

# BETHEL LUTHERAN

E.L.C.A.

G R O V E C I T Y

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent  
December 8, 2024

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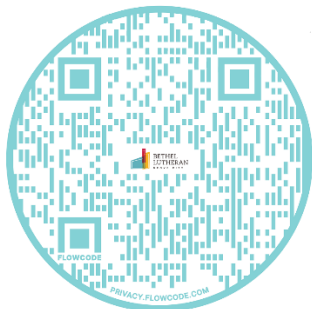
Worship Services 8:30 A.M. & 10:30 A.M.

Welcome

to Bethel Lutheran

We extend special greetings to all our guests who are with us today. Your presence, along with our members and friends, is truly valued. Know that all of God's people are always welcome here at Bethel.

If you would like to know more about Bethel Lutheran, her pastor, the Rev. Peter I. Ray, or any of the parish's programs and activities, please contact the church office (875-0510). You may also check out our website by scanning the QR code below. Again, welcome; and may you have a blessed week!



## **Worship and young children**

All children are welcome in worship. They are a valued part of this faith community.

In addition, Bethel's Nursery (for children up to approximately four years of age) has paid staff at both services. This is available to meet the needs of your family and the worshiping needs of the congregation.

We have a "Parentseeker" paging system for optimal communication between nursery and parents worshiping in the sanctuary.

Children's bulletins are also available in the narthex for younger children to help them make age-appropriate connections with our weekly themes.

Bethel has video monitors in the narthex and hallways if your child gets restless.



*Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the Lord of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."*

- ❖ Quiet reverence before the liturgy allows prayer and meditation.
- ❖ Please do not bring food or drinks into the sanctuary during worship.
- ❖ Throughout the service, **C** means the congregation responds as the **bold print** indicates.
- ❖ As a worship courtesy, **please silence or turn off** all cellular phones and other communication devices during the service.

# Gathering

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### PRELUDE

*(please stand and face the baptismal font)*

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

C **Amen.**

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P God of mercy,

C **We confess that we have sinned.**

**We trust earthly powers and human authority alone.**

**We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.**

**Amen.**

P God of might,  
C **We confess that we have sinned.**  
    **We have turned away from our neighbors.**  
    **We have trusted false promises.**

P God in our midst,  
C **We confess that we have sinned.**  
    **We plead: come to us.**  
    **Bring your mercy to birth in us.**

P 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.

C **Amen.**

**PROCESSIONAL HYMN**

Come Now, O Prince of Peace

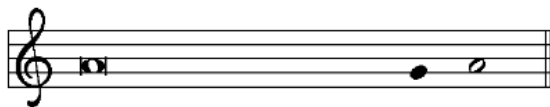
ELW #247

**APOSTOLIC GREETING**

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

C **And also with you.**

## KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



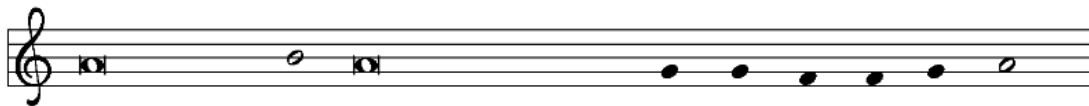
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



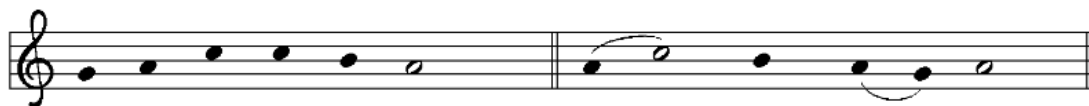
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - men.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

**P** Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

*(please be seated)*

## RITES OF PASSAGE/LIGHTING OF ADVENT WREATH

HYMN

*O Come, O Come, Emanuel*

ELW #257, v.1&2



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.  
in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.  
and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.



# Word

FIRST READING (10:30)

Malachi 3:1-4

*God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means “my messenger”) will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God’s people, as silver and gold are refined.*

<sup>1</sup> See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. <sup>2</sup> But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap; <sup>3</sup> he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. <sup>4</sup> Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

P The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM (10:30)

Luke 1:68-79

<sup>68</sup> Blessed are you, Lord, the | God of Israel,  
you have come to your people and | set them free.

<sup>69</sup> You have raised up for us a | mighty Savior,  
born of the house of your | servant David.

<sup>70</sup> Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us | from our  
enemies,

<sup>71</sup> from the hands of | all who hate us,

<sup>72</sup> to show mercy | to our forebears,  
and to remember your | holy covenant.

<sup>73</sup> This was the oath you swore to our | father Abraham:  
<sup>74</sup> to set us free from the hands of our | enemies,  
 free to worship you | without fear,  
<sup>75</sup> holy and righteous before you, all the days | of our life.  
<sup>76</sup> And you, child, shall be called the prophet of | the Most High,  
 for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way,  
<sup>77</sup> to give God's people knowledge | of salvation  
 by the forgiveness | of their sins.  
<sup>78</sup> In the tender compassion | of our God  
 the dawn from on high shall | break upon us,  
<sup>79</sup> to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
 and to guide our feet into the | way of peace.

*(please stand, as able)*

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

P The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

## GOSPEL

Luke 3:1-6

*John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by “repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.*

<sup>1</sup>In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, <sup>2</sup>during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup>as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

<sup>5</sup>Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth;

<sup>6</sup>and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

(please be seated)

## SERMON

Rev. Jeff Wise

(please stand, as able)

## HYMN OF THE DAY

*On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry*

ELW #249

## **APOSTLES CREED (10:30)**

**C** 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**

**P** As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

*A brief silence.*

**P** Refining God, move through your church. Root out practices that harm your people, and kindle a fire for sharing the gospel among bishops, pastors, deacons, and all the baptized. Lord, in your mercy,

**C** Receive our prayer.

P Renewing God, transform your creation. Steer us from habits that harm what you have made, and guide us in practices that preserve and restore creatures and habitats. Lord, in your mercy,

**C Receive our prayer.**

P Ruling God, teach the nations your ways. Strengthen organizations and communities that broker peace and care for refugees, immigrants, and all caught in the center of conflict (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

**C Receive our prayer.**

P Rescuing God, restore your people who are in any need. Heal all who are suffering (*especially*). Provide comfort and strength, and nurture sustained wholeness for the future. Lord, in your mercy,

**C Receive our prayer.**

P Reforming God, fill this congregation with your presence. Enrich our seasonal preparations, and bless the efforts by worship committees, music ensembles, staff, clergy, and lay leaders as they work in the weeks ahead. Lord, in your mercy,

**C Receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

P Reassuring God, we remember those who have died and rest in you. Guide us in deep gratitude for their life, and allow us to learn from their faithful witness. Lord, in your mercy,

**C Receive our prayer.**

P Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ.

**C Amen.**

# Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

## SHARING OF THE PEACE

**P** The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C** And also with you.

*(You may share a sign of God's peace such as a handshake, wave, hug or other appropriate greeting.)*

*(please be seated)*

## OFFERING

*An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, and the care of those in need. If you are a first-time visitor, it is our privilege to have you worship with us. Please do not feel the need or obligation to give a financial offering. Your presence is gift enough to God and to us.*

Our members and friends have the privilege to participate in faithful financial stewardship. Scan the QR Code below where you can give electronically.



**OFFERTORY ANTHEM** *Do You Know the Way to Bethlehem* Chancel Choir

*(please stand, as able)*

**OFFERTORY RESPONSE**



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right



spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take



not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of



your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

**OFFERTORY PRAYER**

A 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.

C Amen.

# THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

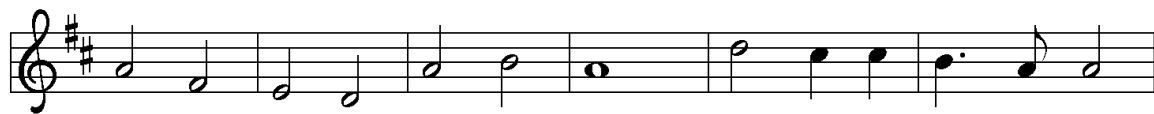




## PREFACE

It is indeed right, our du - ty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you,  
al - mighty and merciful God, through our Sav - ior Je - sus Christ.  
You comforted your people with the promise of the Re - deem - er,  
through whom you will also make all things new  
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righ - teous-ness.  
And so, with all the choirs of an - gels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heav - en,  
we praise your name and join their un - end - ing hymn:

## SANTUS (Holy, Holy, Holy)



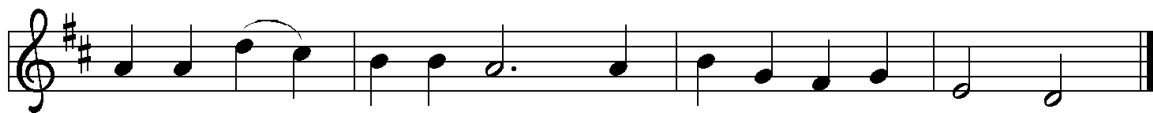
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes



in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

P Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:  
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.  
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.  
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.  
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.  
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.  
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,  
the Word made flesh.

P 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.

P Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

P With this bread and cup  
we remember your Word dwelling among us,  
full of grace and truth.  
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.  
We look with hope for his coming.

**C Come, Lord Jesus.**

P Holy God, we long for your Spirit.  
Come among us.  
Bless this meal.  
May your Word take flesh in us.  
Awaken your people.  
Fill us with your light.  
Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**C Come, Holy Spirit.**

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

C Amen.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C **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

P God feeds us with tender mercy.  
Come to the table.

C Amen.

*(please be seated)*

## COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

Bethel welcomes to the Lord's table all baptized Christians who believe that Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of this meal. Children and adults who want to receive a blessing instead of bread and wine may cross their arms over their chest as they come forward. All are welcome!

### AGNUS DEI (Lamb of God)



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.

**DISTRIBUTION HYMN**

*We Are Waiting for Jesus*

ACS #905



1 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.  
2 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.



We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.  
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.



Sun of jus - tice, shine up - on us; we are trust - ing in your prom - ise.  
Lov - ing Shep - herd, walk be - side us; stir our hearts, and gent - ly guide us.



We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.  
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

*(please stand, as able)*

**PASTORAL COMMENDATION**

**P** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ  
strengthen and keep you in his grace.

**C** Amen.

## POST COMMUNION PRAYER

A 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.

C Amen.

Gathering • Word • Meal • Sending

# Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission out into the world.

## BLESSING

P God of endings and beginnings,

God in the darkness and the light,

God, our hope for the journey,

✠ bless and keep you now and forever.

C Amen.

## CLOSING HYMN

*Hark, the Glad Sound!*

ELW #239

## DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

C Thanks be to God.

## POSTLUDE

## Bethel's Staff

**Lead Pastor: The Rev. Peter I. Ray**

**Care & Visitation Pastor: The Rev. Jeffrey N. Wise**

**Organist/Director of Music: Ward Matthias**

**Pianist/Associate Musician: Ruth Hiles**

**Director of Choirs: Bree Johnson**

**Youth Coordinator: Jennifer Bueter**

**Nursery Director: Crystal Smith**

**Pre-School Directors: Jennifer Bueter & Cathy Tallman**

**Church Administrator: Cathy Tallman**

**Custodian: Jennifer Horvath**

**Retired/Resource Pastors: The Rev. Wil Hallman**

**The Rev. Andrew Mazak**

**The Rev. Joe Stark**

### A Land Statement

*"We acknowledge that we gather as Bethel Lutheran Church on the traditional land of the Shawnee and Ofo and Kaskaskia Peoples past and present, including the Adena/Hopewell Cultures, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we inhabit as well."*