



*Sunday, January 25, 2026
Third Sunday after Epiphany*



BETHLEHEM
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

PRELUDE

Prelude on “Machs mit mir, Gott, nach deiner Güt”

(Deal with Me in Thy Grace, O God - [ELW 799])

Michela G. Abril
tune, Bartholomäus Gesius

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jesus begins his public ministry by calling fishers to leave their nets and follow him. In Jesus the kingdom of God has come near. We who have walked in darkness have seen a great light. We see this light most profoundly in the cross—as God suffers with us and all who are oppressed by sickness, sin, or evil. Light dawns for us as we gather around the word, the font, and the holy table. We are then sent to share the good news that others may be “caught” in the net of God’s grace and mercy.

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Word who spoke life into being, the Wind stirring the waters.

Amen.

Let us turn in confession to the one who knows us completely.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Mighty God, lover of justice,
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.

The former things have passed away, and new things God now declares:
Like a spring of water that never fails, God covers you in the righteousness of Christ, and forgives your sin in † Jesus’ name. May the Spirit give you strength to live for others, and bless you with the gift of peace.

Amen.

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

Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al - might-y God and Fa - ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



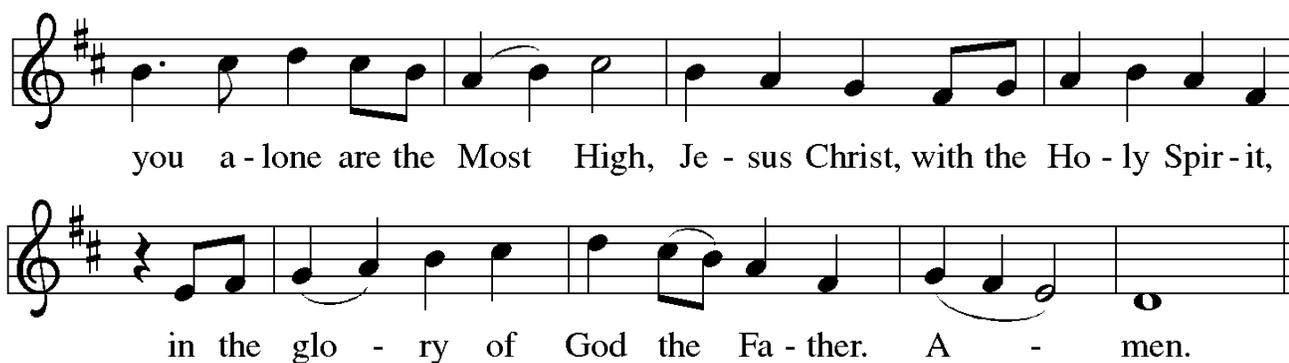
you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Lord God, your lovingkindness always goes before us and follows after us. Summon us into your light, and direct our steps in the ways of goodness that come through the cross of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

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: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Paul calls on the Corinthians to end their dissensions and share the unified outlook of the gospel. Discord arises when we forget that we belong not to human leaders or institutions but to Christ. Indeed, the unifying word of the cross of Christ is the center of the gospel and the power of God's salvation.

¹⁰ Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you but that you be knit together in the same mind and the same purpose. ¹¹ For it has been made clear to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. ¹² What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." ¹³ Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶ I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else. ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel—and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of

its power.

¹⁸ For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 4:12-23

Jesus begins his public ministry shortly after John the Baptist is imprisoned by Herod. He proclaims the nearness of God's reign and calls four fishermen to be his first disciples.

¹² Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³ He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴ so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵ "Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles—

¹⁶ the people who sat in darkness

have seen a great light,

and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death

light has dawned."

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

¹⁸ As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishers. ¹⁹ And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called

them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

²³ Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

Come, Follow Me, the Savior Spake

ELW 799

INSTALLATION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

As God's beloved children united in Christ, let us pray for the church, the whole human community, and the well-being of the earth, our home.

A brief silence.

#1 Holy One, you entrust the message of the cross and the mission of the gospel to the church in every land. Guide the newly baptized and deepen the faith of all who follow Christ. Merciful God,
hear our prayer.

#2 Holy Judge, your power is love, and you judge the nations by the measure of Christ. Free any who are unjustly accused or wrongly condemned. We pray for those in authority. Merciful God,
hear our prayer.

#3 Holy Giver, you gather, forgive, and shape us as disciples of Christ. Nurture in us a spirit of patience and respect, that we may love one another as you love us. Merciful God,
hear our prayer.

We pray for neighbors and siblings in Christ who suffer poverty, homelessness and hunger, that their hope will be sustained, their daily needs are met and their human dignity respected; and for our siblings in faith in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. May our partnerships remind us of your abundance. Merciful God, **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 are grieving, especially the family and friends of:

- LeRoy B, father of Sue C, who died on 1/10
- Jess S, friend of Kim K, who died on 1/3

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Charlie G, cousin of Chris M, who has been diagnosed with ALS
- Dottie, mother of Alli O, who is being treated for an infection
- Marcelle V, friend of Alli O, 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.

Merciful God,
hear our prayer.

Confident that the Holy Spirit receives our prayers and answers us, we commend all for whom we pray to God's loving-kindness made known to us in Christ Jesus 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

Sing to the Lord a New Song

words, Psalm 96 / para. Hal H. Hopson
music, Franz Joseph Haydn
arr. Hal H. Hopson

The Chancel Choir

OFFERTORY



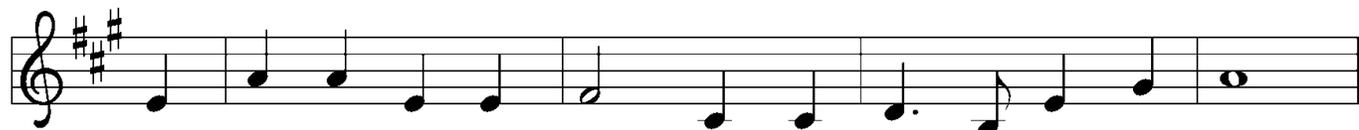
3 We thank you, our cre - a - tor, for all things bright and good,



the seed-time and the har - vest, our life, our health, our food.



No gifts have we to of - fer for all your love im - parts,



but what you most would trea - sure—our hum - ble, thank-ful hearts.

Refrain



All good gifts a - round us are sent from heav'n a - bove.



We thank you, Lord, we thank you, Lord, for all your love.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Gracious God,
you bless us with gifts of guidance, new life, growth in grace, and fruitful labor. Accept the first fruits of time and toil, field and orchard we offer here. Bless and multiply these gifts to our nurture and the care of your creation; for the sake of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

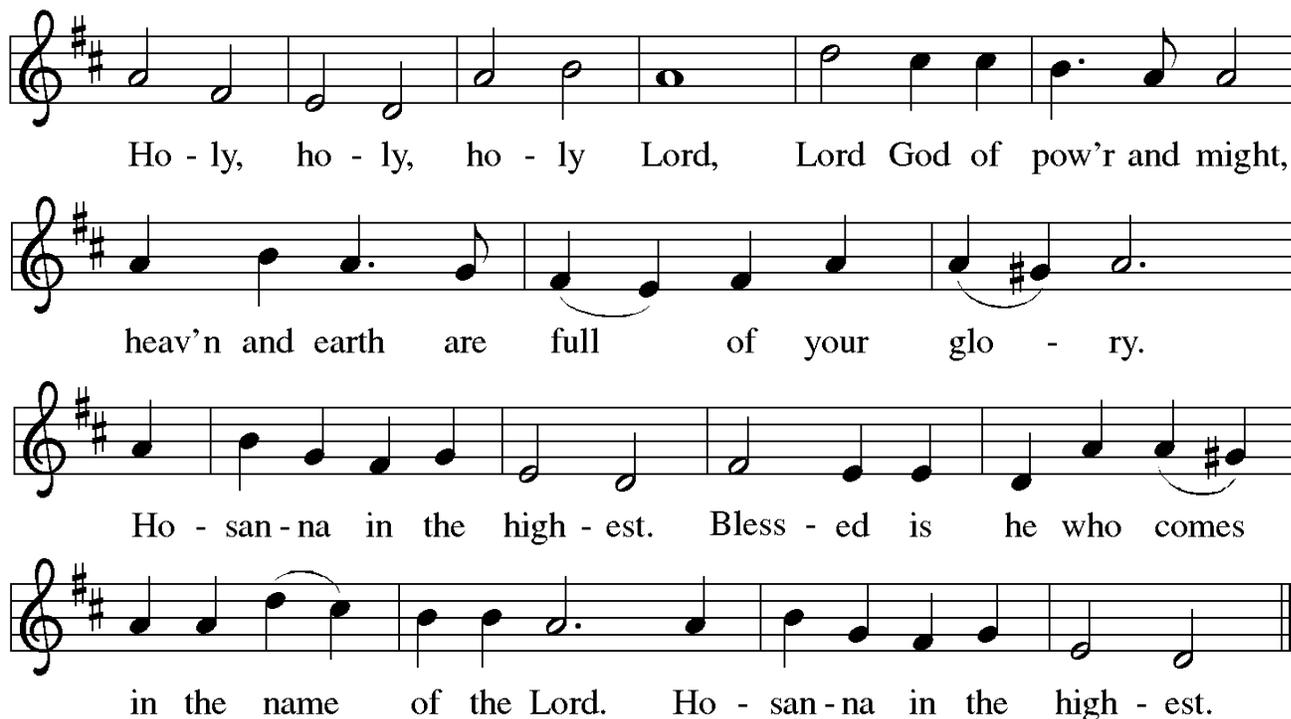
Lift up your hearts.

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.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy . . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again

Pour out your Holy Spirit in this meal,
and make us one in this community of faith and with your people throughout the world.

Glory and praise to you, O God, Author of life, Word made flesh, Power of the Most High, now and forever.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

United in baptism, we pray as Jesus taught:

**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 the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! Come to the table; taste and see.

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



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

HYMNS FOR COMMUNION

I Come with Joy

ELW 482

I Love to Tell the Story

ELW 661

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE

1 O Lord, now let your ser - vant de - part in heav'n-ly peace,
2 Then grant that I may fol - low your gleam, O glo - rious Light,

for I have seen the glo - ry of your re - deem - ing grace:
till earth-ly shad - ows scat - ter, and faith is changed to sight;

a light to lead the na - tions un - to your ho - ly hill,
till rap - tured saints shall gath - er up - on that shin - ing shore,

the glo - ry of your peo - ple, your cho - sen Is - ra - el.
where Christ, the bless - ed day - star, shall light them ev - er - more.

LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

May the triune God, who has put a new song in your mouth and tuned your heart for praise † bless you now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN	Christ, Be Our Light	ELW 715
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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Postlude on Epiphany

(Brightest and Best of the Suns of the Morning)

Simon Peberdy
tune, Joseph F. Thrupp

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:

Hans Walter-Peterson, cantor

James Berner, guitar

Rich Towsley, guitar

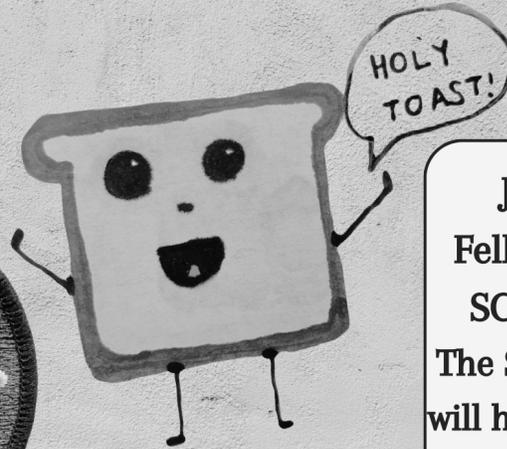
Thank you to all those who participated in worship this Sunday! Want to learn more about what roles are needed in worship or sign-up for a pre-scheduled role? Talk with one of the pastors following worship or send an email to volunteersupport@blcfairport.org and we'll follow up!

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

Sunday Table - February 1st



Join us in the
Fellowship Hall on
SCOUT SUNDAY.
The Scouts of America
will host and share info
on troop activities.

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!

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Holy Communion, Setting Four; Music: Ronald A. Nelson © 1978, 2006 Ronald Nelson (adm. Augsburg Fortress)

“We Plow the Field and Scatter” - ELW 681, stanza 3 Text: Matthias Claudius; tr. Jane M. Campbell

Music: Johann A. P. Schulz

“O Lord, Now Let Your Servant” - ELW 313 Text: Ernest E. Ryder, alt., based on the Nunc dimittis

Music: Finnish folk tune; arr. Hymn version; Text © 1925 Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America

Arr. © 2006 Augsburg Fortress

“Prelude on Machs mit mir, Gott, nach deiner Güte” Tune: Bartholomäus Gesius / adapt. Johann Herman Schein

Music: Michela G. Abril © 2021 Michela G. Abril

“Sing to the Lord a New Song” Words: Psalm 96 – para. Hal H. Hopson; Music: Franz Joseph Haydn / arr. Hal H. Hopson

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“Postlude on Epiphany” – Brightest and Best of the Suns of the Morning

Tune: Joseph Francis Thrupp; Music: Simon Peberdy © 2022 Simon Peberdy

A New Way to Follow

Nations wage war, gangs battle each other, families quarrel, communities of faith divide. We hear others say and even hear ourselves saying, “There is no other way.”

In Jesus, the light of God's kingdom draws near and a new way shines for us to follow.

In today's gospel, Jesus first withdraws (Matt. 4:12). The word *anachoreo* (to withdraw) is used ten times in Matthew's gospel—each time as Jesus' response to violence or conflict. John the Baptist has been arrested, and tension is beginning to build. The way of God and the way of the world's rulers are beginning to collide. In Jesus, a new kingdom has drawn near, a kingdom of nonviolence and non-retaliation. Jesus' withdrawal is not simply passivity but points to a vision of an alternate way of reigning as king. Jesus rules not with violence, abusive power, or through division but through voluntarily emptying himself of power, identifying with the oppressed and burdened, and healing that which is broken. Into this new reign, Jesus calls the disciples to follow him, a way that appears foolish and weak to those who cannot discern it. To those God calls, it is the wisdom and strength, the light and power of God.

To follow in the way of Jesus places one's life at risk, for it eventually leads to the cross. To follow, though, implies someone is leading. The way God calls us to follow has already been filled with the loving kindness and mercy of Jesus who has gone before us and who leads us to the foot of the cross. There, in the shadow of the cross, God makes a way for unity in the midst of division, for healing in the midst of brokenness, for peace in the midst of violence, for forgiveness in the midst of betrayal. Around the table, the kingdom of God draws near; Jesus' broken body announces forgiveness, healing, peace, and unity. Many bodies are nourished and formed into the one body of Christ, called and sent to follow in the way of Jesus, to be broken and shed for the sake of the world.