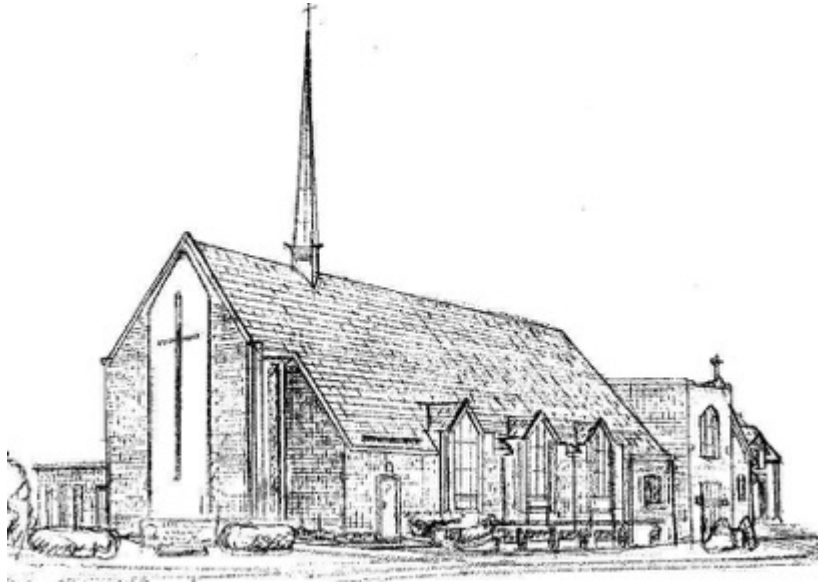


BETHLEHEM EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH



Serving, accepting, and loving all.

Bulletin

December 22, 2024

**Daniel P. Smail & Ellen S. Lundie, Pastors
Laura M. Henri, Organist and Director of Choirs**

**1719 Mt. Royal Boulevard – Glenshaw, PA 15116
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Web Page: www.belc.org

Sunday, December 22, 2024
Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year C

Introduction

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."

GATHERING

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lighting the Advent Wreath: Advent 4

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.

PRELUDE

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

C: Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

L: 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.

L: God of might,

we confess that we have sinned.

We have turned away from our neighbors.

We have trusted false promises.

L: God in our midst,

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.

GATHERING SONG NO. 257 O Come, O Come Emmanuel, VERSES 1-4

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,

and ransom captive Israel,

that mourns in lonely exile here

until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
teach us your will and guide our way. *Refrain*

3 O come, O come, O Lord of might,
as to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times you gave the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe. *Refrain*

4 O come, O Branch of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. *Refrain*

Text: *Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite

Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

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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 (ELW Pg. 138)

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, 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 worship and praise,

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

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **A - men.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

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. **C Amen.**

WORD

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.

A: The word of the Lord.

C : Thanks be to God.

PSALM Luke 1:46b-55

^{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 prom- | ise of mercy,**

⁵⁵ the promise made | to our forebears,
to Abraham and his chil- | dren 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, 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.

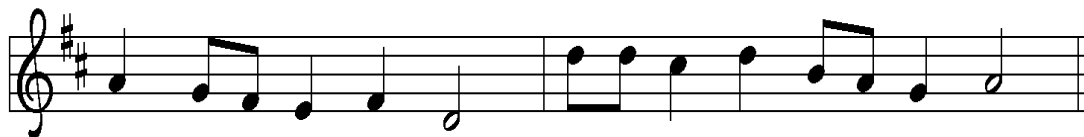
A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW Pg. 142)



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



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

GOSPEL: Luke 1:39-45

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.

P: The holy gospel according to Luke.

C 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 Spirit⁴² 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.”

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON – *The Rev. Daniel P. Smail*

HYMN OF THE DAY NO. 265 The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

- 1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:
"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favored lady." Gloria!
- 2 "For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honor thee;
thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
most highly favored lady." Gloria!
- 3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name."
Most highly favored lady, Gloria!
- 4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
in Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
"Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

Text: Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924

NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

For us and for our salvation

**he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;**

**he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

L: 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.

God our uniter, increase communication and cooperation in our relationships with those of other traditions and religions. Root your church in the radical message of your incarnation and enable us to pursue your justice in the world. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God our creator, we praise you for the beauty that surrounds us. Awaken in us a renewed sense of care for the wildlife in our communities. Form us into faithful stewards of what you have made. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God our sovereign, Mary proclaims a new way of life that lifts up the lowly and fills the hungry with good things. Nurture in local governments and municipalities a desire to care for all who are overlooked and ignored. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God our beacon, as the northern hemisphere begins its slow turn toward more daylight, remind us that even in the deepest nights, you are there. Comfort the lonely and bereaved. Hold closely the frightened, anxious, depressed, and ill; especially those we name within our hearts (*a moment silence...*). Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God our guide, shepherd the leadership of this congregation. Bless the council and staff in discerning future ministry and open their hearts to the voices of the community. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God our life, you remember the promises you have made to your people. In gratitude for those who have died, we praise you for your faithfulness throughout history. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

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

C: Amen.

PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

MEAL

OFFERING - *Offering boxes are located in the narthex and in back of the sanctuary.*

OFFERING PRAYER

L: Let us pray,

C: 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.

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 duty and our joy....we praise your name and join their unending hymn

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW Pg. 144)

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
 heav-en and earth are 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 in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Holy God, the Beginning and the End,
our Salvation and our Hope,
we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty.
When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair,
you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy.
At this end of the ages
your Son Jesus came to bring us your love
and to heal all the suffering world.
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.
Remembering, therefore,
his life, death, and resurrection,
we await his coming again
in righteousness and peace.
Send your Spirit on us
and on this bread and wine we share:
strengthen our faith,
increase our hope,
and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.
Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever.

Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

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

**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.**

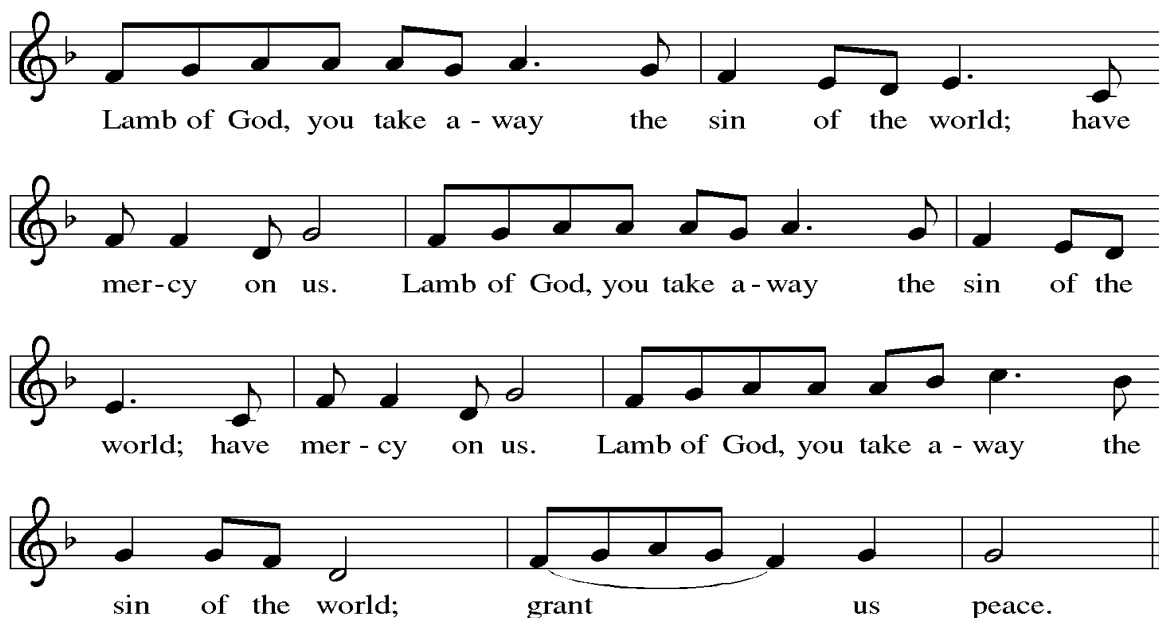
**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**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.

COMMUNION SONG (ELW Pg. 146)



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.

SENIOR CHOIR – *Magnificat*, J. Chepponis

COMMUNION HYMN NO. 245 Creator of the Stars of Night

- 1 Creator of the stars of night,
your people's everlasting light,
O Christ, redeemer of us all,
we pray you hear us when we call.
- 2 When this old world drew on toward night,
you came; but not in splendor bright,
not as a monarch, but the child
of Mary, blessed mother mild.
- 3 At your great name, O Jesus, now
all knees must bend, all hearts must bow:
all things on earth with one accord,
like those in heav'n, shall call you Lord.
- 4 Come in your holy might, we pray,
redeem us for eternal day;
defend us while we dwell below
from all assaults of our dread foe.
- 5 To God the Father, God the Son,
and God the Spirit, Three in One,
praise, honor, might, and glory be
from age to age eternally. Amen.

Text: Latin hymn, 9th cent.; tr. Hymnal 1940, alt.

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POST COMMUNION PRAYER

L: 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.

C: Amen.

SENDING

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.

SENDING SONG NO. 264 Prepare the Royal Highway

1 Prepare the royal highway;
the King of kings is near!
Let ev'ry hill and valley
a level road appear!
Then greet the King of glory,
foretold in sacred story:

Refrain

Hosanna to the Lord,
for he fulfills God's word!

2 God's people, see him coming:
your own eternal king!
Palm branches strew before him!
Spread garments! Shout and sing!
God's promise will not fail you!
No more shall doubt assail you! *Refrain*

3 Then fling the gates wide open
to greet your promised king!
Your king, yet ev'ry nation
its tribute too may bring.
All lands will bow before him;
their voices join your singing: *Refrain*

4 His is no earthly kingdom;
it comes from heav'n above.
His rule is peace and freedom
and justice, truth, and love.
So let your praise be sounding
for kindness so abounding: *Refrain*

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772-1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
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DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

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Children's Space

We encourage children to worship in the sanctuary as much as possible. However, we know that some days, a break may be needed. Please stop in the lounge for shorter breaks where there are coloring activities and snacks provided. All children must be accompanied by an adult. The nursery is also available downstairs in the Fellowship Hall with the ability to hear the service.

2025 Flower Chart

The 2025 Flower Chart is posted on the wall in the hallway across from the office. Think of important dates or life events that you and your family would like to honor or remember someone on and sign up for altar flowers on that date or on a date that is open close to it.

Stained Glass & Other Crafts

Mark your calendars from now for Thursday, January 16th, 2025. This is the date when the Stained Glass and Other Crafts classes will resume here at BELC. We will meet at 10:00am and craft till around noon. We will gather as we had been doing in the downstairs music room.



Our Blessing Box

Our outdoor food pantry has been a blessing to our community providing needed items to those who are food insecure. Your generosity shows your commitment to do God's work but still day after day the box is being emptied by those in need. Here are some of the most desired foods:

Cereals small individual packages or boxes Pop Tarts Granola or protein bars

Individual: fruit cups, rice pkg., potato pkg. Hormel single serve meals

Single serve pkgs. Peanut butter -- crackers small sized boxes (saltines or club)

Hearty soups with lift off tops Tuna—in foil packages Ensure individual bottles

Individual packages of cookies or snacks Single serve Coffee packets

Grab and go items single serve with lift off lids Cans of spam, beef stew, or soups

Small size Deodorants small bottles or shampoo individual bars of soap

NO MEDICATIONS OF ANY KIND

Monthly Special Offering for December is: New Start Ministry

The Week at Bethlehem

Sunday, Dec. 22nd 8:00 am Worship & Communion

9:15am Sunday School

*10:30am Worship & Communion

NO Confirmation

* Live streaming of worship service

Monday, Dec. 23rd 9:00-2:30p PACC (Fellowship Hall)

11a-2p Passage to Recovery (Library)

6:30-8:30pm Girl Scouts (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, Dec. 24th 10:30-11:30a AA (Schmid Hall)

6:00-8:30pm NA (Fellowship Hall)

1pm Service

7:00pm Service

10:30pm Service

Wednesday, Dec. 25th - Office closed

On behalf of the BELC Staff,

we wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas

Thurs., Dec. 26th & Fri., Dec. 27th Office closed

Saturday, Dec. 28th 6:00pm Lessons & Carols w/Comm.

Sunday, Dec. 29th 9:30am Lessons & Carols w/Comm.

Annual Report

Committee Chairs - Start thinking about your committee report for inclusion into our annual report to the Congregation....**All reports are due to the office by January 6, 2025.**



Saturday, January 25th at 7:00pm

Join us for a fun night to fight off the winter cold with a **Chili Cook Off and Family Game Night!**

Please contact the church office if you would like to bring chili and enter the cook off for your chance to be named Bethlehem's very own **Chili Champ for 2025!**

In addition to great food, we will once again host a **Pictionary** team game, but please feel free to bring along your own game, if you'd like!

If you'd like to attend the event (no cooking required), please RSVP to the church office. This is helpful for planning, but not required.



Hope to see you there!