

Take the child and his mother, and flee

MATTHEW 2:13



December 28, 2025
First Sunday of Christmas
Bethany Lutheran Church (ELCA)

Introduction to the day

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.

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.

PRELUDE
LIGHTING OF CANDLES
RINGING OF BELL
WELCOME

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

The assembly stands and responds with the words printed in bold.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty Savior,
Prince of Peace.

Amen.

Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God,

**we yearn for your presence to transform
our grief, pain, and despair.**

**We confess that we have not always prepared
room in our hearts for your love;**

**we have not always recognized
your presence among us;**

we have not always embraced your message of peace.

**We cry out, weary with the burden of violence,
oppression, and fear.**

**We confess our failure to make room
for those seeking refuge;**

**our participation in violent systems
that harm your innocent ones;**

our reluctance to embody your good news.

Be born in us today

and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation.

Amen.

God's grace upon grace flows over you.

✝ Christ's presence redeems the whole creation.

Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN *Love Has Come* (ELW 292) See next page.



1 Love has come— a light in the dark - ness! Love shines forth in the
 2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der. Love is God now a -
 3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us! Love is life ev - er -



Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav - en has come to pro - claim it;
 sleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his moth - er;
 last - ing and free. Love is Je - sus with - in and a - mong us.



hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to
 what is the name her heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the
 Love is the peace our hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the



you, a Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.
 name she whis - pers; Love! Love! Je - sus, Im - man - u - el.
 gift of Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

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.

O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

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

FIRST READING: Isaiah 63:7-9

God does not delegate divine intervention to a messenger or angel. God’s own presence brings salvation. The prophet and all who read these words join in celebrating God’s gracious deeds. God trusts that God’s people will not act falsely.

A reading from Isaiah.

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.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

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!**

SECOND READING: Hebrews 2:10-18

Through Jesus' suffering and death, the trail to eternal salvation has been blazed for us. We do not fear death, because he has conquered the power of death. Thus Christ, our merciful and faithful high priest, has the final say over the destiny of our lives.

A reading from Hebrews.

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.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.

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

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 2:13-23

In a dream, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus from the jealousy of Herod.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³ Now after [the magi] 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.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

Pastor Phil Hougen

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY *What Child Is This* (ELW 296)



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

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 INTERCESSION

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.
Each petition ends with, "Hear us, O God" and the people of God responds, "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.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

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 below, as the gifts are brought forward.

OFFERTORY HYMN *Lord, I Lift Your Name on High* (ELW 857)



Lord, I lift your name on high; Lord, I love to sing your prais-es.
I'm so glad you're in my life, I'm so glad you came to save us.
You came from heav-en to earth to show the way, from the earth
to the cross, my debt to pay, from the cross to the grave,
from the grave to the sky; Lord, I lift your name on high.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior. 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.

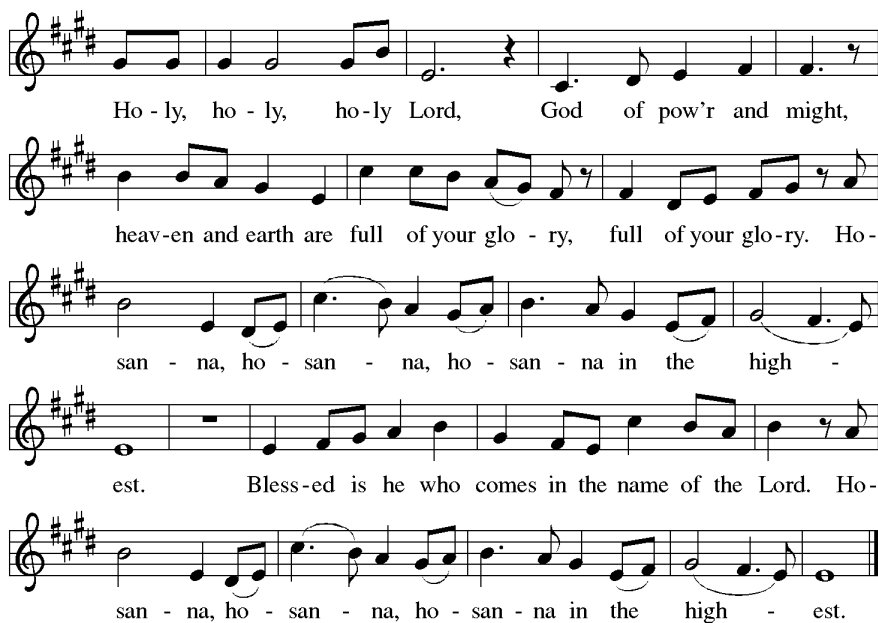
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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 and join their unending hymn:



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.

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

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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

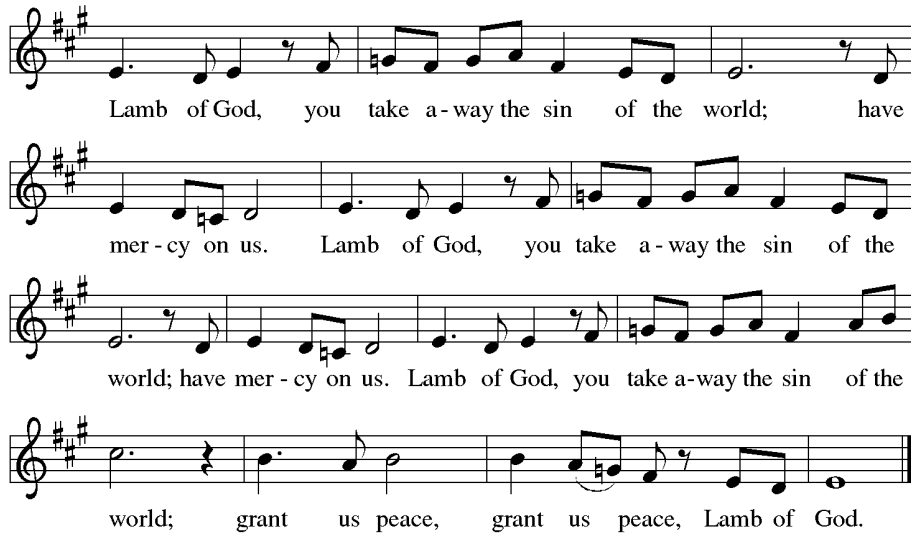
God is now in flesh appearing.
 Come to the feast of joy!

The assembly is 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.

COMMUNION HYMNS



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; grant us peace, grant us peace, Lamb of God.

O Little Town of Bethlehem (ELW 279)



O lit-tle town of Beth-le-hem, how still we see thee lie!
For Christ is born of Mar-y, and, gath-ered all a-bove
How si-lent-ly, how si-lent-ly the won-drous gift is giv'n!
O ho-ly child of Beth-le-hem, de-scend to us, we pray;

A-bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si-lent stars go by;
while mor-tals sleep, the an-gels keep their watch of won-d'ring love.
So God im-parts to hu-man hearts the bless-ings of his heav'n.
cast out our sin, and en-ter in, be born in us to-day.

yet in thy dark streets shin-eth the ev-er-last-ing light.
O morn-ing stars, to-geth-er pro-claim the ho-ly birth,
No ear may hear his com-ing; but, in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ-mas an-gels the great glad tid-ings tell;

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to-night.
and prais-es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
where meek souls will re-ceive him, still the dear Christ en-ters in.
oh, come to us, a-bide with us, our Lord Im-man-u-el!

It Came upon the Midnight Clear (ELW 282)



- 1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,
- 2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come with peace - ful wings un - furled,
- 3 And you, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,
- 4 For lo! The days are has - t'ning on, by proph - ets seen of old,



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
and still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world.
who toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and slow:
when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,



"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all - gra - cious king."
A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - ring wing,
look now, for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing;
when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.
and ev - er o'er its ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.
oh, rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - gels sing!
and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

The assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

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.

SENDING HYMN *Go Tell It On The Mountain* (ELW 290)



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o - ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep - herds kept their watch - ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep - herds feared and trem - bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born;

Refrain



be - hold, through - out the heav - ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ - mas morn.

BLESSING

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

Amen.

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.

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



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

OUR MINISTRY ASSISTANTS

Ministers of:	Today	January 4 th
Music	Jill Barnhart	Jill Barnhart
Proclamation (Lector)	Dave Bahnsen	Deb Anderson
Hospitality (Greeter)	Stacy Beyer	Del & Sue Hughes
Technology	Dave Poppen	Kent Kaufman
Worship (Altar Care)	Stacy Beyer & Cindy Knoop	Heidi Christensen
Food & Fellowship	Needed	Please sign up



Thank you, Pastor Phil Hougen, for leading worship and proclaiming the good news of Christmas, "Born to us is a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord!"

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