

Third Sunday of Advent

December 17, 2023 – 10am

Modern Worship, ELW Setting 3



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.

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:

Open Up the Heavens

McDonald, Ingram & Andrews

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 words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

1 The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; 2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; 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. 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.

L: The Word of the Lord **C: Thanks be to God**

Psalm: Psalm 126

1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.

2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."

3 The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

4 Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses of the Negeb.

5 Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.

6 Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

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: John 1:6-8, 19-28

John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.

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

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 19 This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 20 He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." 21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." 22 Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" 23 He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' " as the prophet Isaiah said. 24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. 25 They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" 26 John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, 27 the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." 28 This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Pastor Paul Busekist

Song of the Day:

All Earth Is Hopeful

ELW #266

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:

Jan Mudgett

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:

***People, Look East
For the Bread Which You Have Broken***

ELW #248

ELW #494

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:

He Came Down

ELW #253

Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Keep awake. C: Thanks be to God.



Bethlehem December 17, 2023
LUTHERAN CHURCH

1050 Peninsula Drive
Traverse City, MI 49686
(231) 947-9880
www.bethlehemtc.org

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

12/17—Marilyn Johns

12/20—Summer Grayson-Ogden

12/22—Inga Nyquist

Worship Servants for December 17

Assisting Minister—Karen Fehr

Lector—Dave Peppler

Musicians: Jan Mudgett, Zeke Clemons, Phil & Denice Bossardet, Pr Paul

Today's altar flowers are donated: By Kristin Rivard in Celebration of Justin Rivard's birthday

A/V—Paul Ton, Barbara Oster, and The Acker Family

Hospitality—Phil Anderson / Susie Burton

Cookies/Coffee—VOLUNTEER

Welcome Table—VOLUNTEER

Bell Ringer—Tim Goebel

Altar Guild—Patty Leibenguth/Erin Word

Tech Support—Julia Acker

Counters—Kate Holtfreter/Barbara Graf

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 < 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.

Sunday School - every Sunday at 9:15am. Please note that they will not meet on December 24th and December 31st.

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!! We will meet Sunday, December 17, at 9:15 to 9:45 a.m. The following two Sundays, the 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 OR you may call the office to request a copy.

Prayer Requests:

- Prayer Chain: Please contact Jan Stretlien at 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 Blue Christmas service on December 21st at 7:00pm. The service will be livestreamed. The BLC Fellowship Committee will be providing a meal prepared by Phil Bossardet at 5:45 p.m. Please come early and share in fellowship and stay for the service.

Our Advent nights will continue this Thursdays December 21. The theme this year is “I Wonder as I Wander”.

Thursday, December 21st: 5:45pm Special meal prepared by Phil Bossardet; 7:00pm Blue Christmas Service

- The menu includes ham, stuffed winter squash, mashed sweet potatoes, green bean casserole, green salad, dinner rolls and dessert. Phil is looking for volunteers to make some desserts. If you are able, please call Phil at 231-499-7522.

Honoring a "Blue Christmas" on the 21st: Perhaps you or someone you know is not feeling the "Joy" of the Advent and Christmas season this year. Often loss, anxiety or grief during the Holidays can leave us feeling out of sync with our culture, when in fact the true meaning of Advent includes nearly every human emotion, as we long for Christ's birth. Leaders from four local ELCA churches invite you to join them on the longest night of the year - **December 21st at 7pm at Bethlehem.** This year's annual "Blue Christmas" service includes words of solace and hope from Pastors Haley Vay Beaman (Feast of Victory - Acme), Tim Jahn (Advent - Lake Ann), Matt Deames (Evangelical - East Jordan) and Paul Busekist (Bethlehem - Traverse City). Peace be with you this season as we journey together.

Due Dates for STAR/Bulletin/Screen Announcements:

- **STAR:** The third Friday of the month sent to admin@bethlehemtc.org (Please note STAR in subject line)
- **Bulletin/Verbal Announcements:** Tuesday of the week sent to 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

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.

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 12/20-- Park Place, Minerva's Happy Hour at 4:00

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

Fri 12/22—Hotel Indigo at 6:00pm

Sun 12/31—Hotel Indigo (Reservations required)

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

FOR BOOK CLUB MEMBERS: The book club is taking a Christmas holiday in December. The Jan book will be announced in the group email and in the Jan 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.

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 December or January. Please contact membership chair, Cindy Monroe at 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 pecan bags left: One (1) Milk Chocolate; Two (2) Dark Chocolates; Three (3) Cinnamon Glazed and Nine (9) Mammoth Halves. Contact Barbara on Sunday or in the church office if you are in need of a last minute Christmas or Hostess gift. The Mammoth Halves are perfect for your baking or munching needs. Contact Barbara on Sundays or in the BLC office during the week.

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. 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.

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 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 17

9:15am—Sunday School
9:15am—Adult Education (YR)
10:00am—Worship Service (S)

Tuesday, December 19

Bulletin articles due today

9:00am—Property Work Group
9:00am—LWR Quilters (FH)
6:30pm—Council Meeting (Library)
7:00pm—Choir Rehearsal (S)

Wednesday, December 20

11:30am—Music Rehearsal (S)

Thursday, December 21

5:30pm—ACA (Library)
5:45pm—Advent Meal (FH)
7:00pm—Blue Christmas Service (S)

Friday, December 22

7:00pm—All Star DE (FH)

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

