

# Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023 – 10am

Modern Worship, ELW Setting 3



Prelude Music

Announcements

**Lighting of the Advent Candle**—Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah (4th verse only, below) ELW 240

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

He is coming, tell the glad tidings. Let your lights be shining!

**Gathering Litany**

(From “Pause, Prepare & Ponder” Advent Reflections, Sundays and Seasons)

P: Blessed be God, the eternal † One-in-Three, who was, and is, and is to come.

**C: Blessed be God forever and ever.**

P: As the night grows longer, and the shadows settle in.

**C: we ponder your marvelous designing.**

P: When our hearts are wintering, weary with grief and woe,

**C: we ponder and seek your wisdom beyond our understanding.**

P: In each moment fleeting, each fragile life beholding, in each gift of your bestowing,

**C: we ponder and trust your promises fully.**

P: Come, O Christ, and set us free.

**C: Come, Emmanuel, bring in your reign of justice and peace.**

P: We wait for a new heaven and a new earth,

**C: where righteousness is at home.**

**Gathering Song:**

**Advent Hymn**

Heaven sent a child to save us, light for all to see; helpless baby mighty Savior, holy mystery.

Unto us a son is given, born in Bethlehem; Lamb of God the Light of nations, God in flesh became.

Watching, waiting, longing for the day when His people would glorify the Name above all names.

For the joy that lay before Him, chose our agony; Jesus bore the wrath of Calv'ry, washing sinners clean.

Our Messiah, Christ our brother word of God in flesh, loosed the chains that held us captive, broke the bonds of death.

Watching, waiting, longing for the day when His people would glorify the Name above all names.

So we wait with expectation for His Advent here. Bride of Christ, His word proclaimed for all the world to hear.

He will come in clouds descending at the trumpet sound; In the light of Christ our Savior, ev'ry knee will bow.

Born in a manger, dying on a tree. Rising Easter morning to set His people free.

We're watching waiting, longing for the day when all nations will glorify the Name above all names

## 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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## Children's Message

*Pr Paul*

## First Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

*Instead of David building a house (temple) for God, God promises to establish David's house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the messiah, God's anointed.*

1 Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, 2 the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent."

3 Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you." 4 But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: 5 Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? 6 I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. 7 Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" 8 Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; 9 and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. 10 And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, 11 from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. 16 Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

L: The Word of the Lord

**C: Thanks be to God**

## Gospel Acclamation:

## Alleluia

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the  
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

## Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

*In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little known places. This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in this gospel.*

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

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Sermon

### Song of the Day:

*The Annunciation and The Magnificat*

*Holden EP Pgs 8 & 9*

## 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.

**Prayers of the Church / Sign of the Peace** *(Let us give one another a sign of peace according to your comfort level.)*

## Offering

Offering Song:

David Husser

Offertory:

*As the Grains of Wheat*

ELW #465

## Offering Prayer

A: Let us pray.

C: God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

## Words of Institution

### Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

**Communion** (*Please note: gluten-free wafers and white grape juice cups are available*)

Communion Songs:

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel v. 1-4*  
*All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly*

ELW #257

ELW #461

## Final Blessing

P: The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit ✠ remain upon you now and forever.

C: Amen.

Sending Song:

*Joy to the World*

ELW #267

## Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Keep awake.

C: Thanks be to God.



**Bethlehem** December 24, 2023  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

1050 Peninsula Drive  
Traverse City, MI 49686  
(231) 947-9880  
[www.bethlehemtc.org](http://www.bethlehemtc.org)

12/25—Jesus of Nazareth  
12/28—Kathryn Thiel  
12/26—Maggie Pierce

12/28—Jane Fred  
12/28—Renaë Wells

### **Worship Servants for December 24**

Assisting Minister—Cindy Monroe

Lector—Mary Ann Tanis

Musicians: David Husser, Phil & Denice Bossardet, Pr Paul

Today's altar flowers are donated: *By Bruce & Pamela Snyder in Celebration of the Glory of God*

A/V—Jim Monroe and The Acker Family

Hospitality—Gary and Kathy Ancinac

Cookies/Coffee—VOLUNTEER

Welcome Table—VOLUNTEER

Bell Ringer—Tim Goebel

Altar Guild—Kate Holtfreter/Barbara Oster

Tech Support—Julia Acker

Counters—Kate Holtfreter/Barbara Graf

**Please note that there will not be a service on Christmas Morning December 25th**

**Building and Office Hours are: 9:00am – 2:30pm, Monday – Thursday.**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** We often find the front door and/or the kitchen door unlocked when there is no one in the building. Please be sure that the doors are locked when you leave.

### **Please Note:**

Barbara Oster/Administrative Assistant works 9:00am-2:30pm on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday

Phil Anderson/Bookkeeper works 8:30am-12:30pm on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Alanna Steffunick/Ministry Coordinator works 9:00am-2:30pm – in the office on Tuesday and Thursday and from home on Wednesday

**Offerings:** The offering plates are now passed during the service. The vase in the back of the Sanctuary is still available for those who prefer not to touch the offering plate.

**The December issue of the STAR is now available.** The January issue will be distributed on December 31st and mailed on January 2nd. For current issues of the Star, feel free to check online at [www.bethlehemtc.org](http://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>.

**The January/February/March Christ In Our Home is now available.** Please take a copy for yourself and also for friends and family.

**Adult Education = Good News for All:** The Adult Education class is alive and well, learning and sharing God's Word as we study the Sunday lessons of each week. We strive to be a growing and inclusive body... please join us!! On December 24th and 31st, there will be no Sunday School/Adult Ed. Bringing in the New Year, we will again unite on Sunday, January 7, to continue our studies. What a great way to start a new year than with a new Holy Habit!! We look forward to seeing you there!!

**Looking for a link to last month's full Council minutes?** Type this address/url into your web browser to get the latest approved minutes from Council: [bethlehemtc.org/Council-Minutes](http://bethlehemtc.org/Council-Minutes) OR you may call the office to request a copy.

### **Prayer Requests:**

- Prayer Chain: Please contact Jan Stretlien at [jstretlien@gmail.com](mailto:jstretlien@gmail.com) or 231-947-3265
- Prayers read from the altar: Please call Administrative Assistant in the church office 231-947-9880

**2024 Giving Envelopes are Ready for Pick Up** - I am happy to report that the 2024 giving envelopes have arrived! They are available for pick up at your convenience. The boxes are in the narthex in alphabetical order by last name. Please pick yours up as soon as possible so you will have them ready for January giving. If you have any questions or need help, please contact me during regular business hours. Your Bookkeeper, Phil Anderson

**The next Third Thursday service will be a Taize 1 service on January 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm.** The service will be livestreamed. The BLC Fellowship Committee will be providing a meal at 5:45 p.m. Please come early and share in fellowship and stay for the service.

**Our beautiful sanctuary Christmas tree was donated to Bethlehem by our long time member, Mr. Neal Kibby.** Thank you Neal. Your gift is greatly appreciated.

**The following people were Bethlehem's Salvation Army Bell Ringers on December 8 and 9, 2023:** Leonard Graf, Betsy Morley, Donna Novak, Don Sheehan, Jim Hinds, Cindy Monroe, Jim Monroe, Shelly Nellist, Dan Hahn, Tim and Peggy Goebel, Mary Ann Tanis and Braxton, Sherri Helman, Paul and Jessica Wiemerslage, Sue Allen, Phil Anderson, Pastor Paul and Parker, Chris Hubert, Suzanne Lehto and Sheila Mosley. They stepped up and answered the call even though the weather, especially on Saturday, was not the most pleasant weather. The total donations received for the two days of ringing was \$1,264.68. That will certainly put some extra cheer in the lives of several families in the Traverse City area. Thank you for helping them.

**Card from member:** Members of Bethlehem. May you enjoy the beauty of this holiday season and every season this year. Thank you so much for the singers of Christmas carols, flowers, cookies and gift. I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Helen Rafeld

**All ages are invited to join us for BLC's annual sledding party!** Join us at Twin Lakes Park at 2:30pm on Sunday, January 21st to enjoy some outdoor time in the winter wonderland. Snacks and drinks will be provided - bring your warm clothes, a sled, and be ready to have some great outdoor fun together!

**You are all wonderful!** The Fellowship Committee would like to thank all of the volunteers for the Advent meals. You are all so wonderful. We had nice evenings of food and fellowship. And a special thank you to Phil Bossarret for his planning and cooking the meal on December 21st for Blue Christmas Service.

**Due Dates for STAR/Bulletin/Screen Announcements:**

- **STAR:** The third Friday of the month sent to [admin@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:admin@bethlehemtc.org) (Please note STAR in subject line)
- **Bulletin/Verbal Announcements:** Tuesday of the week sent to [admin@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:admin@bethlehemtc.org) (Bulletin/Worship Folder is prepared on Tuesday and printed on Thursday morning.) (Please note Bulletin or Announcement in subject line)
- **Screen Announcements/Weekly BLC Emails:** Tuesday of the week sent to [alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org)

**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](mailto:beo6475@yahoo.com) or 231.668.7038.

**Norm Fred has helped a previously homeless couple for a few years.** They are proud people and do not like to be given charity but they will accept help in the form of donated cans that they can recycle for money. Please bring in your recyclables in for them. **Leave them by the garage.** These are nice people. There, but for the Grace of our God, go we.

**Spotlight on Zeke:** So many of us enjoy Zeke's talents with religious music, but did you know that he plays other kinds of music at various locations in the Traverse City area? Here is a list of his engagements in the next month that are close to TC:

**Wed 12/27**-- Park Place, Minerva's Happy Hour at 4:00

**Fri 12/29**—MiddleCoast Traverse City at 6:00

**Sun 12/31**—Hotel Indigo (Reservations required)

**FOR BOOK CLUB MEMBERS:** The book club is taking a Christmas holiday in December. The January book will be announced in the group email and in the January STAR. If you are not on the email list and want to join our group on the 4th Tues at 5:30 please contact Cindy Monroe at [cmonroe@chartermi.net](mailto:cmonroe@chartermi.net).

**DIRECTORY NEWS UPDATE** – The company producing the directory is moving slower than anticipated. We are now looking at January or February for delivery.

**Dear Members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church,**

It's that time of year; the leaves start to turn color and fall to the ground. It is also the time of year when we like to take some time and gratefully thank the congregation for your continued support of our wonderful church.

We are all grateful to have such abundant blessings with our location and our faithful members. It's important to remain dedicated to our Christian faith and do our best to follow through on our commitments. With love & kindness we ask that if you are able and willing to help the church in a financial way, we really need your help. Contributions are behind where we should be for the start of the fourth quarter. This is primarily because of pledged money that has not yet been received.

We respectfully ask that if you can do what you have pledged or even a little bit more, the church will put those dollars to good work. Thank you for prayerfully considering this appeal. We appreciate your support and are grateful for all you do to make Bethlehem Lutheran Church a thriving community of believers. Jim Monroe, BLC Financial Secretary and Phil Anderson, BLC Bookkeeper

**New member orientation:** Arrangements are in the works for a gathering in January. Please contact membership chair, Cindy Monroe at [cmonroe@chartermi.net](mailto:cmonroe@chartermi.net) or the office at 947-9880 if you are interested in joining Bethlehem.

**Our Care Giving Committee has put up a “Communitas” Board on the wall of our Coat Room!** This “BOARD” is needed and helpful for ALL of us! Following is a suggestion of some things YOU and our YOUTH can do to “interact” with the board and other members of our congregation. The purpose of our “Auxilium Communitas” BOARD (Latin for “Community/Congregation Assistance”) is to SHARE our gifts, talents, or skills to others that might be in NEED of something like: Gardening, Organizing, Painting, Raking leaves, Shoveling, Household tasks, Carpentry, Manicures, Pedicures, Companionship, Care giving, etc. - This list is Endless! You never know when YOU will be in need of some extra help personally, in your home or yard – let's make this “reciprocal” - All ages are Welcome to Help Service our Congregation!

**Pecans Update:** The Worship and Music committee thanks the Bethlehem congregation along with Thrivent for supporting our annual pecan fundraiser. We do have some of the Mammoth Halves. Contact Barbara on Sunday or in the church office. The Mammoth Halves are perfect for your baking or munching needs.

**Adult Bible Study:** meets on Wednesdays from 9:30-11:30am in the Youth Room, with a study of the Gospel of John. The group is taking a Christmas break and will continue on January 10th

**The Zoom Book and Bible Study:** meets on Wednesdays from 1:30-3:00pm. The next study will start on January 10th with a study the Book of Mark.

**The final print issue of the Living Lutheran magazine** can be picked up at the welcome table on Sunday mornings. Please note that beginning with the January issue, the Living Lutheran will be digital at [www.livinglutheran.org](http://www.livinglutheran.org). There is no charge for the digital.

**Are you looking for the Caring Table for your donations?** It has been moved inside the coat room to the right. Also, the area for the Oleson and Family Fair receipts is in the lower cabinets below the mailboxes (under the A-B-Cs...). The cabinet door is marked with the receptacle inside.

**Coffee and Cookies on Sunday:** Remember that treats and a hot drink on Sunday are appreciated by all. Please take a moment to sign up to bring cookies or some other tasty treat on the Sunday that works best for you. Or sign up to prepare the coffee. As requested by some of our new members there is a plan in the works to have one Sunday per month when we join in the Fellowship Hall. We can sit at a table and chat with someone new while we munch on a treat. More on that to come...

**Name tags:** Your name tags are in your mailboxes. Please retrieve them so you can proudly wear them on Sunday mornings. We often have visitors and with so many recent new members it helps them if they can see a friendly face and attach a name to it.

**Food Pantry:** We will NOT be closing our outdoor pantry for winter this year. We have a new member who ran an outdoor pantry downstate and she has given us lots of ideas of foods that can be stored there during the cold months including: hamburger helper, stuffing mix, dry milk, instant potatoes, cookies, and rice. Also, there is always room for dry goods such as toilet paper, paper towels etc. Please start looking for some of these items when they are on sale and bring your extras to the coat room. Your generosity is so appreciated.

**A big thank you to all who turned in Olesons' receipts.** We just received a check from Olesons for \$268.15 for a total of \$593.03 this calendar year. Please continue to drop off your Olesons' receipts at Bethlehem. Please note they do not expire. Thank you.

**Hoop's Pet Food Pantry:** This is the only pet food pantry in NW lower Michigan. They primarily provide dry food, wet food, treats, cat litter and toys for mostly dogs and cats but they will support any type of pet to the best of their ability. Please visit them at the Square Deal Country Store, 900 Woodmere Ave, TC **from 11:00am – 2:00pm on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of every month** with your donations OR you may leave donations in the tub on our “donations” table in the coat room. The volunteers have expressed their appreciation when receiving our donations.

**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, weekly emails and on our Facebook Events Page! If there is something you'd like featured or included in any of these, please reach out to [alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org) If you are not getting the weekly emails for any reason, please contact Alanna.

**Please consider signing up for Altar Flowers for a Sunday service.** The sheets for 2024 are ready. Please 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 Administrative 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.

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

**Sunday, December 24**

10:00am—Worship Service (S)  
4:00pm—Christmas Eve service (S)  
7:00pm—Christmas Eve service (S)

**Monday, December 25**  
**Have a Blessed Christmas**  
**Church Office Closed**

**Tuesday, December 26**  
**Bulletin articles due today**

**Wednesday, December 27**  
11:30am—Music Rehearsal (S)  
1:00pm—Johnson SG (Offsite)

**Thursday, December 28**  
5:30pm—ACA (FH)

**Friday, December 29**  
7:00pm—All Star DE (FH)

**Sunday, December 31**  
10:00am—Taize Worship Service (S)

**Monday, January 1**  
**Happy New Year**  
**Church Office Closed**



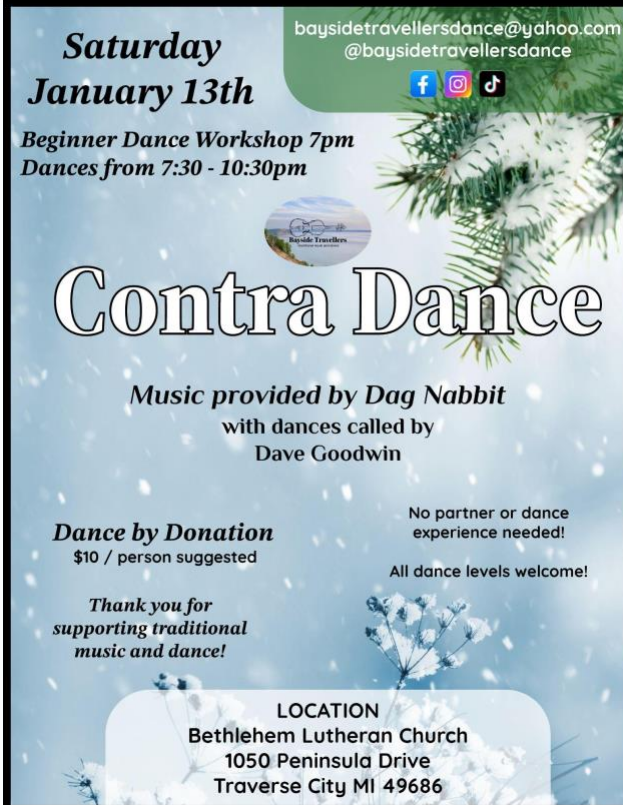
**XYZ**  
extra years of zest

Join us for a potluck lunch,  
followed by a  
program or presentation.

Friday  
January 12th  
12pm

**SIMPLY ALI**

Traverse City based professional organizer and home simplification expert  
Ali LeJeune  
partners with you to bring calm and clarity to your spaces.



**Saturday**  
**January 13th**

baysidetravellersdance@yahoo.com  
@baysidetravellersdance

Beginner Dance Workshop 7pm  
Dances from 7:30 - 10:30pm

**Contra Dance**

Music provided by **Dag Nabbit**  
with dances called by  
**Dave Goodwin**

**Dance by Donation**  
\$10 / person suggested

No partner or dance experience needed!  
All dance levels welcome!

Thank you for supporting traditional music and dance!

**LOCATION**  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
1050 Peninsula Drive  
Traverse City MI 49686