

BETHEL
LUTHERAN

E.L.C.A.

G R O V E C I T Y

2nd Sunday After Christmas
January 5, 2025

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.

Never been to a “Lutheran” or “liturgical” church? It might at first seem strange with all the singing and sitting down and standing up. Know all we do has meaning and function. Pastor Ray is happy to explain any confusing things for you. 😊

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.

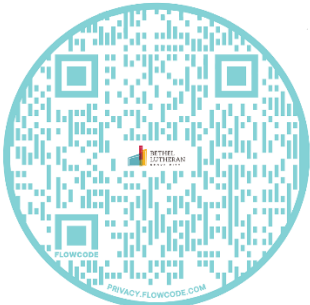
We have a “Parentseeker” paging system for optimal communication between nursery and parents worshiping in the sanctuary.

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.



In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.



- ❖ 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

Rev. Peter I. Ray

PRELUDE

(please stand and face the baptismal font)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
whose steadfast love is everlasting.

C **Amen.**

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God
and of one another.
Silence is kept for reflection.
God-with-us,

C **We confess that we have turned away those seeking shelter,
claiming there is no room when we have plenty.
We have made power and wealth our idols,
while you show us true glory: a baby in a manger.
We have overlooked the shepherds,
expecting good news in prettier packaging.
Too often, we have valued violence instead of your peace.
Turn us from our ways to your ways.
Grant us the grace to begin again.
Free us from all that keeps us bound,
and forgive our sin, through Jesus Christ, who gives himself for us.
Amen.**

P Hear the good news and rejoice!
 You are God's chosen ones,
 holy and beloved,
 † forgiven in Christ,
 and freed to respond in joy.

C Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Love Has Come

ELW #292



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!

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, 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)

RITE OF PASSAGE/CHILDREN'S TIME

Gathering • Word • Meal • Sending

Word

FIRST READING (10:30 A.M.)

Jeremiah 31:7-14

God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gift of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.

⁷ Thus says the Lord:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,

“Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel.”

⁸ See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,
those with child and those in labor, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

⁹ With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them back,
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰ Hear the word of the Lord, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him,
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock."

¹¹ For the Lord has ransomed Jacob,
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

¹² They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord,
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and over the young of the flock and the herd;
their life shall become like a watered garden,
and they shall never languish again.

¹³ Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,
and the young men and the old shall be merry.

I will turn their mourning into joy,
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

¹⁴ I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty.

P The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM (10:30 A.M.)

Psalm 147:12-20

- ¹² Worship the Lord, | O Jerusalem;
praise your | God, O Zion,
¹³ who has strengthened the bars | of your gates
and has blessed your children within you.
¹⁴ God has established peace | on your borders
and satisfies you with the | finest wheat.
¹⁵ God sends out a command | to the earth,
a word that runs | very swiftly.
¹⁶ God gives | snow like wool,
scattering | frost like ashes.
¹⁷ God scatters | hail like bread crumbs.
Who can stand against God's cold?
¹⁸ The Lord sends forth the | word and melts them;
the wind blows, and the | waters flow.**
- ¹⁹ God declares the | word to Jacob,
statutes and judgments to Israel.
²⁰ The Lord has not done so to any | other nation;
they do not know God's judgments. | Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING (10:30 A.M.)

Ephesians 1:3-14

In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵ He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹² so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴ this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

P The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

(please stand, as able)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

P The Holy Gospel according to John.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL

John 1:[1-9] 10-18

John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.

[¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.] ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") ¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

(please be seated)

SERMON

Rev. Peter I. Ray

(please stand, as able)

HYMN OF THE DAY

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

ELW #276



1 In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;
2 Flocks were sleep - ing, shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing new



ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ the child is Lord of all.
saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel true.



Swift - ly wing - ing, an - gels sing - ing, bells are ring - ing, tid - ings bring - ing:
Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing, greet the mor - row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

APOSTLES CREED (10:30 A.M.)

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 Filled with good news of great joy, let us offer our prayers for the church, the earth, and all people.

A brief silence.

P O God, you reveal yourself in this assembly. In water, wine, and bread, show us again and again your grace upon grace, that your church boldly testifies to your love. God of grace,

C Receive our prayer.

P You reveal yourself in creation. In seedlings and planets, microorganisms and galaxies, awaken us to the cry of the earth. As you nourish your people like a watered garden, empower us to nourish our creaturely companions. God of grace,

C Receive our prayer.

P You reveal yourself in every land and in the farthest parts of the earth. Deliver peoples who suffer under oppressive regimes. Thwart the foolish plans of unjust leaders. Give wisdom to our elected officials (*local leaders or governing bodies may be named*). God of grace,

C Receive our prayer.

P You reveal yourself in every human being. Help us recognize your image in our siblings in Christ who are in the strong grip of addiction, depression, anxiety, hopelessness, or other illness (*especially*). Grant us compassion in our care for your people. God of grace,

C Receive our prayer.

P You reveal yourself anew every day. In this new year, renew this congregation and its ministries in our witness to the good news of the incarnation (*specific ministry areas may be named*). Transform the way we have always done things into your new future for us. God of grace,

C Receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

P You reveal yourself in the lives of your holy ones. We give you thanks for those who set their hope on you, trusting the inheritance we receive in you. God of grace,

C Receive our prayer.

P We commend these prayers to you, O God, trusting your grace made known to all, through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

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

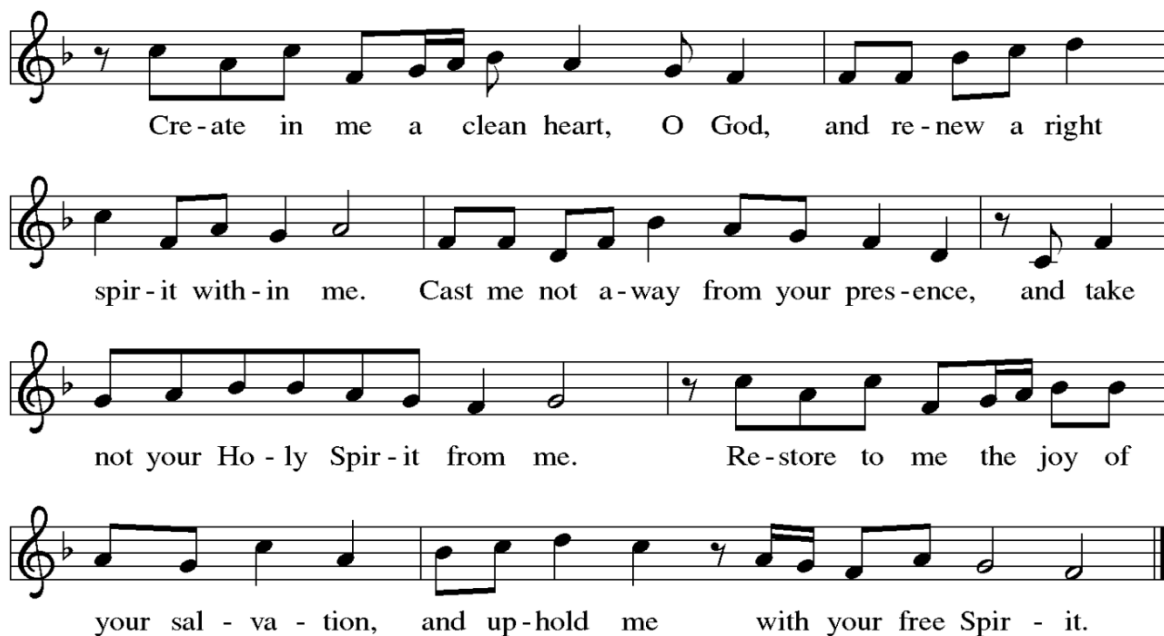
An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, and the care of those in need. If you are a first-time visitor, it is our privilege to have you worship with us. Please do not feel the need or obligation to give a financial offering. Your presence is gift enough to God and to us.

Our members and friends have the privilege to participate in faithful financial stewardship. They share their gifts by envelope, direct deposit and other electronic means. Scan the QR Code below where you can give a gift electronically.



(please stand, as able)

OFFERTORY MUSIC



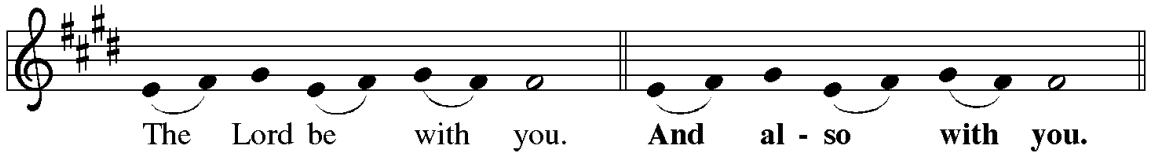
Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take
not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of
your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

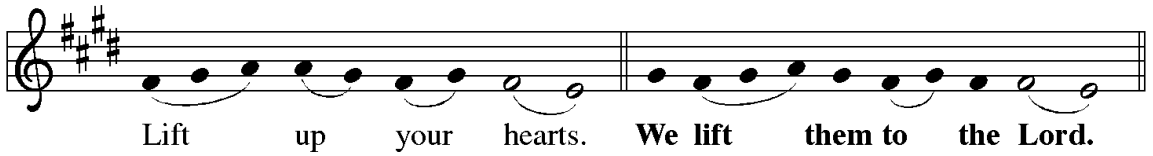
P God of heaven and earth,
from the beginning, you have called forth life,
in which you take delight.
The trees, the fields, and the seas sing for joy.
Bless now these gifts, received from your bounty,
that we may join the chorus of creation
to tell of your salvation from day to day.

C Amen.

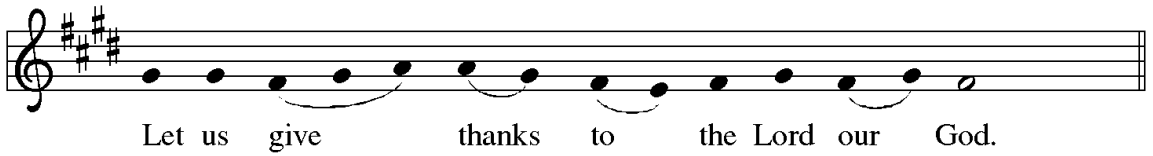
THE GREAT THANKSGIVING



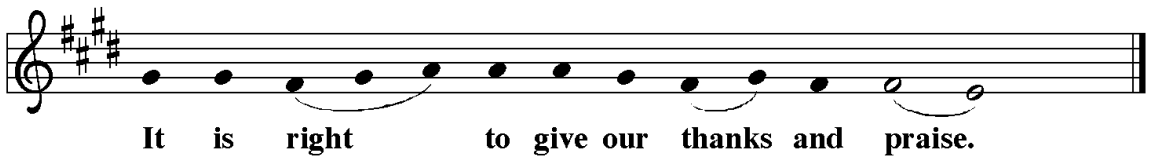
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.



Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

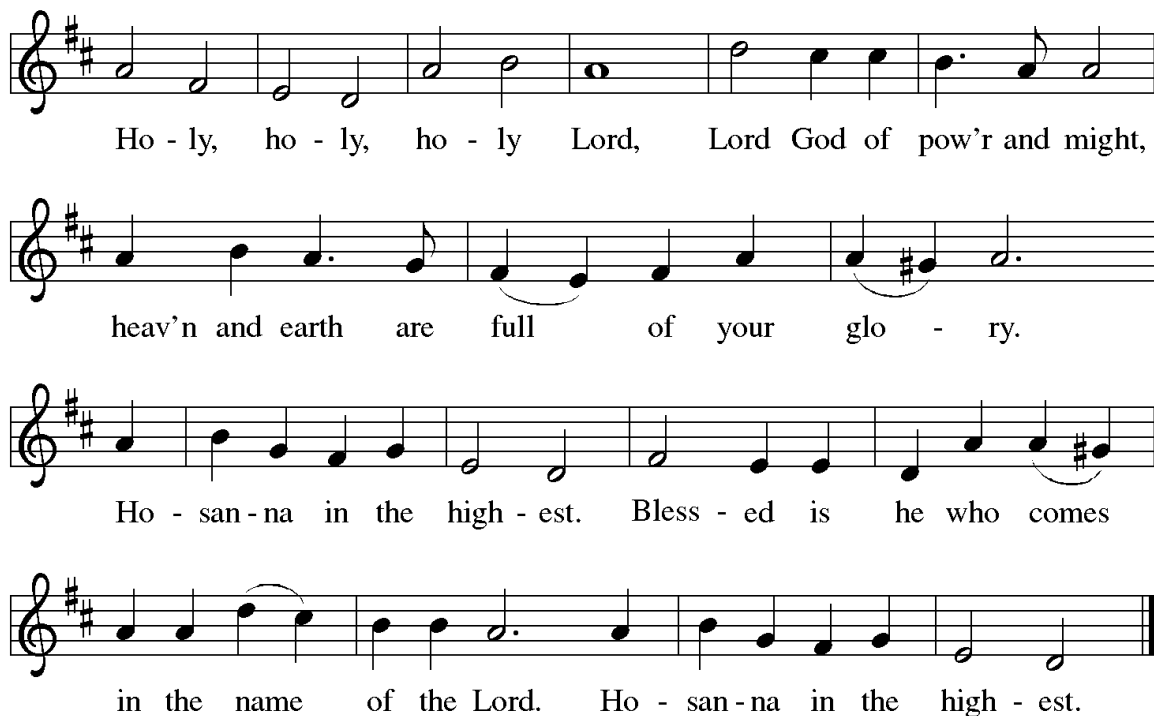


It is right to give our thanks and praise.

THE 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.
In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened
the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vis - ion of your glo - ry,
that be - holding the God made vis - i - ble,
we may be drawn to love the God whom we can - not see.
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:

SANCTUS *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.

EUCHARISTIC 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.

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.**

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 A child has been born for us, a Son given to us.
Come, receive the gift of Jesus.

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.

(please stand, as able)

DISTRIBUTION HYMN*In A Far-Off Place, Jesus Comes*

ACS #908



1 In a far - off place, Je - sus comes to earth.
 2 For the poor in heart, Je - sus comes to earth.
 3 In our deep - est night, Je - sus comes to earth:



Sheep and cat - tle grace the site. As the
 Hum - ble shep - herds start the news. For each
 ra - diant star to light our way. Sum - mer's



an - gel songs be - gin, like the whis - per of the wind,
 home - less in - fant born, for the meek and those who mourn,
 heat or win - ter's chill, with a warm and lov - ing will,



na - ture's hope a - wakes a - gain; Je - sus comes.
 for the wear - y and the worn, Je - sus comes.
 to a world that needs him still, Je - sus comes.

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 Merciful God,

we thank you for Jesus, who is our heavenly food.
Strengthened by this goodness,
send us forth to announce your peace,
comfort the afflicted,
and share the good news of great joy.

C **Amen.**

Gathering • Word • Meal • Sending

Sending

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

BLESSING

P The God of love,

Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit,
lavish you with grace,
illumine your path,
and increase your joy,
today and always.

C **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

Let All Together Praise Our God

ELW #287



1 Let all to - geth - er praise our God be - fore the
2 From God's right hand the Son de - scends, is born an
3 O ten - der Child, you veil in flesh the splen - dor
4 Your moth - er feeds you ten - der - ly, sings you a



high - est throne; to - day God o - pens heav'n a - gain and
in - fant small, and lies in pov - er - ty, his bed a
of your might; a ser - vant's garb now wraps the one who
lul - la - by, while an - gels, hail - ing Da - vid's heir, your



sends the on - ly Son, and sends the on - ly Son.
man - ger in a stall, a man - ger in a stall.
clothed the sky with light, who clothed the sky with light.
glo - ry mag - ni - fy, your glo - ry mag - ni - fy.

5 A wonderful exchange you make:
you take our flesh and blood,
and in return give us to share
the shining realm of God,
the shining realm of God.

6 Unlock the door again today
that leads to paradise;
the angel bars the way no more.
To God let praises rise,
to God let praises rise!

DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. The Word of God dwells in you richly.

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."