

Sunday, January 4, 2026
Epiphany of Our Lord

 BETHLEHEM
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

PRELUDE

A Medley of Carols

setting, Paul Manz

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 and Ephesians, 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

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!

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. O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

In the Bleak Midwinter

Gustav Holst
arr. Tull Glazener

BLC Dulcimers

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 61:10-62:3

³ 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.
⁴ 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.

⁵ Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks;
foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines,
⁶ but you shall be called priests of the Lord;
you shall be named ministers of our God;
you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations,
and in their riches you shall glory.

⁷ Because their shame was double
and dishonor was proclaimed as their lot,
therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion;
everlasting joy shall be theirs.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

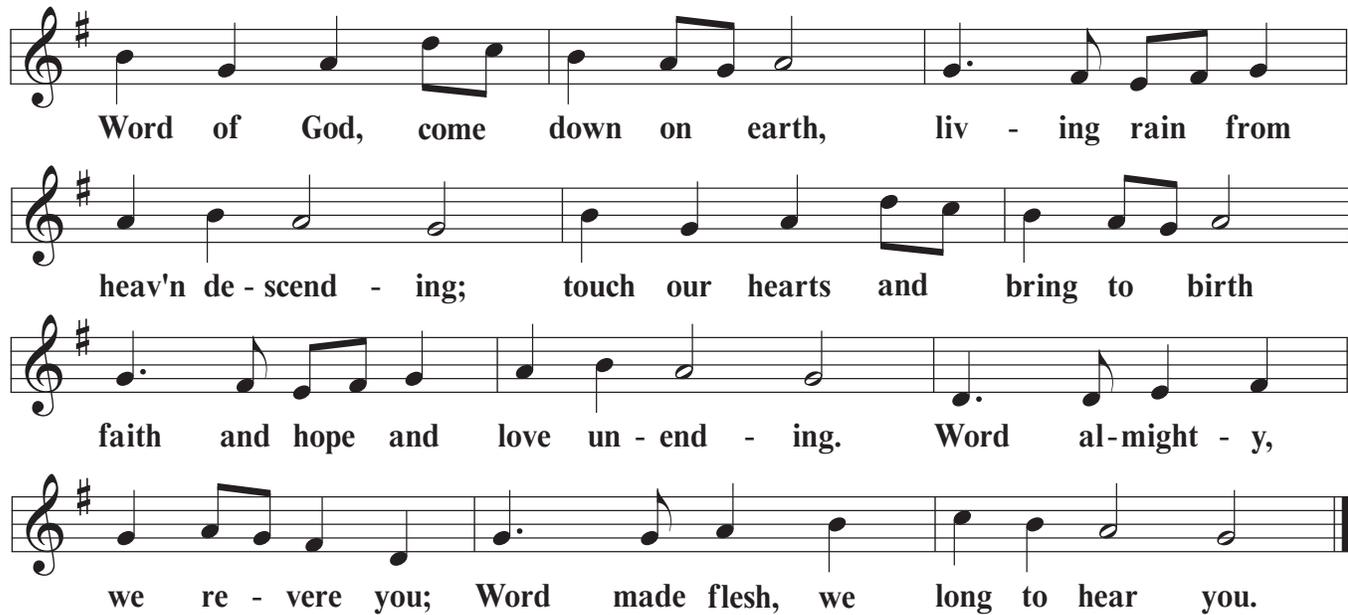
¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord;
my whole being shall exult in my God,
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹ 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



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 2:1-12

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, magi 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 in the east 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 magi 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 in the east, 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 gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY	Bright and Glorious Is the Sky ELW 301, sts. 1, 3-6
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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.**

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 Repairer of the breach, you separate us from our sin and unite us with one another. Heal the animosity in our hearts, and bind us together in love. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

#2 Author of life, you sent your spirit over the waters, your breath into your children, and guiding stars across the sky. Awaken us to the plight of the planet and send us to care for your creation. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

#3 Light that leads the way, you make yourself known to the nations. Illuminate just paths and guide leaders in the church and the world in your holy will. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

We pray for those who respond to God's call by working hand in hand with our companion churches and other organizations around the world through ELCA Global Mission; and 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 offer prayers of thanksgiving for:

- the safe arrival of Charlotte Anne, great granddaughter of Judy L, born on 12/23

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

- Penny, mother of Dave M, who died on 12/24

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Pat M-L, friend of Pat E, who had a stroke and is currently hospitalized
- Sandy J, recovering at home from knee surgery
- Nancy S, recovering from heart surgery

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 or scan the QR (quick response) code on the right and you'll be brought to BLC's mobile giving page.



OFFERING OF MUSIC

Brightest and Best of the Stars

(Tune 1: MORNING STAR – ELW 303)

(Tune 2: STAR IN THE EAST)

text, Reginald Heber

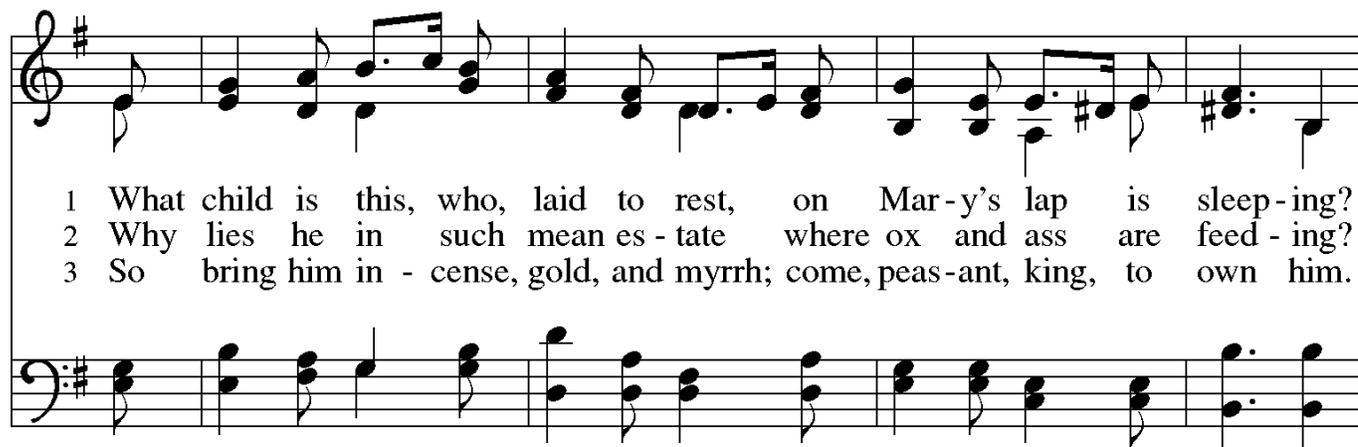
music, James P. Harding

music, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

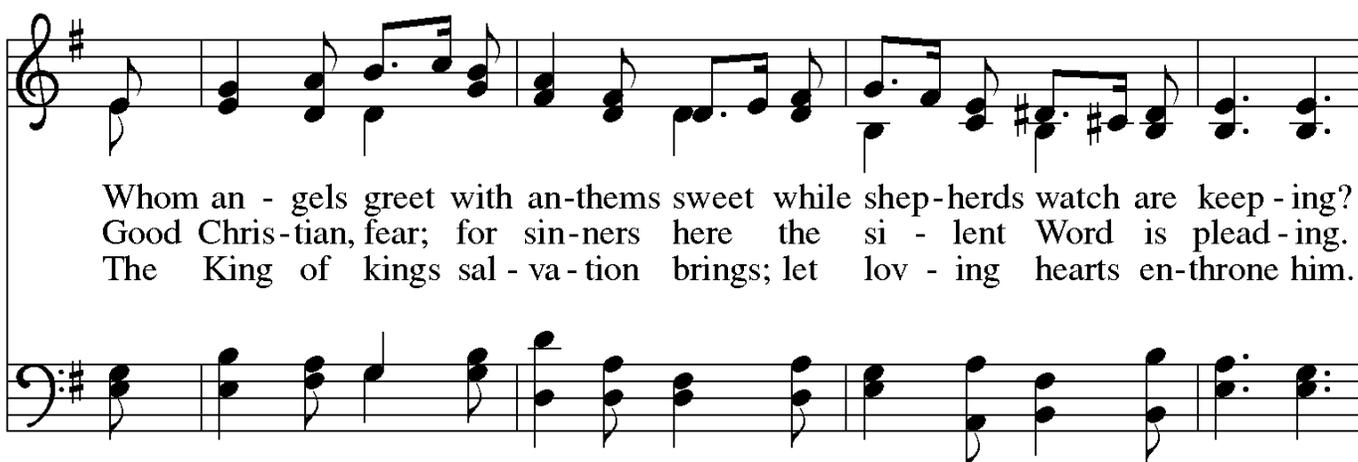
arr. Chrisanne Gates / refrain, arr. Shawn Kirchner

The Chancel Choir

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



HYMNS FOR COMMUNION

As the Grains of Wheat

ELW 465

I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

ELW 815

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.

SENDING HYMN

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

ELW 310

DISMISSAL

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

From Heaven Above

(VOM HIMMEL HOCH – ELW 268)

setting, Wilbur Held
tune, attr. Martin Luther

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 Chrisanne Gates for serving as our guest musician while Raelynn is away.

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 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. 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: 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. 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 or 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

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“A Medley of Carols” Setting: Paul Manz © 1975 Concordia Publishing House

“In the Bleak Midwinter” Music: Gustav Holst; Arranger: Tull Glazner © Eagle Creek Music

“Word of God, Come Down on Earth” Text: James Quinn; Music: Johann R. Ahle

Text © James Quinn, SJ, (adm. Selah Publishing Co., Inc.)

“Brightest and Best of the Stars” Text: Reginald Heber

Tune 1: morning star; Music: James P. Harding

Tune 2: star in the east – *Southern Harmony*, 1835; Arranger (Refrain): Shawn Kirchner

Tune 1 © 2006, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Tune 2 Arrangement: S. Kirchner © 2016 Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

“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

“From Heaven Above” Music: Wilbur Held; Tune: attr. Martin Luther © 1959 Concordia Publishing House

Treasured by God

A newborn baby often elicits “oohs” and “ahs” from its admirers and yet developmentally, may be doing nothing incredibly remarkable—only able to focus on objects only about 18 inches in front of its face and prone to stare at any shiny object. Nevertheless, a newborn is a miracle to behold, filled with wonder for the world around it and desiring nothing more than to be fed, held, rocked, nurtured, and loved.

The gifts of the magi direct us away from the cute, cuddly, cooing baby Jesus by pointing us to who Jesus really has come to be. The magi offer gold, a possession of kings; frankincense, used in ritual to indicate the presence of the deity; and myrrh, an oil used at the time of death as well as for anointing priests. By their gifts, the wise men reveal the identity of this child: the king before whom nations will bow, the anointed high priest of God, and the suffering servant who will die for the ones he has come to serve.

The “oohs” and “ahs” we offer as we celebrate the Epiphany of Our Lord are not simply for a cooing and cuddly baby Jesus but for a God who chooses to reveal God’s love and mercy by taking human form. On this day, we celebrate that God’s mercy is wider and deeper than we imagined and includes all people and all nations. All people—rich or poor, Gentile or Jew, straight or gay, male or female—are God’s treasure, the precious ones for whom God is willing to die. What do we bring to honor our Lord before whom we bow? We bring the treasure of our lives poured out in praise of God and in service to others.