

December 17th, 2023 Third Sunday of Advent Bethany Lutheran Church (ELCA)

PRELUDE AND LIGHTING OF CANDLES RINGING OF BELL WELCOME

The gathered people of God respond with the words printed in bold.

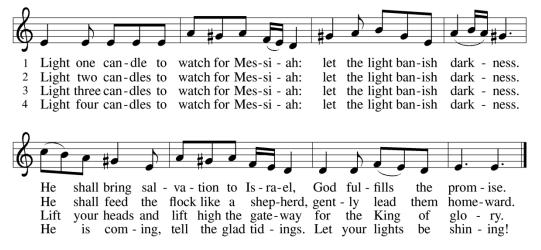
PRAYER AND LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE

Let us pray.

Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow. You bring water to parched ground and life out of death. Bless us as this light grows, and send sorrow and sighing to flee away. Give us strength and patience, trusting that you are true to your promises. Transform the lives of all who suffer with your wonders near at hand.

Amen.

Two blue candles and the pink candle are lit as the gathered people of God sing verses 1-3 of "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah (ELW 240)



The people of God stand.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit,

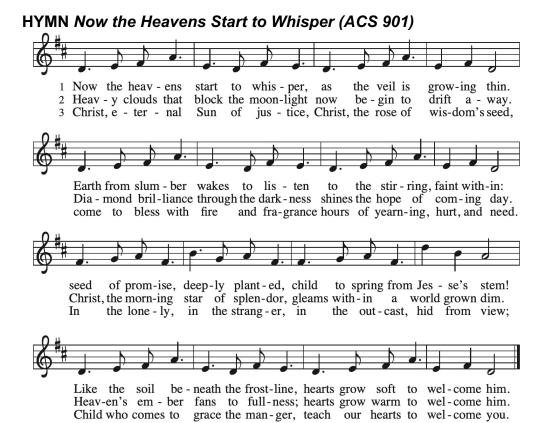
whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever.

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Loving and forgiving God, we confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not always welcomed the stranger; we have not always loved our neighbor; we have not always 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. People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are freefree 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. Amen.



GREETING

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

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

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.**

The people of God are seated.

CHOIR ANTHEM "Silent Night"

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

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.

A reading from Isaiah.

¹The 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; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to 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. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

⁸For 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. ⁹Their 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. ¹⁰I 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. ¹¹For 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.

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

PSALM 126

¹When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,

then were we like those who dream.

²Then 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."

³The LORD has done great things for us,

and we are glad indeed.

⁴Restore our fortunes, O LORD,

like the watercourses of the Negeb.

⁵Those who sowed with tears

will reap with songs of joy.

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

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.

A reading from First Thessalonians.

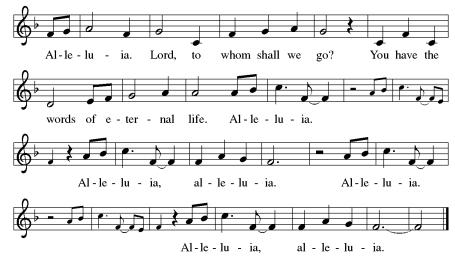
¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

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

The people of God stand.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p.188)



GOSPEL READING: 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.

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

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

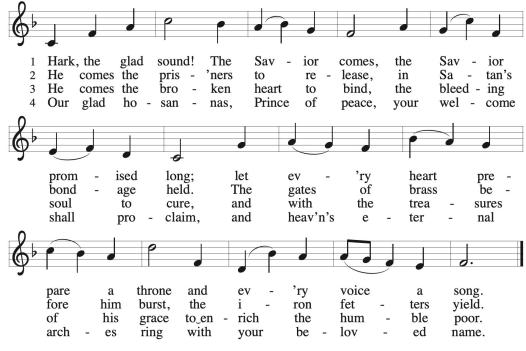
The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

The people of God are seated.

Pastor Phil Hougen

The people of God stand.



HYMN Hark, the Glad Sound! (ELW 239)

APOSTLES' CREED (ELW P.105)

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 INTERCESSION

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

Each petition ends with, "Lord, in your mercy." Those worshipping respond with the hymn below "O Lord Hear My Prayer" (ELW 751).



Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

PEACE

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

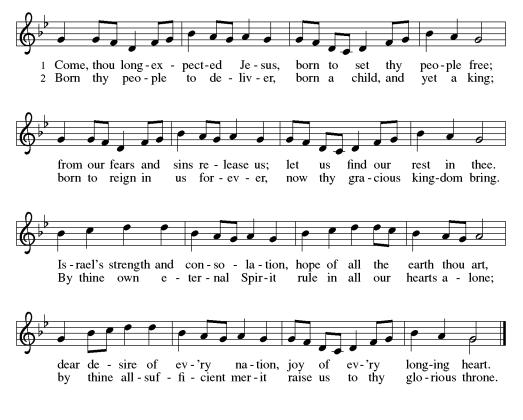
The people of God are seated.

OFFERING

We are grateful for your gifts, and they are needed to continue the work of the church. For those worshipping online please visit our website (<u>www.wbbethany.org</u>) and click on the blue "Give Now" button on the home page. Thank you!

The people of God stand as the offering is brought forward.

OFFERTORY HYMN Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (ELW 254) See next page.



Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788 Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, Southern Harmony, 1835

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

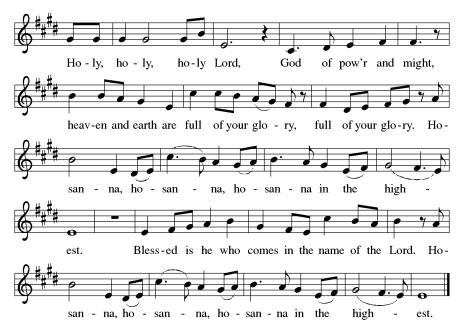
God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

MEAL God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

GREAT THANKSGIVING (*ELW p.190*) 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.

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. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



WORDS OF INSTITUTION

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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

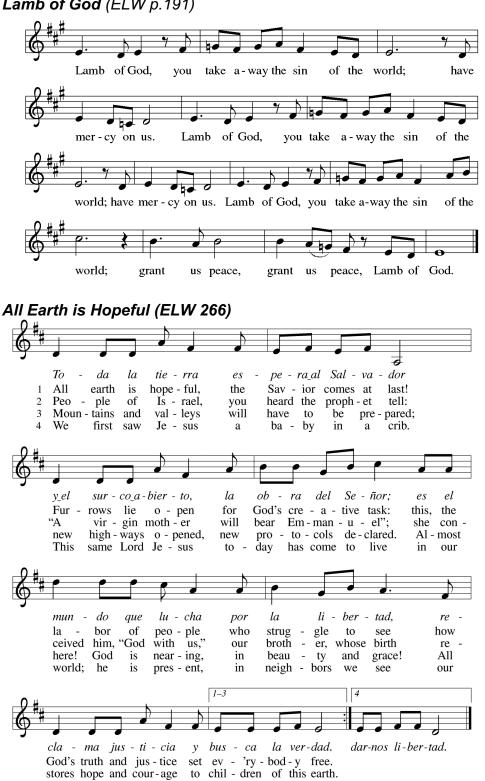
The people of God are seated.

COMMUNION

Communion today will be distributed in a continuous line. The cups in the center of the tray contain white grape juice. All other cups are wine. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request.

All gathered who believe Jesus Christ is their Lord and Savior are invited to come to Holy Communion with repentant hearts believing that Christ forgives our sins and guides our lives. Strengthened, forgiven, and nourished through this meal the Spirit sends us forth in service and to proclaim the good news of Christ's love. Children and adults who do not take communion may come forward for a blessing. **HYMNS DURING COMMUNION**

Lamb of God (ELW p.191)

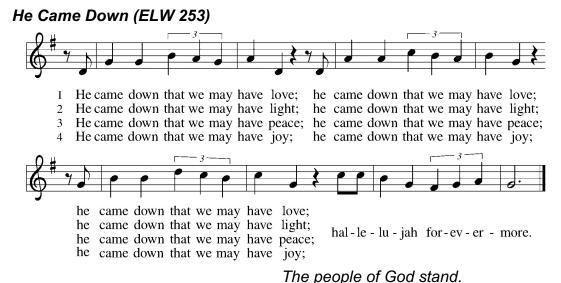


Je - sus is with us, and Text: Alberto Taulé, b. 1932; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946

Music: TODA LA TIERRA, Alberto Taulé Spanish text and tune © 1993 and English text © 1995 Centro de Pastoral Litúrgica, admin. OCP Publications, 5536 NE Hassalo, Portland, OR 97213.

ev-er sets us free.

clear ev - 'ry gate-way, in haste, come out in haste!



PRAYER

Let us pray.

O God, we give you thanks that you have set before us this feast, the body and blood of your Son. By your Spirit strengthen us to serve all in need and to give ourselves away as bread for the hungry, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

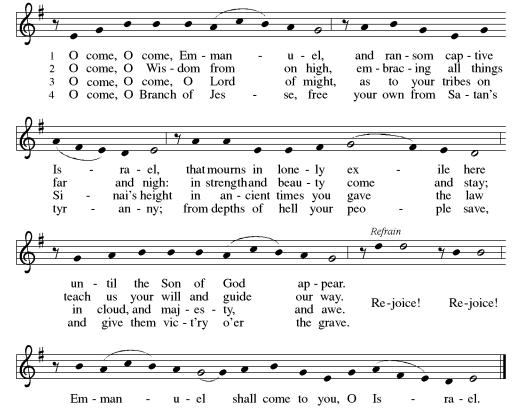
BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace. **Amen.**

HYMN O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (ELW 257)



SENDING

Go in peace! Christ is with you! Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the Great Hall.

OUR WORSHIP ASSISTANTS		
Ministers of:	Today	December 24
Music	Jill Barnhart	Jill Barnhart
Proclamation (Lector)	Wayne Frauenholtz	5:00PM Dave Bahnsen
		7:00PM Beth Kaufman
Minister of Technology	Jill Taylor	5:00PM Paula Casper
Worship (Altar Care)	Cindy Knoop & Stacy Beyers	Cindy Knoop & Stacy Beyers
Ministers of Hospitality	Nancy Bruns	5:00PM Del & Sue Hughes
		7:00PM Kent & Beth Kaufman

This worship is being streamed live via Facebook and will be posted to our Website and X (formerly Twitter). The camera captures anyone in the first few pews of our worship space and beyond extending to the altar.

Thank you, Pastor Phil Hougen, for leading worship & proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ this morning!

Thank you for worshipping with us today. Just as Jesus welcomed the stranger, we believe all are welcome here. Please join us again next week. For more information about our life together in Christ, visit: www.wbbethany.org



You are invited to join the children, youth, and families of Wednesday Night Faith formation next week, December 20th, as we gather to play Advent and Christmas Bingo. Hot Cocoa and cookies will be served. We will begin at 6:30 and conclude by 7:30.



5:00 and 7:00 PM 5:00 PM streamed live on Facebook No morning worship on Christmas Eve





Did you know... How your weekly offering makes an impact?

It supports... youth ministries

50 children were able to attend Vacation Bible Sc 25 children attend Faith Formation Sunday School





It supports...small group Bible Studies Wednesday Mornings - Men's Study Group - 7:00am Thursday Mornings - Woman's Study Group - 6:00am Ionthly Women's Bible Study - 2nd Wednesday at 9:00ar Quilting Group - Thursdays at 1:00 pm

It supports...community outreach programs Food Pantry, Domestic Violence Intervention Program Shelter House, Lutheran Campus Ministry, Lutheran Services of Iowa, and Sleep in Heavenly Peace

> It supports... meals and fellowship Free dinner on the 4th Sunday of the month, the annual community tailgate, and Angel Meals

Thank you for your gifts, which support these and many more great ministries at Bethany Lutheran Church



It helps us invest in technology to expand our reach beyond the church doors



Average Online attendance = 125 viewers

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mission

To grow so deep in Christ through worship, education, and fellowship that we celebrate by reaching out to others.



Land Acknowledgement

Bethany Lutheran is located in the original and ancestral homelands of the lowa, Sauk, Fox, Kickapoo and Oceti Sakowin peoples, and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.

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