**BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Rev. Molly Wills, Pastor | Jan Smith, Accompanist

Fourth Sunday of Advent | Sunday, December 22, 2024

ACS Holy Communion Setting 11

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Vibrantly open to the Spirit, Bethel Lutheran Church seeks to serve God

and its neighbors by joyfully living into the good news of Jesus Christ.

**SPIRIT ART**

A meditative study of scripture through art.

Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

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***HELPFUL WORSHIP INFORMATION:*** *We use the Evangelical Lutheran Worship (red book) as our hymnal, containing both liturgy and hymns. Liturgies are indicated by (ELW p.), found in front of the hymnal and the numbers are on the bottom of the page. Hymns are indicated by (ELW ###), they are found in the back two-thirds of the hymnal and the numbers are on the top of the page. Hymns in the All Creation Sings hymnal (purple book) are indicated by (ACS ###). Songs in the green binder are indicated by (GB ###).*

**GATHERING**

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

**Meditation time** Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel - Setting by J. Wayne Kerr

Joyful Proclamation - Written by Kurt Meyer (Chime Choir)

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Confession, 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 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.**

**GATHERING SONG *Now the Heavens Start to Whisper* (ACS 901)**

**Greeting (ELW p. 12)**

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.**

**Kyrie (ACS p. 12)**

**Canticle of Praise (ACS p. 12)**

**Prayer of the Day**

**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.**

**Word**

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

**FIRST Reading: Micah 5:2-5a**

2 But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who is 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**.

**PSALM:** **Luke 1:46b-55 (read responsively)**

46b My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, 47 my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
48 **for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.** **From this day all generations will call me blessed:**  
49 you, the Almighty, have done great things for me and holy is your name.  
50 **You have mercy on those who fear you,** **from generation to generation.**   
51 You have shown strength with your arm and scattered the proud in their conceit,  
52 **casting down the mighty from their thrones** **and lifting up the lowly.**  
53 You have filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.  
54 **You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,** **to remember the promise of mercy,**  
55 the promise made to our forebears, to Abraham and his children forever.

**SECOND Reading: Hebrews 10:5-10**

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, 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.**

**Gospel Acclamation (ACS p. 14)**

**Gospel: Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]** 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.**

**Children's Sermon**

**Sermon**

**Hymn of the Day *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (ELW 257)**

**NICENE Creed (ACS p. 16)**

**Prayers of Intercession** Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

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

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**Meal**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

**Offering** *Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus* – setting by Edwin T.Childs

**Offering Prayer**

**Creator God, you made the whole 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 this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Great Thanksgiving**

**Dialogue (ACS p. 20)**

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 (ACS p. 20)**

**Holy, Holy, Holy (ACS p. 21)**

**Thanksgiving at the Table (ACS p. 21)**

…with every breath. **We praise you, O God.**

…into the future. **We rejoice in you, O God.**

…with us now. **We thank you, O God.**

…proclaim the mystery of faith: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

**…**in your church, without end. **Amen.**

**Lord’s prayer (ACS p. 24)**

**Communion (ACS p.25)**

**Hymn during Communion *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came* (ELW 265)**

**Prayer after Communion**

**Sending**

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

**Blessing**

God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, our hope for the journey, + bless and keep you now and forever. **Amen.**

**Sending Song *Joy to the World* (ELW 267)**

**Dismissal** Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel. **Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude** Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come - Setting by Edwin T. Childs

**About the Prayer of the Day**

The prayer of the day, based on prayer #1121 in the seventh-century Gelasian Sacramentary, is unusual in that it addresses Christ, rather than God. This week we ask that, like Mary and Elizabeth, we will receive Christ in joy.

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**WELCOME TO BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH!**

**QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS?** Please contact the church office at 320-395-2125 or bethellutheranlp@gmail.com. For emergency pastoral care needs call Pastor Molly Wills at 320-339-8169 or email pastor@lpbethel.org.

**BULLETIN SUBMISSION DEADLINE:** Wednesdays at noon.

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:** 25th of the month. **CHURCH ADDRESS:** 77 Lincoln AVE N, Lester Prairie, MN 55354, **(Mailing USPS use: PO Box 207)**

**SIMPLY GIVING** offers convenience for you and much-needed consistency for Bethel! If you have any questions, contact Stacy Meyer, Financial Secretary, at finsec@lpbethel.org**.**

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**ONLINE GIVING:** scan QR code

**HEARING ASSIST DEVICES AVAILABLE**—speak to an usher for assistance.

**LARGE PRINT HYMNS AVAILABLE**—contact the office if you are interested.

**For the week of December 22, 2024…**

* Sunday school: following worship
* *The Chosen* & Fellowship hour: following worship

**Tuesday, December 24**

* Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship service w/holy communion: 4:00 pm

**Wednesday, December 25 *Merry Christmas!***

**Next Sunday, December 29**

* Worship: 9:00 am (Pastor Donna)
* *The Chosen* & Fellowship hour: following worship

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS**

* **NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEEKING 2025 VOLUNTEERS:** Open positions include:

Council positions: President, Secretary, Financial Secretary (all 2-year terms),

Finance Board and Education Board (both 2-year terms, they partner with another board member, and only one person from each board needs to attend the council meetings) Committee positions: Cemetery 2-year term, Mission Endowment 3-year term/need two, Audit 3-year term/need one, Nominating 1-year term/need four, Synod Assembly in June/one male & one female. Contact Peggy Wick, Ron Foust, or Brian Duncan if you want to serve in 2025!

* **THANK YOU** for donating gifts for Christmas to three local families through the LP Outreach Christmas Gifts Program! Also, thank everyone who donated $ for the children’s Christmas treat bags!
* **UPCOMING MILESTONE CLASSES:** *God’s Grace for 2nd graders*: January 12 with a Blessing during worship on January 19. *Ten Commandments for 4th graders*: February 2 with a Blessing during worship on February 9. *Stewardship for 6th graders*: February 9 with a Blessing during worship on February 16. The classes will be held after worship.
* **REMINDER:** Email your Financial Annual Reports to [bethellutheranlp@gmail.com](mailto:bethellutheranlp@gmail.com) by January 10! *(Council Treasurer, 2025 Budget, and WELCA Treasurer)*
* **BETHEL’S ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING, SUNDAY, JANUARY 26**: The meeting will begin immediately following worship. A potluck meal will follow the meeting.Please make every effort to attend this important meeting for our congregation.
* **NO BETHEL BREAKFAST IN DECEMBER:** Since the annual meeting is scheduled for January 26, 2025, the next Bethel Breakfast at Longhorn’s will be on **January 19, 2025!**
* **YOUTH TASK FORCE SOCIAL:** Bethel will host the Youth Task Force Social **on Wednesday, January 15, 12:40 pm-1:40 pm.** We will need volunteers to come early to set up card-making supplies on the tables, pop popcorn, etc., and volunteers to sit at each table to help the students. If you would like to volunteer, contact Pastor Molly.
* **A MULTI-LEVEL AGE GIRL SCOUT TROOP** will meet monthly at our church starting January 18 at 1:00 pm. At the first meeting, they will decide which Saturday of the month to meet and what time. Girls K-12 are invited to join. It will be a multi-level age group because it is the only Girl Scout troop available in Lester Prairie. The leader is Deb Riske. If anyone is interested in joining, contact Deb at 612-804-3188 or [dwriske@gmail.com](mailto:dwriske@gmail.com)
* **FAITH THAT OVERFLOWS 2025:** Registration for GLLM summer programs is open! By registering early, you will not only reserve your place, but you’ll save money too! **The Early Bird Discount ends on February 13, 2025!** Every registration received before then will receive $65 off each registered program (some restrictions apply.) GLLM scholarships are available for any program including youth camps, and retreat programs. Bethel also has scholarships available, contact Emily Koehler or Pete Hallberg if you are interested. Visit gllm.org for more information and register today! If you have questions, contact the office by phone at 320-796-2181 or email [camp@gllm.org](mailto:camp@gllm.org).
* **CREATIVE SOULS RETREAT, FEBRUARY 7-9, 2025:** Escape the cold and snow and enjoy a cozy weekend of creating! Crafters of all skills and projects are invited to a weekend of dedicated time to create and work on projects. No need to think about meals or dishes, because we have those covered. When you need a break, there is space for taking a brisk walk, reading a book, or even enjoying a nap. Join us for a weekend filled with whatever your creative soul needs! Register before the deadline - **Tuesday, January 28!** Visit [gllm.org](http://gllm.org/) for more information and register today!

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