



December 22, 2024
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Bethany Lutheran Church (ELCA)

Introduction to the day

Cradle and cross are inextricably connected on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Between a lovely tribute to the little town of Bethlehem and Mary's magnificent song of praise, the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in no uncertain terms that Christ's advent is for "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." It is the kind of tension in which the church always lives as when in holy communion—with high delight—"we proclaim the Lord's death."

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

PRELUDE AND LIGHTING OF CANDLES

RINGING OF BELL

WELCOME

Those gathered are invited to respond with the bold printed words.

PRAYER AND LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. In your Son, Emmanuel, you have shown us your light and saved us from the power of sin. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath. Increase our longing for your presence, that at the celebration of your Son's birth his Spirit might dwell anew in our midst, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever. Amen.

The candles are lit as the gathered people of God stand and sing verses 1-4 of "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah" (ELW 240).



- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home - ward.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, † one God,
alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of mercy,

we confess that we have sinned.

We trust earthly powers and human authority alone.

We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.

God of might,

we confess that we have sinned.

We have turned away from our neighbors.

We have trusted false promises.

God in our midst,

we confess that we have sinned.

We plead: come to us.

Bring your mercy to birth in us.

A righteous branch springs forth:

it is Christ the Lord, our Savior,

in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy.

By the power of the Holy Spirit,

receive the grace and forgiveness of God

through † Christ Jesus, whose day draws near. **Amen.**

GREETING (ELW p. 184)

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 (ELW p. 188)

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before prayer.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

The people of God are seated.

FIRST READING Micah 5:2-5a

The prophet Micah, having pronounced judgment upon Judah, speaks of a future shepherd-king who, like David, will come from the small town of Bethlehem. (Ephrathah refers to the area around Bethlehem.) This king will restore Israel and bring peace. New Testament writers understood this passage to be referring to Jesus.

A reading from Micah.

² But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

⁴ And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;

^{5a} and he shall be the one of peace.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Luke 1:46-55 Mary's Magnificat

⁴⁶ My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ **for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.**

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

⁵⁰ **His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.**

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵² **He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;**

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴**He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,**

⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.

SECOND READING: Hebrews 10:5-10

The author of Hebrews uses the image of religious sacrifice to convey the significance of Christ's coming. Through obedient acceptance of God's will, Christ allows his own body to become the greatest sacrifice of all, one through which we are made a holy people.

A reading from Hebrews.

⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body you have prepared for me;

⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.

⁷ Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me).”

⁸ When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), ⁹ then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

The people of God stand.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Halle, Halle, Hallelujah (ELW 172)

Hal-le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal -
- le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le -
lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah.

GOSPEL READING: Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

Elizabeth, John's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, are two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. In Elizabeth's inspired greeting and Mary's song of praise we hear of a saving God who remembers, scatters, lifts up, and fulfills all things.

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The people of God are seated.

SERMON

The people of God stand.

HYMN *My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness (ELW 251)*



1 My soul pro-claims your great-ness, Lord; I sing my Sav - ior's praise!
2 To all who live in ho - ly fear your mer-cy ev - er flows.
3 To Is - ra - el, your ser - vant blest, your help is ev - er sure;



You looked up - on my low - li - ness, and I am full of grace.
With might - y arm you dash the proud, their schem-ing hearts ex - pose.
the prom - ise to our par - ents made their chil - dren will se - cure.



Now ev - 'ry land and ev - 'ry age this bless-ing shall pro - claim—
The ruth-less you have cast a - side, the low - ly throned in - stead;
Sing glo - ry to the Ho - ly One, give hon - or to the Word,



great won - ders you have done for me, and ho - ly is your name.
the hun - gry filled with all good things, the rich sent off un - fed.
and praise the Pow'r of the Most High, one God, by all a - dored.

Text: *With One Voice*, 1995, based on the Magnificat
Music: KINGSFOLD, English folk tune
Text © 1995 Augsburg Fortress

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

APOSTLES' CREED (ELW p. 189)

**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" and the people of God sing "O Lord, Hear My Prayer" (ELW 751).

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call, an - swer me.
or *The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise: all my hope comes from God.*

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: come and lis - ten to me.
The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise: God, the well-spring of life.

The image shows two systems of musical notation. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The first system includes lyrics: "O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call, an - swer me. or The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise: all my hope comes from God." The second system includes lyrics: "O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: come and lis - ten to me. The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise: God, the well-spring of life."

Text: Psalm 102:1-2; Taizé Community, adapt.
Music: HEAR MY PRAYER, Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994
Text and music © 1982, 1991 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent, 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638.
www.giamusic.com, 800.442.3358. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

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 (ELW p. 190)

We are grateful for your gifts, and they are needed to continue the work of the church. For those worshipping online, options on ways to give are found on our website (www.wbbethany.org). Thank you! After the offering is gathered, the people of God stand and sing the hymn on the next page as the gifts are brought forward.

OFFERTORY HYMN *To God Our Thanks We Give* (ELW 682)

Re - a - mo le - bo - ga, re - a - mo le - bo - ga,
To God our thanks we give, to God our thanks we give,

re - a - mo le - bo - ga mo - di - mo wa ro - na.
to God our thanks we give, our thanks to God we give.

The image shows two systems of musical notation. Each system consists of a single treble clef staff. The first system includes lyrics: "Re - a - mo le - bo - ga, re - a - mo le - bo - ga, To God our thanks we give, to God our thanks we give,". The second system includes lyrics: "re - a - mo le - bo - ga mo - di - mo wa ro - na. to God our thanks we give, our thanks to God we give." Both systems feature a fermata over the first measure of each line and a second ending bracket over the final two measures.

Text: Botswana traditional, as taught by Daisy Nshakzongwe; tr. I-to Loh, b. 1936
Music: REAMO LEBOGA, Botswana traditional, as taught by Daisy Nshakzongwe
Text and music © 1986 World Council of Churches and the Asian Institute for Liturgy and Music

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Creator God, you made the world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The people of God are seated.

WELCOMING TO THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Those being welcomed to the Lord's Supper come forward and gather at the front of the worship space.

Today this community of faith rejoices with the following people who join in sharing the meal of Holy Communion: Sienna McElhinney, Cadence Heid, Cozette Sexton, Ainsley Kinsinger, Avery Fonseca, Theodore Wiele, and Easton McFarland.

In the sacrament of holy baptism, we are welcomed into the body of Christ and sent to share in the mission of God. In the sacrament of holy communion, God unites us in Jesus Christ and nourishes us for that mission. Living among God's faithful people, we are strengthened by God's word and this holy supper to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

Let us welcome these sisters and brothers in Christ to holy communion.

Welcome to the Lord's table. We thank God for you.

**We pray that you will find joy and strength in this meal,
until we feast forever at God's heavenly banquet.**

DIALOGUE (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.

PREFACE (ELW p. 190)

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 things new
in the day he comes to judge the world in righteousness.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 190) See next page.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
 heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry, full of your glo-ry. Ho -
 san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high -
 est. Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
 san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE (ELW p. 190)

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,
 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.**

The people of God are seated.

COMMUNION

Family members of the youth being welcomed to the sacrament of Holy Communion are invited to the altar to commune with their child. Following that, communion to the saints of God 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.

COMMUNION HYMNS

I Come with Joy (ELW 482)



1 I come with joy, a child of God, for - giv - en, loved, and
2 I come with Chris - tians far and near to find, as all are
3 As Christ breaks bread, and bids us share, each proud di - vi - sion
4 The Spir - it of the ris - en Christ, un - seen, but ev - er
5 To - geth - er met, to - geth - er bound by all that God has



free, the life of Je - sus to re - call in
fed, the new com - mu - ni - ty of love in
ends. The love that made us, makes us one, and
near, is in such friend - ship bet - ter known, a -
done, we'll go with joy, to give the world the



love laid down for me, in love laid down for me.
Christ's com - mu - nion bread, in Christ's com - mu - nion bread.
strang - ers now are friends, and strang - ers now are friends.
live a - mong us here, a - live a - mong us here.
love that makes us one, the love that makes us one.

Text: Brian A. Wren, b. 1936
Music: DOVE OF PEACE, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835
Text © 1971, rev. 1995 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (ELW 254)



1 Come, thou long - ex - pect - ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;
2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

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

All Earth is Hopeful (ELW 266)



To - da la tie - rra es - pe - ra, al Sal - va - dor
1 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!
2 Peo - ple of Is - rael, you heard the proph - et tell:
3 Moun - tains and val - leys will have to be pre - pared;
4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.



y, el sur - co - a - bier - to, la ob - ra del Se - ñor; es el
Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the
"A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el"; she con -
new high - ways o - pened, new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most
This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our



mun - do que lu - cha por la li - ber - tad, re -
la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how
ceived him, "God with us," our broth - er, whose birth re -
here! God is near - ing, in beau - ty and grace! All
world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our



cla - ma jus - ti - cia y bus - ca la ver - dad. dar - nos li - ber - tad.
God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.
stores hope and cour - age to chil - dren of this earth.
clear ev - 'ry gate - way, in haste, come out in haste!
Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

The communion of saints stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name.

Amen.

BLESSING (ELW p. 192)

God of endings and beginnings,
God in the darkness and light,
God, our hope for the journey,

✠ bless and keep you now and forever.

Amen.

HYMN O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (ELW 257) See next page.



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things
 3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on
 4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
 far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;
 Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law
 tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!
 in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.
 and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

SENDING

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Thank you for worshipping with us.

Please join us in the fellowship hall downstairs for refreshments.

OUR WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Ministers of:	Today	December 29
Music	Jill Barnhart	Jill Barnhart
Proclamation (Lector)	Jon Twing	John Black
Minister of Technology	Dave Poppen	Jill Taylor
Ministers of Hospitality	Nancy Bruns	Stacy Beyer
Worship (Altar Care)	Stacy Beyer & Cindy Knoop	Stacy Beyer & Cindy Knoop



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

Land Acknowledgement

Bethany Lutheran is located in the original and ancestral homelands of the Iowa, Sauk, Fox, Kickapoo and Ojibwe 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.

WORSHIP
with us!
CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
 Christmas Eve
 5:00 & 7:00 PM



5:00 service streamed live on Facebook

THERE WILL BE NO
 4TH SUNDAY DINNER
 IN DECEMBER

MERRY
 CHRISTMAS

May your home be filled with love
 and laughter this christmas



**SUPPORT THE MANY
 MINISTRIES**
 BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

1

OFFERING PLATE

Money can be placed in offering plate on Sunday morning or mailed to:
 Bethany Lutheran Church Box 236, West Branch, IA 52358.

2

ON-LINE DONATIONS

Scan QR code with your phone or visit our website
<https://wbbethany.org>. Click on the blue "Give Now" button.

3

AUTOMATIC WITHDRAWAL

Sign up for the "Simply Giving" program for automatic withdrawals from your account. Contact blcsecretary@lcom.net

4

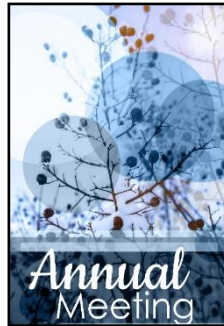
MOBILE APP

Download the new Vanco Mobile App from your smartphone app store. Select Bethany Lutheran Church, West Branch, IA and make your donation.

5

IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER

Tax-free donation directly from an IRA to Bethany Lutheran Church
 This is a tax-free way to give your required minimum distributions from your IRA to charity.



Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 19th, 2024, after worship

Remember, a "Voting Member" per our Constitution and Bylaws is defined as:

C8.02.c Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this

Liturgy from sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Used by permission of Augsburg Fortress under license # SB135727.
Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah (ELW 240); Text © 1984 Fortress Press, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission under OneLicense.net A-726405 streaming license.
All Earth is Hopeful (ELW 266) Spanish text and tune © 1993 and tr. © 1995 Centro de Pastoral Litúrgica, admin. OCP Publications, 5536 NE Hassalo, Portland, OR 97213. Used by permission under OneLicense.net A-726405 streaming license.
O Come O Come Emmanuel (ELW 257); Text sts.2 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission under OneLicense.net A-726405 streaming license.
HYMN My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness (ELW 251)
 Text © 1995 Augsburg Fortress
 Outside the USA: Arr. from The English Hymnal © Oxford University Press 1906. All rights reserved. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Used by permission under OneLicense.net A-726405 streaming license.
New Revised Standard Version Bible, Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.