

# WELCOME TO BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

## 3<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY IN ADVENT

*December 17, 2023*

*8:00 & 9:30 AM*

**We are so glad you are here in God's house for worship.**

**Before** worship, talk to God!

(see inside cover of hymnal for pre-service prayer prompts)

**During** worship, let God talk to you!

**After** worship, talk to one another.

**If You're a Visitor**, let us get to know you.

Scan the QR Code here:



**Parents of Young Children:** *We love to have children in worship.* God put the wiggle in children; don't feel you have to completely suppress it in God's house. We know the presence of children in worship is a gift to the church! It is in the Lord's house that we learn how to listen and speak to our God with our brothers and sisters in faith. Feel free to quietly explain the parts of the service and the actions of those leading worship. Children learn how to worship by copying you. If you have a need, we have "worship bags" in the Narthex filled with items to help children and families during worship. There is a *Nursery* across the courtyard in the office complex, where you as a parent may take your little one needing a break. You are then able to return to church and continue your worship of the Lord.

**Please** place cell phones and electronic devices on mute as you join us in worship this morning. Thank you.

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME**



1 Hark the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, The Sav - ior  
 2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, In Sa - tan's  
 3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, The bleed - ing  
 4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, Thy wel - come



prom - ised long; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare a  
 bond - age held. The gates of brass be - fore Him  
 soul to cure, And with the trea - sures of His  
 shall pro - claim, And heav'n's e - ter - nal arch - es



throne And ev - 'ry voice a song.  
 burst, The i - ron fet - ters yield.  
 grace To en - rich the hum - ble poor.  
 ring With Thy be - lov - ed name.

**INVOCATION:**

**Leader:** God who never fails us, whose forgiveness is sure,  
 whose steadfast love endures eternally,  
 who comes to us in grace and whose presence we now enter

**People:** God the Father, + Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

**LIGHTING OF THE WREATH:**

**Leader:** Lord of Light, unending source of glory and grace,  
 we thank You for this wreath's light  
 that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.  
 As we light the candles on this wreath,  
 kindle within us the fire of Your Spirit  
 that we may be light shining in the darkness  
 and enlighten us with Your grace,  
 that we may welcome others as You Lord have welcomed us.

**People:** Grant this through Christ whose coming is certain  
and whose day is drawing near. Amen.

### **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS:**

**Leader:** Together let us honestly and humbly confess  
that we have not made good on our promises to God  
and have sinned against Him in thought, word and deed.

*(Time for silent reflection.)*

**Leader:** Loving and forgiving God,

**People:** We confess that we are held captive by sin.  
On occasion we accidentally go astray, often we intentionally wander.  
We confess that we have not desired Your advent  
as much as we have desired the things of this world  
and we that have failed to welcome You as we ought.  
Advent calls us to be ready,  
to be the voice crying out to many to prepare the way for the Lord;  
we yet confess,  
that we have neglected to pass on that which we have received.  
Restore us, O God.  
Wake us and turn us from our sin;  
and for the sake of Christ, set us free from guilt  
and deliver us from Your wrath. Amen.

**Leader:** I am here with Good News for you!  
Your sins are forgiven, and you are free-  
Free from all that holds you back  
Free to live in peace with God  
Free to serve others as if you were serving Him!  
Go in the freedom that His advent brings. Amen.

### **LITANY OF DELIVERANCE:**

**Leader:** Come down and make Your name known;  
rend the heavens  
and come down that even the mountains tremble before You!

**People:**       **Come down and make Your name known.**

Leader:        When You did awesome things that we did not expect, You came down.

**People:**       **Come down and make Your name known.**

Leader:        No eye has seen any god besides You  
                  who acts on behalf of those who wait for Him.

**People:**       **Come down and make Your name known.**

Leader:        You are the potter, we are the clay; we are the work of Your hands.

**People:**       **Come down and make Your name known.**

Leader:        Do not remember our sins for we are Your people.

**People:**       **Come down and make Your name known.**

Leader:        Come down and make Your name known.

**People:**       **Jesus, the Lord who saves is His name.**

Leader:        Come down and make Your name known.

**FIRST SCRIPTURE READING: *Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11***

**T**he Spirit of the Almighty LORD is with me  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to deliver good news to humble people.  
He has sent me  
to heal those who are brokenhearted,  
to announce that captives will be set free  
and prisoners will be released.  
He has sent me  
to announce the year of the LORD's good will  
and the day of our God's vengeance,  
to comfort all those who grieve.

He has sent me  
to provide for all those who grieve in Zion,  
to give them crowns instead of ashes,  
the oil of joy instead of tears of grief,  
and clothes of praise instead of a spirit of weakness.

They will be called Oaks of Righteousness,  
the Plantings of the LORD,  
so that He might display His glory.

They will rebuild the ancient ruins.  
They will restore the places destroyed long ago.  
They will renew the ruined cities, the places destroyed generations ago...

I, the LORD, love justice.  
I hate robbery and wrongdoing.  
I will faithfully reward my people's work.  
I will make an everlasting promise to them.  
Then their offspring will be known among the nations  
and their descendants among the people.  
Everyone who sees them will recognize  
that they are the descendants whom the LORD has blessed.

I will find joy in the LORD.  
I will delight in my God.  
He has dressed me in the clothes of salvation.  
He has wrapped me in the robe of righteousness  
like a bridegroom with a priest's turban,  
like a bride with her jewels.  
Like the ground that brings forth its crops  
and like a garden that makes the seed in it grow,  
so the Almighty LORD will make righteousness and praise  
spring up in front of all nations. – GW ®

**MINISTRY OF MUSIC:**

***“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”***

Piano

**SECOND SCRIPTURE READING: *1 Thessalonians 5:16-24***

Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Whatever happens, give thanks, because it is God's will in Christ Jesus that you do this.

Don't put out the Spirit's fire. Don't despise what God has revealed. Instead, test everything. Hold on to what is good. Keep away from every kind of evil.

May the God who gives peace make you holy in every way. May He keep your whole being—spirit, soul, and body—blameless when our Lord Jesus Christ comes. The one who calls you is faithful, and He will do this. – GW ®

**CHILDREN'S SERMON**

**THE HOLY GOSPEL: *John 1:6-8, 19-28***

God sent a man named John to be His messenger. John came to declare the truth about the light so that everyone would become believers through his message. John was not the light, but he came to declare the truth about the light...

This was John's answer when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" John didn't refuse to answer. He told them clearly, "I'm not the Messiah."

They asked him, "Well, are you Elijah?"

John answered, "No, I'm not."

Then they asked, "Are you the prophet?"

John replied, "No."

So they asked him, "Who are you? Tell us so that we can take an answer back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

John said, "I'm a voice crying out in the desert, 'Make the way for the Lord straight,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

Some of those who had been sent were Pharisees. They asked John, "Why do you baptize if you're not the Messiah or Elijah or the prophet?"

John answered them, "I baptize with water. Someone you don't know is standing among you. He's the One who comes after me. I am not worthy to untie His sandal strap."

This happened in Bethany on the east side of the Jordan River, where John was baptizing.  
– GW ®

1 O God, O Lord of heav'n and earth, Thy liv - ing  
 2 Our fa - tal will to e - qual Thee, Our reb - el  
 3 Thou cam - est to our hall of death, O Christ, to  
 Δ 4 O Spir - it, who didst once re - store Thy Church that

fin - ger nev - er wrote That life should be an aim -  
 will wrought death and night. We seized and used in pride -  
 breathe our poi - soned air, To drink for us the dark  
 it might be a - gain The bring - er of good news

less mote, A death - ward drift from fu - tile birth.  
 ful spite Thy won - drous gift of lib - er - ty.  
 de - spair That stran - gled our re - luc - tant breath.  
 to men, Breathe on Thy clo - ven Church once more,

Thy Word meant life tri - um - phant hurled In splen - dor through  
 We housed us in this house of doom, Where death had roy -  
 How beau - ti - ful the feet that trod The road that leads  
 That in these gray and lat - ter days There may be those

Thy bro - ken world. Since light a - woke and life be - gan,  
 al scope and room, Un - til Thy ser - vant, Prince of Peace,  
 us back to God! How beau - ti - ful the feet that ran  
 whose life is praise, Each life a high dox - ol - o - gy

Thou hast de - sired Thy life for man.  
 Breached all its walls for our re - lease.  
 To bring the great good news to man!  
 To Fa - ther, Son, and un - to Thee.

SERMON: "Neither Snow, nor Rain, nor Gloom of Night"  
 Text: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11



1 Come, Thou long-ex-pect-ed Je-sus, Born to set Thy peo-ple free;  
 2 Born Thy peo-ple to de-liv-er; Born a child and yet a king!



From our fears and sins re-lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.  
 Born to reign in us for-ev-er, Now Thy gra-cious king-dom bring.



Is-rael's strength and con-so-la-tion, Hope of all the earth Thou art,  
 By Thine own e-ter-nal Spir-it Rule in all our hearts a-lone;



Dear de-sire of ev-'ry na-tion, Joy of ev-'ry long-ing heart.  
 By Thine all-suf-fi-cient mer-it Raise us to Thy glo-rious throne.

**OFFERING:** *The Offering Box is located in the center aisle. If you so desire, Text Giving is now available by texting GIVE to 562-210-0463. For On-line Giving information, contact Maraley at [mshaeffer@bethanylutheran.org](mailto:mshaeffer@bethanylutheran.org) or call 562-421-4711, ext. 21. Thank you!*

**CONSECRATING THE GIFTS:**

Leader: Generous God, You have created all that is,  
 and provide for us in every way.  
 Bless all that we offer, that through these gifts  
 the world will receive the deliverance that comes only in Jesus,  
 Emmanuel, God with us, amen.



## **PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

Leader: O Lord, Who has called us Your own beloved children,  
we thank you for the gift of family and friends,  
strengthen the ties that bind us together.  
Fill our hearts with joy  
to sing with those who gathered at Bethany beyond the Jordan,  
“Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”  
We pray this in the name of Jesus, Your gift of deliverance to the world.

## **APOSTLES' CREED: (\* catholic means the universal Christian Church)**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**  
**I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.**  
**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit**  
**and born of the virgin Mary.**  
**He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.**  
**He descended into hell. On the third day He rose again.**  
**He ascended into heaven,**  
**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**  
**He will come again 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.**

## **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

### **LORD'S PRAYER:**

**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.**

## + *Service of the Sacrament* +

*The Lord's Supper is celebrated at Bethany in the joyful confession that our Lord gives us His very Body and Blood for the forgiveness of sins in this sacrament. God intends this gift for His children who recognize their sin, trust in Christ as their Savior, desire to live for Him alone and join in this joyful confession.*

To help you prepare for communion we invite you to take a few moments of quiet prayer. For aid there are prayers on the front page of the hymnal for both before and after the reception of communion. Or simply pray, *Dear Lord Jesus, at Your gracious invitation You invite me to come to You, to eat and drink Your holy body and blood as You Yourself have promised to give in this sacrament of Your altar. Forgive me of my sin, through this Your meal of Forgiveness. Let me experience the fullness of Your love, through this Your meal of love. Strengthen my faith, through this meal of Yours that calls for and bestows faith. Empower me to live for You, through this Your meal that promises life everlasting and equips me for daily living as one who has received You and Your gifts.*

### WORDS OF INSTITUTION

*For those communing, who so desire, the center cups in each tray are alcohol free.*

*The wafers next to the Christ candle side are gluten free;  
for those with dietary restrictions, please take a gluten free wafer.*

*In our 9:30 a.m. service we will practice the Easter tradition of continuous communion. We will not kneel at the altar, rather we will join the procession of saints and come forward and remain standing as we receive the bread and wine. After receiving the elements, you are invited to return to your seat and continue in meditation, prayer and song.*

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS:

*"Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness"* LSB 849



1 Praise the One who breaks the dark - ness With a lib - er -  
2 Praise the One who blessed the chil - dren With a strong, yet  
3 Let us praise the Word In - car - nate, Christ, who suf - fered



at - ing light; Praise the One who frees the pris - 'ners,  
gen - tle, word; Praise the One who drove out de - mons  
in our place. Je - sus died and rose vic - to - rious



Turn - ing blind - ness in - to sight. Praise the One who preached the  
With the pierc - ing, two - edged sword. Praise the One who brings cool  
That we may know God by grace. Let us sing for joy and



Gos - pel, Heal - ing ev - 'ry dread dis - ease, Calm - ing  
wa - ter To the des - ert's burn - ing sand; From this  
glad - ness, See - ing what our God has done; Let us



storms, and feed - ing thou - sands With the ver - y Bread of peace.  
Well comes liv - ing wa - ter, Quench - ing thirst in ev - 'ry land.  
praise the true Re - deem - er, Praise the One who makes us one.

*“O God of Love, O King of Peace”*

LSB 751

1 O God of love, O— King of— peace, Make wars through-  
out the world to cease; The rage of na— tions—  
now— re— strain: Give peace, O God, give peace a— gain!

- 2 Remember, Lord, Thy works of old,  
The wonders that Thy people told;  
Remember not our sins' dark stain:  
Give peace, O God, give peace again!
- 3 Whom shall we trust but Thee, O Lord?  
Where rest but on Thy faithful Word?  
None ever called on Thee in vain:  
Give peace, O God, give peace again!
- 4 Where saints and angels dwell above,  
All hearts are knit in holy love;  
O bind us in that heav'nly chain:  
Give peace, O God, give peace again!

**POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

**SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**THE BLESSING:**

Leader: The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting  
The long-expected Savior fill you with His joy,  
The Spirit who leads to Christ,  
guide your journey in Jesus + now and forevermore. Amen.



1 On what has now been sown Thy bless - ing, Lord, be - stow;  
 2 To Thee our wants are known, From Thee are all our pow'rs;  
 3 O grant that each of us, Now met be - fore Thee here,



The pow'r is Thine a - lone To make it sprout and grow. Do Thou  
 Ac - cept what is Thine own And par - don what is ours. Our prais -  
 May meet to - geth - er thus When Thou and Thine ap - pear And fol -



in grace the har - vest raise, And Thou a - lone shalt have the praise!  
 es, Lord, and prayers re - ceive, And to Thy Word a bless - ing give.  
 low Thee to heav'n, our home. E'en so, a - men, Lord Je - sus, come!

## POSTLUDE

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"Hark the Glad Sound" LSB 349

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702-51. Tune: Thomas Haweis, 1734-1820; setting: *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 1941.  
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"O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth" LSB 834

Text: Martin H. Franzmann, 1907-76, alt. Tune: Jan O. Bender, 1909-94.  
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"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" LSB 338

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