

*Sunday, December 28, 2025*  
*First Sunday of Christmas*

 BETHLEHEM  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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



## PRELUDE

Pastorale on “The Sussex Carol”

John S. Dixon  
tune, English carol

Offertory on “The Wexford Carol”

John S. Dixon  
tune, Irish carol

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the “holy innocents” of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.*

## GATHERING

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace.

**Amen.**

Trusting in God’s steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Reconciling God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

God's grace upon grace flows over you. † Christ's presence redeems the whole creation. Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!

**Amen.**

<b>GATHERING HYMN</b>	<b>Joy to the World</b>	<b>ELW 267</b>
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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**

1 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, King of cre - a - tion,  
2 Fair are the mead - ows, fair are the wood - lands,  
3 Fair is the sun - shine, fair is the moon - light,  
4 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, Lord of the na - tions,

Son of God and Son of Man!  
robed in flow'rs of bloom - ing spring;  
bright the spar - kling stars on high;  
Son of God and Son of Man!

Tru - ly I'd love thee,      tru - ly I'd serve thee,  
 Je - sus is fair - er,      Je - sus is pur - er,  
 Je - sus shines bright - er,      Je - sus shines pur - er  
 Glo - ry and hon - or,      praise, ad - o - ra - tion,

light of my soul,      my joy, my crown.  
 he makes our sor - rowing spir - it sing.  
 than all the an - gels in the sky.  
 now and for - ev - er - more be thine!

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, 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: Psalm 148

*The splendor of the Lord is over earth and heaven. (Ps. 148:13)*

- <sup>1</sup> Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens;  
praise God in the heights.
- <sup>2</sup> **Praise the LORD, all you angels;  
sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**
- <sup>3</sup> Praise the LORD, sun and moon;  
sing praise, all you shining stars.
- <sup>4</sup> **Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens.**
- <sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
who commanded, and they were created,
- <sup>6</sup> **who made them stand fast forever and ever,  
giving them a law that shall not pass away.**
- <sup>7</sup> Praise the LORD from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deeps;
- <sup>8</sup> **fire and hail, snow and fog,  
tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**
- <sup>9</sup> mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars;
- <sup>10</sup> **wild beasts and all cattle,  
creeping things and flying birds;**
- <sup>11</sup> sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the world;
- <sup>12</sup> **young men and maidens,  
old and young together.**
- <sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.
- <sup>14</sup> **The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for  
all faithful servants,  
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!**

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Word of God, come down on earth, liv - ing rain from  
heav'n de - scend - ing; touch our hearts and bring to birth  
faith and hope and love un - end - ing. Word al - might - y,  
we re - vere you; Word made flesh, we long to hear you.

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

### **GOSPEL: Matthew 2:13-23**

*In a dream, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus from the jealousy of Herod.*

<sup>13</sup> Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” <sup>14</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

<sup>16</sup> When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. <sup>17</sup> Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

<sup>18</sup> “A voice was heard in Ramah,  
wailing and loud lamentation,

Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

<sup>19</sup> When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, <sup>20</sup> “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” <sup>21</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazarene.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

<b>HYMN OF THE DAY</b>	Gentle Joseph Heard a Warning	ACS 1060
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## 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.**

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## **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.*

#1 God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise. Hear us, O God,  
**Your mercy is great.**

#2 God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken. Hear us, O God,

**Your mercy is great.**

#3 God of righteousness, when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice, you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve. Hear us, O God,

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for those who are forgotten and alone, including those who are incarcerated, held in detention centers, live in institutions, or are unable to leave their homes during this Christmas season. We pray also for our siblings in faith in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. May our partnerships remind us of your abundance. Hear us, O God,

**Your mercy is great.**

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*

- Tristan A, estranged brother of Bill A, who died in December

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

- Sandy J, recovering at home from knee surgery
- Nancy S, recovering from heart surgery
- Sandy G, recovering from a recent hospitalization

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

*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**

### **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**

Mary, Did You Know?

Mark Lowry and Buddy Greene  
arr. Jack Schrader

# OFFERTORY



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?  
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?  
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas-ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?  
Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.  
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an - gels sing;  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!



## **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.**

## **HOLY COMMUNION**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.

**Come among us.**

Bless this meal.

**May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people.**

**Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth. Come, Holy Spirit.**

## **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**

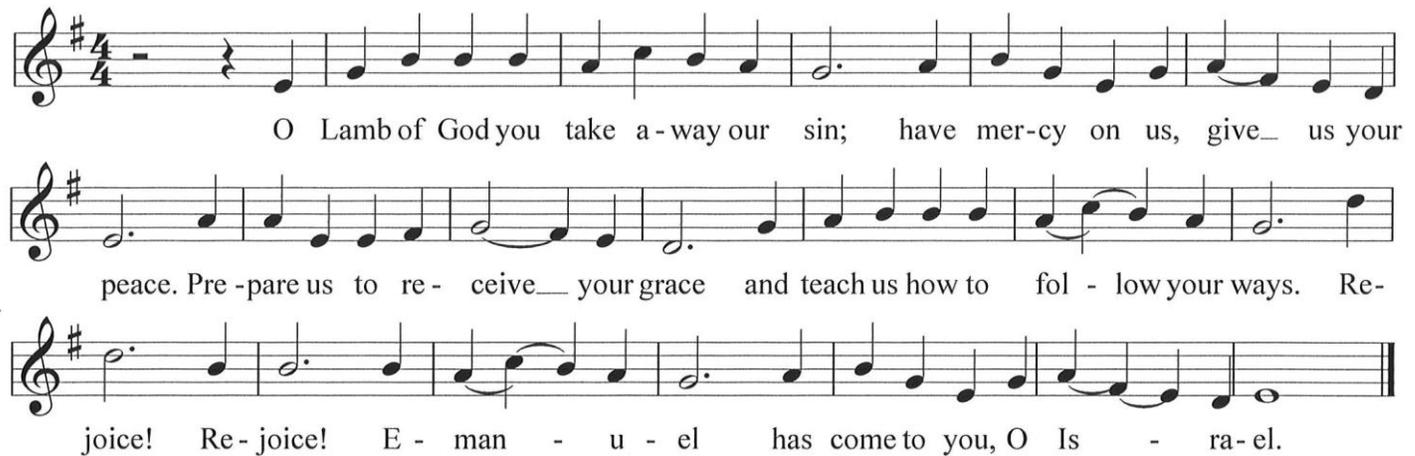
### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

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

### **HYMN FOR COMMUNION**

The First Noel

ELW 300

## 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.**

## LEAVING TO SERVE

### BENEDICTION

The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter,  
✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.

**Amen.**

<b>SENDING HYMN</b>	Hark! The Herald Angels Sing	ELW 270
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### DISMISSAL

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

**Thanks be to God.**

### POSTLUDE

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

David Cherwien  
tune, Felix Mendelssohn

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“Pastorale on the Sussex Carol”, Tune: Traditional English carol, Music: John S. Dixon, © 2016 Lorenz Publishing Company

“Offertory on the Wexford Carol”, Tune: Traditional Irish carol, Music: John S. Dixon, © 2016 Lorenz Publishing Company

“Beautiful Savior”, Text: Gesangbuch, Münster, 1677; tr. Joseph A. Seiss, Music: Silesian folk tune, 19th cent.

“Word of God, Come Down on Earth”, Text: James Quinn, Music: Johann R. Ahle, Text © James Quinn, SJ, (adm. Selah Publishing Co., Inc.)

“Mary, Did You Know?”, Words and Music: Mark Lowry and Buddy Greene, Arranger: Jack Schrader, © 1991 Word Music and Rufus Music  
“What Child Is This”, Text: William C. Dix, Music: English ballad, 16th cent.

“Lamb of God” – based on VENI, EMMANUEL, Music: French processional, 15th cent., Text: adapt. David Eck, Text © 2011 David Eck

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”, Tune: Felix Mendelssohn, Music: David Cherwien, © 2006 Wayne Leupold Editions, Inc.

## **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:**

Nancy Price, soloist – offering of music

**The altar flowers are given by Sherry Cook in loving memory of Jim Cook.**

**A Special Thanks** to Chrisanne Gates, organist/pianist, for assisting us with today's worship.

**A Big Thank You** to the Rev. David Gerhardt for leading us in worship today and to Chrisanne Gates for serving as our guest musician.

**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)

# 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!



## **Joy and Sorrow at Christmas**

The joy-filled carols of Christmas still seem to echo in the nave as the assembly gathers for worship. There is praise of God in the psalm this day as the psalmist sings of the Lord present in all creation even as the same creation reveals a Creator worthy of praise. Still, our joy is not complete for sin continues, even in these days. Herod, bent on destroying Jesus, orders the murders of the youngest children of Bethlehem. Even today the distress present in a dangerous and unjust human society presses in. Human sin severs our relationships with God and one another.

In the midst of our distress, Jesus comes in flesh and blood and is proclaimed in today's readings to be fully human, and even vulnerable, just as we are. Yet the Christ child also is Lord and Savior. Even while Herod plots, God makes a way to use this for good. Guiding Joseph by dreams, Jesus and his family are saved and the words of Hosea 11:1 are fulfilled. In this way we are reminded once more this is no ordinary child, this is the Christ child, the Messiah, the one sent to save and redeem a broken and sinful humanity.

Once more we discover God does not simply fix our lives, removing all obstacles and difficulties. Instead, God uses the harsh realities of life as opportunities for the gospel to be proclaimed, hope to triumph, and grace to shine forth. This is Jesus, our Emmanuel, God with us, when we flee to Egypt and as we return to dwell in Nazareth.