

Bethlehem Lutheran Church



December 28, 2025

First Sunday of Christmas

Pastor Calvin Konop, Presiding

Jess Christenson, CYF Director

Average Worship Band, Musical Leaders

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Belonging to Christ, Sharing Christ on the North Shore and Beyond!

Introduction

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the “holy innocents” of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

Prelude

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Average Worship Band

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship:

Praise for God's Universal Glory

Psalm 148

¹ Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise God in the heights.

² Praise the LORD, all you angels; sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.

³ Praise the LORD, sun and moon; sing praise, all you shining stars.

⁴ Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.

⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD, who commanded, and they were created,

⁶ who made them stand fast forever and ever, giving them a law that shall not pass away.

⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;

⁸ fire and hail, snow and fog, tempestuous wind, doing God's will;

⁹ mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;

¹⁰ wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds;

¹¹ sovereigns of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the world;

¹² young men and maidens, old and young together.

¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD, whose name only is exalted,
whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

¹⁴ The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful
servants, the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!

Opening Medley:

Angels, From the Realms of Glory

ELW 275
(verses 1, 2, 4)

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

ELW 270
(verses 1, 3)

Angels We Have Heard on High

ELW 289
(verses 1, 3)

Greeting:

May the amazing grace of Jesus, the extravagant love of God, and the
communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day:

You surprised a world, O God, by coming not in clashing thunder or
flashing lights, but in the quiet and simple splendor of a child's radiant
face.

**Help us to understand this mystery of love beyond all loves that we may
be led to a new kind of love.**

A love that loves not by what we can get but in what we can give, a love
that counts not who is worthy to receive, but, beyond our human
calculations, is showered freely on all.

**Show us the way of Bethlehem's child, that in seeing, we may believe, and
in believing, we may learn again how to love. AMEN.**

Children's Time

On the way up the aisles, the children will be collecting coins for the "Holy Cow"
fund, which will support ELCA World Hunger. *Find that loose change and hand it
to a kiddo!*

First Reading

Isaiah 63:7-9

⁷ I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD,
the praiseworthy acts of the LORD,

because of all that the LORD has done for us
and the great favor to the house of Israel

that he has shown them according to his mercy,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people,
children who will not act deceitfully,"
and he became their savior

⁹ in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel
but his presence that saved them;
in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Second Reading

Hebrews 2:10-18

¹⁰ It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹² saying,

"I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

¹³ And again,

"I will put my trust in him."

And again,

"Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham.

¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people.

¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel

Matthew 2:13-23

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹³ Now after [the magil had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Pastor Calvin Konop

Hymn of the Day

Joy to the World

ELW 267

Confession of Faith:

I believe the Word **was in the form of God and did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. He emptied himself, took the form of a servant, was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born in our own likeness. I believe he humbled himself and became obedient unto death.**

I believe God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name. I believe that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, every knee in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

I believe that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Almighty. I believe that Jesus lives and reigns with God and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Prayers of God's People

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need. *(A brief silence.)*

God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of righteousness, when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice, you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of life, you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ's siblings. Pour out your compassion in every place your people suffer, and protect them in the palm of your hand. *We pray especially for Karen, Lois, Linda, Luke, Butch, Sarah, Barb, Paul, Cam, Bruce, Lynn, and Katrina* We pray now for those we name aloud, or in the silence of our hearts. *(A time of silence)* Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of compassion, you nurture children as the apple of your eye. As you sheltered your son Jesus from Herod's grasp, shelter all children in danger. As you comforted Rachel, comfort all who have lost children to violence. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones. Even as we mourn, we offer thanks for those who have gone before us, trusting in your comfort and protection. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Sharing the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

Offering

Average Worship Band

Offering Prayer

Gracious God,

You have shown your great love for your children by using commonplace things for your purpose—

Water to mark your children, bread and wine to feed and nourish us ordinary people to be disciples, a child in a manger to announce your grace.

Take these commonplace things, these gifts of paper and metal and the lives that stand behind them. Bless and use them to proclaim your gracious love, for we offer them in the name of Jesus, the Lamb of God. Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Preface:

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ.

In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.

And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name.

Thanksgiving at the Table:

. . . Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

. . . We look with hope for his coming. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

. . . Bring the gift of peace on earth. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

The 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.

Invitation to Communion

God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy! All are welcome!

Bethlehem Lutheran Church believes in the real presence of Christ in Holy Communion, and we practice eucharistic hospitality. All persons, whether visiting or a member, are welcomed to Communion.

Communion Music

Away In the Manger (Forever Amen) by Phil Wickham

Post Communion Blessing

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in grace unto everlasting life. **Amen.**

Prayer After Communion

Incarnate God, **you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us. Amen**

Blessing

The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter,
✚ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy. **Amen**

Sending Hymn

Go Tell It On The Mountain

ELW 290

Dismissal

Glory to God in the highest!

And peace to God's people on earth!

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Average Worship Band



God Bless You in the New Year!

This week we lift up these members: Karen Shannon, Lois Johnson, Linda Zenk, Luke Gulstrand, Sarah, Cam, Barb and Paul Coe; Lynn & Craig Schulte, Harry Peterson, Phyllis Olson, Joan Bieber, Gene & Barbara Erickson, Bruce & Stacey Johnson, Butch & Rhonda Schulte, Christy Buetow; Clayton Koss; Patty Nelson; Annalisa Winje, Paulina Backstrom; Shae Lindholm; Char Anderson; Stacey Schulte; Hank Ferland; Ramiro Acero; Margaret Dahl; Katrina Crouse; Tom Christiansen.

This week we lift up these members: Eric & Sue Anderson; Natalie Shaw; Tom & Patty Nelson; Eric, Adrianna, Bently & Eva Brisson. May God walk with these faithful friends as they live their Christmas journey.

Our Mission of the Month for December will support the **Damiano Center** in Duluth. The Damiano Center "welcomes people in need and serves them without judgment" as the largest emergency meal provider in our region and a source for comprehensive services including clothing, health realization, hygiene access, and more. **Member Challenge:** In addition to financial support, please contribute winter wear to the hat and mitten tree in the narthex. Donations will be delivered to the Damiano Center!



Free Bibles: We have bibles for all ages. Talk to Jess to get one that's right for you.

Choir rehearsals: Sundays at 8:40 am. The choir generally sings on the 1st and 3rd Sundays.

Devotionals: Christ In Our Home Devotions are in the narthex and entryway by the offices. Take a copy. Share a copy.

This Week at Bethlehem:

Sun Dec 28	8:40AM Choir practice
	10:00AM Worship Service
Mon Dec 29	
Tues Dec 30	8:30 AM Staff meeting
Wed Dec 31	
Thurs Jan 1	New Year's Day
	Office is closed
Fri Jan 2	----- Clarity Hearing
Sun Jan 4	8:40 AM Choir practice
	10:00 AM Worship Service
	12:00 PM Daisy Troop

Sign up to help with Christmas Eve

Services: Please fill in the sign-up sheet for Christmas Eve!

Quilters are down to less than a handful of members and are seeking more helpers!

Every Thursday morning at 9 to 11:30am.
Come as you are able.

Traveler Cards and Local

Grocery Cards are available from BLC to members of the community that need help. Please contact the office.

Church Directory Did you get your copy? More are in the Narthex. (Contact Denise in the office with changes or if more are needed Thanks!)

Devotionals are available in the narthex and office entryway.

Annual Reports from all council members, groups, and committee chairs are due to the office **NO LATER THAN JANUARY 5, 2026**

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On-line giving is encouraged using this QR Code or through automatic transfer.
(Forms are available online & the office.)



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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Christmas Poinsettias



*This year, we are doing
things differently:*

*Thanks to Jacob & Crystal at
Johnson's Foods for donating
all of the poinsettias to
Bethlehem this year!*

See back side. . .

Donations this year will be used
for our **Grocery Card Ministry.**

We will publish a list of the
memorials as usual. Plants are
free to anyone and may be
picked up after 6:00pm on
Christmas Eve.

Please fill out this form with your
donation and return to the office
by December 18th

Donation from:

In Honor or Memory of:
