

Third Sunday of Advent

December 12, 2021 – 10am

Modern Worship, ELW Setting 4



Prelude Music

Announcements

Lighting of the Advent Candle – Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah (3rd verse only, below) ELW 240

Light three candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.

Lift your heads and lift high the gateway for the King of glory.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: God for whom we wait,

C: in the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you. We fail in believing that your good news is for us. We falter in our call to tend your creation. We find our sense of self in material wealth. We fear those different from ourselves. We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love. Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.

P: God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you! Through the power of the Holy Spirit, † your sins are forgiven. You are children of the Most High, inheritors of the eternal promise, and recipients of divine mercy. God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.

C: Amen.

Gathering Song:

Open Up the Heavens

We've waited for this day. We're gathered in Your Name, calling out to You.
Your glory, like a fire, awakening desire, will burn our hearts with truth.

You're the reason we're here. You're the reason we're singing.

Open up the heavens. We want to see You. Open up the floodgates, a mighty river, flowing from Your heart, filling every part of our praise.

Your presence in this place, Your glory on our face, we're looking to the sky.
Descending like a cloud, You're standing with us now. Lord, unveil our eyes.

You're the reason we're here. You're the reason we're singing.

Open up the heavens. We want to see You. Open up the floodgates, a mighty river, flowing from Your heart, filling every part of our praise.

Open up the heavens. We want to see You. Open up the floodgates, a mighty river, flowing from Your heart, filling every part of our praise.

Show us, show us your glory. Show us, show us your power. Show us, show us your glory, Lord.

Show us, show us your glory. Show us, show us your power. Show us, show us your glory, Lord.

Open up the heavens. We want to see You. Open up the floodgates, a mighty river, flowing from Your heart, filling every part of our praise.

Greeting

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all!

C: And also with you!

Kyrie

A: In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **C: Lord, have mercy.**

A: For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. **C: Lord, have mercy.**

A: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord. **C: Lord have mercy.**

A: For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord have mercy.

A: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. **C: Amen.**

Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray together,

C: Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Children's Message

Annie Slabaugh

First Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-20

The prophet Zephaniah's message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God's salvation is at hand.

¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! ¹⁵The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. ¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. ¹⁷The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing ¹⁸as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. ¹⁹I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. ²⁰At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation: Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord

(Solo)

Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

(Congregation)

Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

(Congregation)

Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

Gospel: Luke 3:7-18

John the Baptist heralds the mighty one who is coming. John teaches that preparation for God's reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.

P: A reading from... **C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

⁷John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruits worthy of repentance. 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. ⁹Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" ¹¹In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." ¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." ¹⁴Soldiers 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." ¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John 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 thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His 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." ¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Pastor Paul Busekist

Song of the Day: Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

ELW 242

Apostles Creed

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.

Sending Song:

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

ELW 282

Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Christ is near.

C: **Thanks be to God.**



Bethlehem
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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December 12, 2021

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

12/15—Fran White

12/17—Marilyn Johns

A COVID update from Council:

“For several months, Grand Traverse County has topped the 14-day average 7% Covid positivity threshold set up by Council for our current precautions. At the last Council Meeting, it was voted upon that **if the positivity rate rises to 17.5% that Bethlehem will once again require mandatory masks regardless of vaccination status.** This will ensure that we are doing our part to keep our parishioners and community safe.

Currently, Munson Healthcare has activated Pandemic Response Level Red for the first time in history (<https://www.munsonhealthcare.org/services/community-health/covid19/pandemic-status>), as they are seeing the most Covid cases since last year. At the time of Tuesday's Council vote, the rate was 15%, and **the latest update, as of time of printing, GT County positivity rate is 19.7%, so we ask that ALL worshippers wear masks.** Stay safe, pray for all good things, and see you soon!

-Your Bethlehem Church Council”

Please note that the new Building and Office Hours are: 9:00am – 2:30pm, Monday – Thursday.

CHRISTMAS AT TRAVERSE CITY HIGH SCHOOL IS BACK! Christmas is right around the corner and we have a list of items needed by the students. Near the gathering space there is a list of items desired. **Please return and place in the box provided BY DECEMBER 12TH. DO NOT WRAP GIFTS. NO HATS OR SCARVES ARE NEEDED.** Thank you for supporting the 22nd year from Bethlehem!

For two of our three Christmas Eve services, we are in need of Hospitality greeters for the 6:00pm and 8:00pm services. Even if you are not a regular Hospitality volunteer, we can use your ability to greet and hand out worship folders. **Also needed are volunteers to assist with decorating the sanctuary on Thursday, December 23rd.** This will include setting out the poinsettias and filling the luminaries for the outdoor service. Please contact Barbara Oster if you are able to help out.

ADVENT WEDNESDAY NIGHT - DECEMBER 15TH: Beginning at 6PM there will be a craft and lessons for the youth so you will be able to attend worship at 6:30.

Join us for Advent and Christmas:

Wednesday December 15th – 6:30PM Service | 7PM Dessert & Fellowship

Wednesday December 22nd – 6:30PM Blue Christmas Service (no dessert)

Friday December 24th—4:00PM Christmas Eve Service (Sanctuary)

Friday December 24th—6:00PM Christmas Eve Service with Luminaries (East Lawn)

Friday December 24th—8:00PM Holden Evening Prayer with Christmas Carols (Sanctuary)
(4:00PM and 8:00PM services will be Livestreamed)

Please consider signing up for Altar Flowers for a Sunday service. You may use the sign-up poster in the Narthex by signing on the date you request. **Then fill out a pink slip with the necessary information and place it and a check for \$40 (payable to Bethlehem Lutheran Church or BLC) in the offering plate on Sunday morning (Preferable) or during the week, in the Administration Assistant's mailbox near the church office entrance.** You may select either "in honor" or "in memory" or "to celebrate". If someone has already signed on the date you would like, feel free to add your name – we welcome more than one on a Sunday.

Today's altar flowers are donated by: *Bill and Sue Allen for their church blessings.*

Today's altar flowers are donated by: *Carl and Ellie Tacke in celebration of their 60th wedding anniversary.*

Celebrate a new child in your life with a rose on the baptismal font! Cost \$10.00 per rose. Contact Barbara Oster at beo6475@yahoo.com or 231.668.7038.

Bethlehem is in need of a sanctuary Christmas tree. The tree should be balsam, spruce or fir and not less than 12 feet tall, and preferable not real wide. We will cut it down and haul it if it is reasonably accessible to a truck and trailer. Please contact Carl Lehto at 231-223-7187 or 231-944-9640.

The outdoor food pantry is closed until spring to make sure that none of the food is damaged by the cold. You can still bring in your staples at any time and place it in the teal bin under the table by the mailboxes. One BLC member knew of an apartment complex for low income residents with food needs and delivered 12 overflowing bags of what had been outside to the very grateful recipients. Please keep the residents of the 72 unit Brookside Commons Apartments in your prayers. Watch for the pantry to jump back into full swing in the spring.

Our blog has been renamed "Paths of Hope". Check it out on the Bethlehem website:
[http://www.bethlehemtc.org/new-blog-paths-of-hope.](http://www.bethlehemtc.org/new-blog-paths-of-hope)

The delivery of the pecans have been delayed until December. Those who have ordered will be notified when they are ready for pick-up.

The December issue of the STAR is ready. Feel free to check online at www.bethlehemtc.org < About Us > "The Online Bethlehem Star" or type this URL to get these directly: [http://www.bethlehemtc.org/the-bethlehem-star-newsletter.](http://www.bethlehemtc.org/the-bethlehem-star-newsletter)

After two years of cancellations due to COVID-19, Living Water Ministries has decided to make camp a gift freely given for all campers of Stony Lake. This means that there are no registration fees for any program at Stony Lake for the summer of 2022!! Adult Leaders from Bethlehem are planning on being there for Week 1 (June 19-24) as long as there are youth interested. Please note that the Living Water Ministries Board of Directors made the decision to make full vaccination a requirement for attendance at any Living Water Ministries event, including camp. **If your youth is interested in attending camp this summer, please see Annie after service or reach out to her via email at annie.slabaugh@bethlehemtc.org no later than Wednesday February 9th.**

Annie is looking for a male co-leader for the upcoming CHARGE Event (Friday March 18 - Sunday March 20 at the Great Wolf Lodge) the male co-leader would be staying with the boys who have registered. Please see Annie after church or reach out to her at annie.slabaugh@bethlehemtc.org for more information!

CHARGE - Living Water Ministries has made the decision to cancel the Great Lakes Youth Gathering in January and will instead combine it with CHARGE this year in a hybrid type event! Therefore, grades for CHARGE will be **6th - 12th** and the event will take place from **March 18th - 20th** here in Traverse City at the Great Wolf Lodge! As registration to fills up fast, Annie needs to know who is interested so that we can figure out cost for families right away. **Please let her know if your youth is interested in attending CHARGE in 2022.** She will send further information such as forms to fill out and what the family cost will be once we know the total number of people interested!

Thanks to the dedicated BLC members who joined together to prepare special music for the Advent and Christmas season:

Bell Choir: Crystel Fernholz, Laura Hahn, Kate Holtfreter, Carl Lehto, Cindy Monroe, Jacky Putman, Erin Word. Thanks also to guest Nan Worthington for playing the harp.

Singing Choir: Denice and Phil Bossardet, Crystel Fernholz, Cindy Monroe, Carl Lehto

Video Taping of Bell Choir: Cassidy White & Pastor Paul

The newest Living Lutheran magazine and the January/February/March Christ in our Home can be picked up at the welcome table on Sunday mornings, from the Shooting STAR box below the outside mailbox, or during parking lot communion. We still have copies of the October/November/December *Christ in our Home* available.

The Wednesday morning bible study of Matthew meets from 9-11am. All are welcome. Bring your own bible. We read the bible and then talk about what we read. We say a prayer for any needs that are shared. Come. Join a fellowship. Leader is Barbara Graf.

Quilters need help! We meet on Tuesdays 9:00am-11:00am. It is not traditional quilting. We tie three layers of fabric together. The "quilts" are sent all over the world when needed by Lutheran World Relief. So if you can tie or even cut, please join us on Tuesday mornings.

"Zoom Book Study" gathering via Zoom will meet this Wednesday, Dec 15th from 1:30pm until about 3:00pm and then take a break until after New Year's. Besides the thought-provoking discussions, we also have great conversation and fellowship. For this series, we will discuss the Gospel of Matthew. Please contact Pr. Paul if you are interested in joining.

A big thank you to all who turned in their Olesons' receipts to Bethlehem. We just received a check from them for \$179.90. So far this year, we have received \$435.52 total from Olesons' receipts. Please continue to turn in your Olesons' receipts to Bethlehem. Thanks again.

Have something important going on at Bethlehem that you'd like others to know about? Maybe a Small Group? A Club Event? Feature it on the Screen Announcements and on our Facebook Events Page! If there is something you'd like featured or included for either Screen Announcements or Facebook Events please reach out to Annie at annie.slabaugh@bethlehemtc.org.

Bethlehem sends weekly emails directly to your inbox with important announcements and information! If you are not getting them for any reason or if you have something you'd like to have added please reach out to Annie at annie.slabaugh@bethlehemtc.org.

Still time to Pledge...paper-free!

There is still time to pledge, and your stewardship committee is making it easier than ever to take that next step to help our BLC ministry! See www.bethlehemtc.org/pledge

The church calendar has returned below. Please be sure to notify the office (admin@bethlehemtc.org or 231.947.9880) to be sure that your group is on the calendar.

CALENDAR

Sunday, December 12

10:00am—Worship Service (S)
11:00am—Parking Lot Communion
11:15am—Congregational Assembly (S)

Monday, December 13

4:00pm—Drive My Way (FH)
5:00pm—Finance Committee (CR)

Tuesday, December 14

9:00am—LWR Quilters (FH)
9:00am—Property Work Group
10:00am—Staff Meeting (CR)
12:00pm—Sarah Circle (FH)
4:00pm—Drive My Way (FH)
4:30pm—Executive Committee (CR)
6:00pm—Y2A Meeting (GS)

Wednesday, December 15

Bulletin articles due today
Star articles due today

9:00am—Bible Study (YR)
11:30am—Music Rehearsal (S)
1:30pm—Zoom Bible Study
4:00pm—Drive My Way (FH)
6:30pm—Advent Service (FH)
7:00pm—Advent Dessert and Fellowship (FH)
7:30pm—Choir Rehearsal (S)

Thursday, December 16

4:00pm—Drive My Way (FH)
5:30pm—ACOA (GS)

Friday, December 17

5:00pm—BLUES Christmas Party (FH)

Saturday, December 18

11:00am—All Star DE (FH)
5:00pm—Junior High & High School Christmas Party (FH)

Sunday, December 19

10:00am—Worship Service (S)
11:00am—Parking Lot Communion