

First Sunday of Advent

November 29, 2020



Lighting of the 1st Advent Candle

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever.

C: Amen.

P: Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

Silence is kept for reflection

P: Loving and forgiving God,

C: we confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.

P: People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free— free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, † comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Verse 1

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear. Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Verse 4

O come, O Branch of Jesse, free your own from Satan's tyranny; from depths of hell your people save, and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Verse 5

O come, O Key of David, come, and open wide our hev'nly home; make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery. Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Verse 6

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer; O Sun of justice now draw near. Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight. Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Verse 8

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear. Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

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!

Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray together,

C: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Children's Message

First Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—⁶just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Gospel: Mark 13:24-37

Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

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

Jesus said: ²⁴“In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon – Pastor Paul

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 / Interlude

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.

Final Blessing

P: The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, † now and forever.

C: Amen.

Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Open Up the Heavens

Verse 1: 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.

Pre-Chorus: You're the reason we're here. You're the reason we're singing.

Chorus: 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.

Verse 2: 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.

Pre-Chorus: You're the reason we're here. You're the reason we're singing.

Chorus: 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. (Repeat)

Bridge: Show us, show us Your glory. Show us show us, Your power. Show us, show us Your glory Lord. (Repeat)

Chorus: 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. (Repeat)



Bethlehem LUTHERAN CHURCH

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November 29, 2020

POINSETTIAS: Despite the cancellation of indoor church services, we are still decorating for the possible Christmas eve outdoor 'story and carols'. Please call Kate Holtfreter at 231-590-3946 to order a plant and say who it is in honor of, in celebration of, etc. You can send her a check for \$10.00 made out to Bethlehem Lutheran Church (or BLC) and write poinsettia in the memo line.

Volunteers are needed to ring bells for the Salvation Army at Tom's East Bay Store on December 11, and December 12, 2020. The first shift starts at 10:00 am and the last shift starts at 6:00 pm. Each shift is 1 hour long. If you are willing to ring, please call Carl Lehto at 231-223-7187 home or 231-944-9640 cell. We need 18 ringers. You can bring a friend with you to ring. Please dress warmly and wear a mask. The needs are greater than ever, so your help will be appreciated more than ever. Merry Christmas. Thank you.

Stewardship Encouragement 2021 is On the Way! Greetings Fellow Bethlehemites! We are in the fall season again, and it is time for us to look forward to Bethlehem's ministry in the coming year. We thank you for the way you have given your support to Bethlehem with your time, your talents and your treasure in 2020. It has been a very difficult year for many. However, we hope and pray that you will find many new blessings in 2021. If you haven't already received it, a letter from your Stewardship Committee, Pledge Card and an Automated Giving form were mailed out last week. Please be mindful of all the ways you can contribute in ways big and small (including automatic giving), as we invite you to start now to pray and think about how you can generously support your church and its ministry as it does the will of our Lord Jesus. *Your BLC Stewardship Committee*

Covid hits our congregation! Please keep praying for all who are being hit by this illness especially one of our own council members. Even though all in that household were being careful, someone who was ill came to their home without wearing a mask and all are now very sick. Through the wonders of ZOOM this person was able to participate in the most recent council meeting, and the rest of us saw how ill someone could be even without being hospitalized. Another council member had to be in work/home only quarantine for 2 weeks due to recent multiple exposures in that person's essential job. *Know that any of the tough decisions that the council is making are with the well-being of all members in mind.*

Pecans are SOLD OUT!!!! The Worship and Music committee thanks all who participated in our Fall Fundraiser. We also appreciate the support of Thrivent in this endeavor.

The NOVEMBER issue of the STAR is ready! The STAR is no longer being subsidized by anonymous donors. We thank them for the generosity for three months and their hard work in preparing it for mailing. (There is even a rolling pin involved!!!) The cost of postage for the STAR is now being taken from the general fund. If anyone wants to make an extra donation towards postage due to the monthly cost of keeping all members informed, a notation can be made on any check or envelope. If you read the STAR on line and have not told us, please make certain you contact the office so we are not sending out copies needlessly. Printed STARs will also be available in the "Shooting Star box" outside the church entry later this week. 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>

The outdoor "**Shooting STAR Dispenser**" at BLC is now full with several paper publications, including the November STAR. If you would like a copy of a DVD, please contact the church and one will be produced for you.

Advent Nights & Blue Christmas this year will all be online. We are excited to announce that we will be teaming up with three other Lutheran pastors in the area to provide Advent Wednesday content for all four Advent Wednesdays in December (12/2, 9, 16 and 23) with a special "Blue Christmas" service for the 16th. We invite you to join us on either Facebook or YouTube on Wednesdays at 7:00PM for this special programming.

Calling all Knitters!!: There is an overabundance of yarn skeins in the bin under the mailboxes in the narthex. PLEASE feel free to grab some to make hats, mittens, prayer shawls, etc.! The yarn is sorted according to kind, so you can be sure to find something appropriate for whatever project you have in mind. Questions? Call Betty R. (947-1013)

Christ in Our Home Devotionals for October/November/December. They can be picked up at the name tag table on Sunday mornings, from the STAR box below the outside mailbox, or during parking lot communion. The newest *Living Lutheran* magazine is also available in the same locations.

The daughter of one of our members, Kathi Ivany-Mort, is in need of a vehicle. She is a single parent of three children, two of which have special needs. She has limited funds but would be open to a fair price and/or payment plan if desired. If you have a vehicle that would seat five people and possibly AWD or 4WD, please contact Kathi on her cell at 231-313-1647 or Kathi's husband, Jef Mort, at their home phone 231-929-4911.

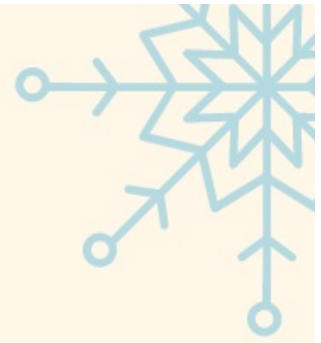
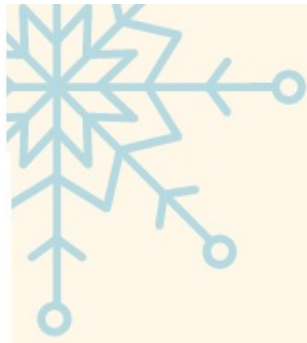
"Help the Children" School Supplies Project: So far, we have been able to send school supplies to Traverse City High School and Blair Elementary, along with gift cards to two families at Silver Lake Elementary so they could purchase fall/winter clothing for their children. We also have added monies to send school supplies to Traverse Heights Elementary. We thank our Bethlehem family for the support of this important project.

The BLC book club will take a Christmas break and not meet again until Tuesday, January 26th. More information on the book to be discussed will come later.

Keep "Hope Spreading": Don't forget our blog "Hope Spreads Further" is still going strong! We've had many very inspiring entries and hope to read more. We invite you to help us build this blog or just read current entries at <http://www.bethlehemtc.org/hope-spreads-further>. Reach out to *Pastor Paul* at paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org or *Sharon* at admin@bethlehemtc.org if you'd like to contribute to the blog!

"Zoom Bible Study", gathering via Zoom is going strong each Wednesday from noon until about 1:15pm, and each week we are having great conversation and fellowship. We are using the Augsburg Fortress study of two of Paul's letters: 1st and 2nd Corinthians. Please contact Pr. Paul if you are interested in joining.

We're still collecting Oleson's receipts, and we're hoping you've been saving yours for Bethlehem. Please drop them off in the bin under the mailbox counter. Thanks.



BETHLEHEM
LUTHERAN CHURCH
December 2020
Programming

ADVENT WEEK 1: WED, DEC. 2ND - 7PM
VIRTUAL ADVENT NIGHT
FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE

ADVENT WEEK 2: WED, DEC. 9TH - 7PM
VIRTUAL ADVENT NIGHT
FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE

ADVENT WEEK 3: WED, DEC 16TH - 7PM
VIRTUAL BLUE CHRISTMAS
FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE

ADVENT WEEK 4: WED, DEC. 23RD - 7PM
VIRTUAL ADVENT NIGHT
FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE

THURS, DEC. 24TH - 4PM
VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE

THURS, DEC. 24TH - 6PM
CHRISTMAS EVE "STORY & CAROLS"
BETHLEHEM'S EAST LAWN

THURS, DEC. 24TH - 8PM
VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE

Leadership for Advent Nights will be shared by: Advent Lutheran Church of Lake Ann, Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Traverse City, Immanuel Lutheran Church of Suttons Bay, Feast of Victory Lutheran Church of Acme