marja R, who died on 11/26
- Noel K, friend of Mike J., who died on 12/5

*We pray for those in need of healing, especially:*

- Ray, friend of Dave W, who is struggling with health issues
- Dottie, mother of Ally O'M, who has been hospitalized
- Bob B, brother of Jim B, recovering at home from a brain bleed

Hear the names of those we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

*Silence for individual prayer.*

God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

**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](http://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

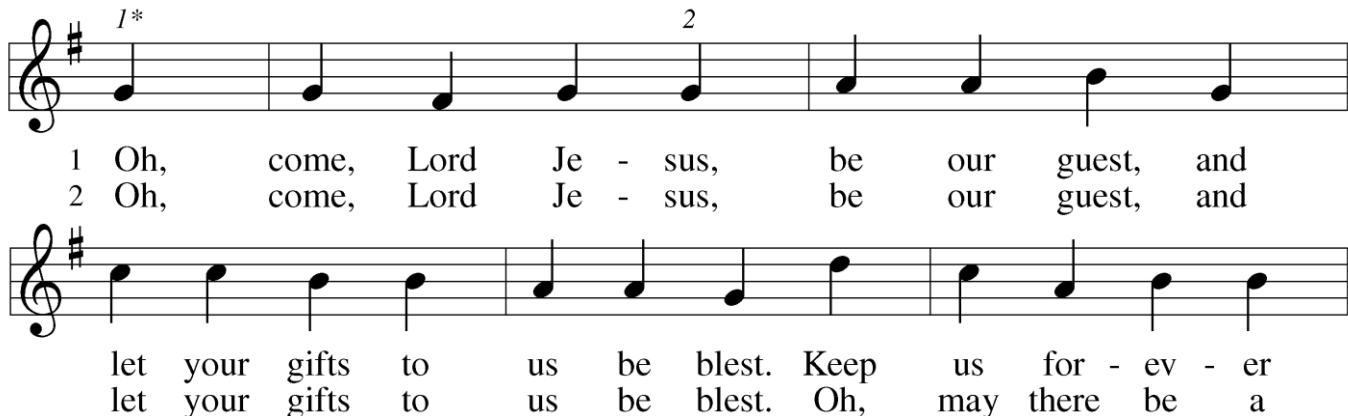
Prepare the Royal Highway  
(BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN)

text, Frans Mikael Franzén  
music, James H. Laster  
tune, Swedish folk, 17th cent.

The Chancel Choir

### OFFERTORY

1\* 2



1 Oh, come, Lord Je - sus, be our guest, and  
2 Oh, come, Lord Je - sus, be our guest, and

let your gifts to us be blest. Keep us for - ev - er  
let your gifts to us be blest. Oh, may there be a



### **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray. Nourishing God,  
**you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. Amen.**

### **HOLY COMMUNION**

As we gather at Christ's table of mercy, the Spirit and the church cry out:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

All those who await his appearance pray:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

The whole creation pleads:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

### **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

Long-expected Jesus, we come to your table and ask you to meet us here.  
**Open our hearts to believe that you come to us in this meal of grace. Amen.**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

In fervent hope, we raise our voices in prayer as Jesus 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

Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.  
**Thanks be to God.**

### DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

*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.

### HYMNS FOR COMMUNION

The King Shall Come

ELW 260

Light Dawns on a Weary World

ELW 726

### TABLE BLESSING

### POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

**Amen.**

## LEAVING TO SERVE

### BENEDICTION

May God who comes among us, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always.

**Amen.**

<b>SENDING HYMN</b>	<b>All Earth Is Hopeful</b>	<b>ELW 266</b>
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### DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Make your heart ready.

**Thanks be to God.**

### POSTLUDE

Rejoice, Rejoice

(Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn)

Mark Sedio  
tune, Marty Haugen

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“Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland” – Savior of the Nations, Come, Music: Helmut Walcha  
Tune: J. Walter, Geistliche Gesangbüchlein, 1524, © 1954 C. F. Peters / © 2000 Augsburg Fortress  
“O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf” – O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide, Music: Walther Haffner  
Tune: Gesangbuch, Augsburg, 1666, © 1993 Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden / © 2000 Augsburg Fortress  
Come Now, O Prince of Peace, Text: Geonyong Lee / tr. Marion Pope, Music: Geonyong Lee, Text and Music © Geonyong Lee  
“The Nativity”, Words: Gary L. Lake Dillensnyder, Music: Robert Jackson - TRENTHAM  
WORDS © 2009 Gary L. Lake Dillensnyder, (adm. The General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church, Nashville, TN)  
“Rejoice, Rejoice!”, Music: Cathy Moglebust, Tunes: HAF TRONES LAMPA FÄRDIG and VENI, EMMANUEL  
© 2013 Choristers Guild  
“Word of God, Come Down on Earth”, Text: James Quinn, Music: Johann R. Ahle, Text © James Quinn, SJ, (adm. Selah Publishing Co., Inc.)  
“Prepare the Royal Highway”, Text: Frans Mikael Franzén / tr. Lutheran Book of Worship, Music: James H. Laster  
Tune: Swedish folk, 17th cent.  
Text © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship, Concordia Publishing, Music © 1989 Concordia Publishing House  
“Come, Lord Jesus”, Text: traditional table prayer, adapt. Susan Briehl, Music: TALLIS’ CANON, Thomas Tallis  
Text © 1996 Augsburg Fortress  
“Lamb of God” – based on VENI, EMMANUEL, Music: French processional, 15th cent., Text: adapt. David Eck  
Text © 2011 David Eck  
“Rejoice, Rejoice” – Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn, Music: Mark Sedio  
Tune: Marty Haugen; © 1983 GIA Publications, Inc., Arrangement © 1996 Augsburg Fortress

## **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 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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:office@blcfairport.org) or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

**Church office hours:** Sandy Squires holds office hours on Wednesdays from 9-1 and is responsive to phone and email Monday through Friday during usual business hours. Please communicate your needs through the church office by phone (585) 223-0634 or by email [office@blcfairport.org](mailto:office@blcfairport.org). Our co-Pastors are available Sunday – Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling the church office or emailing [pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org](mailto:pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org) or [pastor.amy@blcfairport.org](mailto:pastor.amy@blcfairport.org)

# Celebrate Christmas Eve



**5:00 pm - Worship**

**6:45 - 7:00 pm**  
**outdoors on the corner**

**7:30pm - Worship**

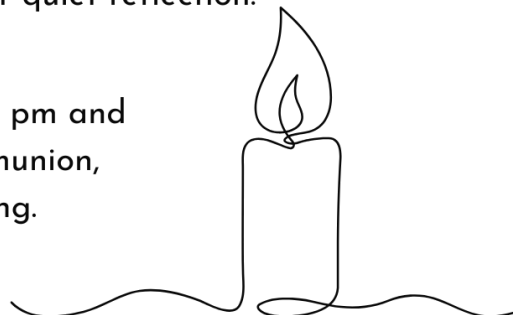
[blcfairport.org/advent](http://blcfairport.org/advent)

## **Longest Night Service** **Thursday, December 18**

This service makes space for difficult emotions like grief and anxiety during the holiday season.

If you have lost a loved one, feel weighed down by worry, or if Christmas is a challenging season for you, this service is for you. Sanctuary opens at 6:30 pm for quiet reflection.

Worship begins at 7:00 pm and includes prayer, communion, and candle lighting.



## **Prayer for the Third Sunday in Advent**

Here is a gaping sore, Lord: half the world diets, the other half hungers; half the world is housed, the other half homeless; half the world pursues profit, the other half senses loss. Redeem our souls, redeem our peoples, redeem our times. Amen.

—from *The Complete Book of Christian Prayer*, p. 151.

This prayer was written by John Bell (b. 1949), Scottish-born musician and ordained minister in the Church of Scotland. A prolific musician and hymn writer, Bell is a music leader of the Iona Community in Scotland who is much sought as a speaker and workshop leader.