



# *Epiphany Sunday*

Bethany Lutheran Church  
January 4, 2026

## PRELUDE

### OPENING HYMN: “Rise, Shine, You People”

LSB 825



1 Rise, shine, you peo - ple! Christ the Lord has en - tered  
2 See how He sends the pow'rs of e - vil reel - ing;  
3 Come, cel - e - brate, your ban - ners high un - furl - ing,  
4 Tell how the Fa - ther sent His Son to save us.



Our hu - man sto - ry; God in Him is cen - tered.  
He brings us free - dom, light and life and heal - ing.  
Your songs and prayers a - gainst the dark-ness hurl - ing.  
Tell of the Son, who life and free-dom gave us.



He comes to us, by death and sin sur -  
All men and wom - en, who by guilt are  
To all the world go out and tell the  
Tell how the Spir - it calls from ev - 'ry



round - ed, With grace un - bound - ed.  
driv - en, Now are for - giv - en.  
sto - ry Of Je - sus' glo - ry.  
na - tion His new cre - a - tion.

### CALL TO WORSHIP:

**L:** Gracious Father, on this day  
by the shining of a star and the stirring of Your Spirit  
the Magi were led to Your Son  
through whom You have revealed Yourself to the nations.

**P:** Heavenly Father,  
continue to lead us now by faith to know Your presence in our lives,  
and bring us at last to the full vision of Your glory through Your Son, Jesus  
Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy  
Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS:

**L:** Lord of Life You invite us to come to You  
and You call us to follow in Your way.

**P:** Yet, We confess that we have often turned from Your way  
and ignored Your revelation to pursue our own paths  
or choose our own truth.  
Forgive us for the times we have spoken or acted too quickly.  
Forgive us for the times we have not spoken or acted at all.  
Forgive us for the hurt we have caused those closest to us.  
Forgive us for the hurt we have caused those we have yet to know.  
Forgive us for thinking more about ourselves than others.  
Forgive us for having thought less of our calling and vocation than we  
ought.  
Forgive us for having thought little of Your gifts, Your declarations and  
Your commands.  
For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, the Lord of life who suffered and  
died for us, forgive us anew that we might live again for You. Amen.

**L:** God never tires of revealing His mercy.  
God's love never runs out.  
God has made His glory clear to see in Christ  
and for His sake your sins are forgiven.  
Go to follow Him. Go to make Him known.

**P:** Amen.

## HYMN OF PRAISE:

## “Songs of Thankfulness and Praise”

LSB 394



1 Songs of thank - ful - ness and praise, Je - sus, Lord, to Thee we raise,  
 4 Sun and moon shall dark-ened be, Stars shall fall, the heav'ns shall flee;  
 5 Grant us grace to see Thee, Lord, Pres - ent in Thy ho - ly Word—



Man - i - fest-ed by the star To the sa - ges from a - far,  
 Christ will then like light - ning shine, All will see His glo - rious sign;  
 Grace to im - i - tate Thee now And be pure, as pure art Thou;



Branch of roy - al Da - vid's stem In Thy birth at Beth - le - hem:  
 All will then the trum - pet hear, All will see the Judge ap - pear;  
 That we might be - come like Thee At Thy great e - piph - a - ny



An - thems be to Thee ad-dressed, God in man made man - i - fest.  
 Thou by all wilt be con-fessed, God in man made man - i - fest.  
 And may praise Thee, ev - er blest, God in man made man - i - fest.

PSALM 72:1-8, 11 (*we read responsively*)

- L:** Give the king your justice, O God,  
**P:** **and your righteousness to the royal son!**  
**L:** May He judge your people with righteousness,  
**P:** **and your poor with justice!**  
**L:** Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people,  
**P:** **and the hills, in righteousness!**  
**L:** May He defend the cause of the poor of the people,  
 give deliverance to the children of the needy,  
**P:** **and crush the oppressor!**
- L:** May they fear you while the sun endures,  
**P:** **and as long as the moon, throughout all generations!**  
**L:** May He be like rain that falls on the mown grass,  
**P:** **like showers that water the earth!**  
**L:** In His days may the righteous flourish,  
**P:** **and peace abound, till the moon be no more!**

**L:** May He have dominion from sea to sea,  
**P:** **and from the River to the ends of the earth!**  
**L:** May He rule from sea to sea,  
**P:** **from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth. –ESV®**

## **OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Isaiah 60:1-6***

Arise! Shine! Your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord has dawned.  
Darkness now covers the earth,  
and thick darkness covers the nations.  
But the Lord dawns,  
and His glory appears over you.  
Nations will come to your light,  
and kings will come to the brightness of your dawn.

“Look up, look around, and watch.  
All of your people assemble and come to you.  
Your sons come from far away.  
Your daughters are carried in their arms.  
Then you will see this and rejoice,  
and your heart will be thrilled with joy,  
because the riches of the sea will be brought to you.

The wealth of the nations will come to you.  
“Many camels will cover your land,  
young camels from Midian and Ephah.  
Everyone from Sheba will come.  
They will bring gold and incense.  
They will sing the praises of the Lord. – GW®

## **CHILDREN’S MESSAGE**

## THE HOLY GOSPEL: *Matthew 2:1-12*

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea when Herod was king. After Jesus' birth wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem. They asked, "Where is the one who was born to be the king of the Jews? We saw His star rising and have come to worship Him."

When King Herod and all Jerusalem heard about this, they became disturbed. He called together all the chief priests and the experts in the Scriptures and tried to find out from them where the Messiah was supposed to be born.

They told him, "In Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet wrote about this:

Bethlehem in the land of Judah,  
you are by no means least among the leaders of Judah.  
A leader will come from you.  
He will shepherd my people, Israel."

Then Herod secretly called the wise men and found out from them exactly when the star had appeared. As he sent them to Bethlehem, he said, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you have found Him, report to me so that I may go and worship Him too."

After they had heard the king, they started out. The star they had seen rising led them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They were overwhelmed with joy to see the star. When they entered the house, they saw the child with His mother Mary. So they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasure chests and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they left for their country by another road. – GW®

**SERMON HYMN: “Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning”** LSB 400



1 Bright - est and best of the stars of the morn - ing,  
2 Cold on His cra - dle the dew - drops are shin - ing;  
3 Shall we not yield Him, in cost - ly de - vo - tion,  
4 Vain - ly we of - fer each am - ple ob - la - tion,  
5 Bright - est and best of the stars of the morn - ing,



Dawn on our dark - ness and lend us thine aid;  
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall;  
Fra - grance of E - dom and of f'rings di - vine,  
Vain - ly with gifts would His fa - vor se - cure.  
Dawn on our dark - ness and lend us thine aid;



Star of the East, the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,  
An - gels a - dore Him in slum - ber re - clin - ing,  
Gems of the moun - tain and pearls of the o - cean,  
Rich - er by far is the heart's ad - o - ra - tion;  
Star of the East, the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,

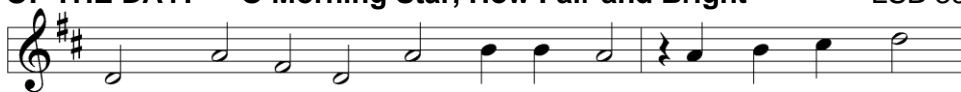


Guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid.  
Mak - er and Mon - arch and Sav - ior of all.  
Myrrh from the for - est and gold from the mine?  
Dear - er to God are the prayers of the poor.  
Guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid.

**MESSAGE: “Best Day Ever”**

# HYMN OF THE DAY: "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright"

LSB 395



1 O Morn-ing Star, how fair and bright! You shine with God's  
4 Al - might - y Fa - ther, in Your Son You loved us when  
5 O let the harps break forth in sound! Our joy be all  
6 What joy to know, when life is past, The Lord we love



own truth and light, A - glow with grace and mer - cy!  
not yet be - gun Was this old earth's foun - da - tion!  
with mu - sic crowned, Our voic - es glad - ly blend - ing!  
is first and last, The end and the be - gin - ning!



Of Ja - cob's race, King Da - vid's son, Our Lord and mas -  
Your Son has ran - somed us in love To live in Him  
For Christ goes with us all the way— To - day, to - mor -  
He will one day, oh, glo - rious grace, Trans - port us to



ter, You have won Our hearts to serve You on - ly!  
here and a - bove: This is Your great sal - va - tion.  
row, ev - 'ry day! His love is nev - er end - ing!  
that hap - py place Be - yond all tears and sin - ning!



Low - ly, ho - ly! Great and glo - rious, All vic - to - rious,  
Al - le - lu - ia! Christ the liv - ing, To us giv - ing  
Sing out! Ring out! Ju - bi - la - tion! Ex - ul - ta - tion!  
A - men! A - men! Come, Lord Je - sus! Crown of glad - ness!



Rich in bless - ing! Rule and might o'er all pos - sess - ing!  
Life for - ev - er, Keeps us Yours and fails us nev - er!  
Tell the sto - ry! Great is He, the King of Glo - ry!  
We are yearn - ing For the day of Your re - turn - ing!

**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 Pauline at [psvolos@bethanylutheran.org](mailto:psvolos@bethanylutheran.org) or call 562-421-4711, ext. 21. Thank you!*

## **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:**

- L:** The Magi brought to You their treasures,  
**P:** **receive O Lord, the gifts we bring, ourselves, our time and our possessions; signs of Your gracious love given through Him who gave Himself for us.**
- L:** Through these gifts fund and support ministry here at Bethany that leads many to behold Your glory in Christ in whose name we pray.  
**P:** **Amen.**

## **CONFESSION OF FAITH: 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.**

## **PRAYERS 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.**

## **✠ Holy Communion ✠**

***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 and 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:**

**[L]:** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

For those communing, who so desire, the center cups in each tray are **alcohol free**.  
The wafers on the stand next to the pillar pulpit side (when kneeling for communion) or on  
the stand in front of the baptismal font (when processing for communion) are **gluten free**.

## DISTRIBUTION SONGS: "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

LSB 411

1 I want to walk as a child of the light.  
2 I want to see for the bright-ness of God.  
3 I'm look - ing for the com - ing of Christ.

I want to fol - low Je - sus.  
I want to look at Je - sus.  
I want to be with Je - sus.

God set the stars to give light to the world.  
Clear Sun of Righ - teous - ness, shine on my path,  
When we have run with pa - tience the race,

The star of my life is Je - sus.  
And show me the way to the Fa - ther.  
We shall know the joy of Je - sus.

*Refrain*

In Him there is no dark - ness at all.

The night and the day are both a - like.

The Lamb is the light of the cit - y of God.

Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

# **“Gracious God, You Send Great Blessings”**

LSB 782



1 Gra - cious God, You send great bless - ings  
 2 By Your Word You formed cre - a - tion  
 3 In His earth - ly life, our Sav - ior  
 4 Heav'n - ly Fa - ther, may our car - ing



New each morn - ing all our days. For Your mer - cies  
 Filled with crea - tures large and small; As we tend that  
 Knew the care of faith - ful friends; May our deeds of  
 Bear the im - print of Your grace; With the Son and



nev - er end - ing, For Your love we of - fer praise.  
 end - less trea - sure May our care en - cir - cle all.  
 ded - i - ca - tion Of - fer love that nev - er ends.  
 Ho - ly Spir - it, Praise be Yours in ev - 'ry place!

*Refrain*



Lord, we pray that we, Your peo-ple Who Your gifts un - num - bered claim,



Through the shar-ing of Your bless-ings May bring glo-ry to Your name.

## **POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

### **THE BLESSING:**

**[L]:** The God of all glory dwell in you richly,  
 name you beloved, shine brightly on your path;  
 and the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the ✠ Son,  
 and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

**[P]:** **Amen.**

**CLOSING HYMN:****“Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling”**

LSB 650



1 Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er dwell - ing In the ho - liest  
2 Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er liv - ing As the Church's  
3 Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er work - ing Through the Church's



realms of light; Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er brood - ing  
ver - y life; Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er striv - ing  
min - is - try; Quick - 'ning, strength - 'ning, and ab - solv - ing,



O'er a world of gloom and night; Ho - ly Spir - it,  
Through us in a cease - less strife; Ho - ly Spir - it,  
Set - ting cap - tive sin - ners free; Ho - ly Spir - it,



ev - er rais - ing Those of earth to thrones on high; Liv - ing,  
ev - er form - ing In the Church the mind of Christ: You we  
ev - er bind - ing Age to age and soul to soul In com -



life - im - part - ing Spir - it, You we praise and mag - ni - fy.  
praise with end - less wor - ship For Your gifts and fruits un - priced.  
mu - nion nev - er end - ing, You we wor - ship and ex - tol.

**POSTLUDE****COPYRIGHT/STREAMING PERMISSIONS:**

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“Rise, Shine, You People” LSB 825

Text: Ronald A. Klug, b. 1939, alt.

Tune: Dale Wood, 1934-2003.

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“Songs of Thankfulness and Praise” LSB 394

Text: Christopher Wordsworth, 1807-85, alt. Tune: George J. Elvey, 1816-93.

Text and music: Public domain.

“Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning” LSB 400

Text: Reginald Heber, 1783-1826, alt.

Tune: James P. Harding, 1850-1911, adapt.; setting: *Service Book and Hymnal*, 1958

Text and Music: Public Domain

“O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright” LSB 395

Text and Tune: Philipp Nicolai, 1556-1608; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*, 1978, alt. Tune: Public domain

Setting: *Choralbuch zum Evangelischen Kirchengesangbuch*, Berlin, 1955.

Setting: © 1955 Verlag Merseburger. All rights reserved. Reprinted under ONELICENSE #A-706149.

Text: ©1978 Lutheran Book of Worship. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted under ONELICENSE #A-706149

“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light” LSB 411

Text: Kathleen Thomerson, b. 1934

Music: Kathleen Thomerson

Text and Music: © 1970, 1975 Celebration. All rights reserved. Reprinted under ONELICENSE #A-706149.

“Gracious God, You Send Great Blessings” LSB 782

Text: Gregory J. Wismar, b. 1946.

Tune: *Columbian Harmony*, Cincinnati, 1825; setting: *Worship & Rejoice*, Carol Stream, 2001

Text: © 2004 Gregory J. Wismar; Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved.

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Music: Public domain

“Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling” LSB 650

Text: Timothy Rees, 1874-1939, alt.

Tune: *Oude en Nieuwe Hollantse . . . Contradanseu*, Amsterdam, c. 1710; Setting: Henry V. Gerike, b. 1948.

Text and tune: Public domain.

Setting: ©2006 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved. Reprinted under ONELICENSE #A-706149.



## **SERVING GOD'S HOUSE TODAY:**

Acolyte 9:30...Anastasia Kienitz

Lector 8:00...Greg Goebel    Lector 9:30...John Holmquist    Lector 11:00...Nick Davies

Liturgist...Pastor John Alwood

Preacher...Pastor Kevin Kritzer

Director of Music Ministries & Worship Arts...Noah Freeman

Children's Message...Karl Fink

Sound...Felix Rivera, Jon Widmann



**If You're a Visitor**, WELCOME! We are so glad you have joined us for worship today. If you would like more information about Bethany and its ministries, please scan the QR code to the right. You will be directed to Bethany's fillable information form.



Please visit our websites to find out more about our Church, School and Preschool. Get weekly updates by signing up for the **Bethany Broadcast**—our weekly capsule of worship highlights and campus-wide information.

**Bethany Lutheran Church** and its Ministries are found at: [www.bethanylutheran.org](http://www.bethanylutheran.org)

**Bethany Lutheran School** information can be found by visiting their website at: [www.bethanylutheran.org/school/](http://www.bethanylutheran.org/school/)

**Bethany Preschool's** website: [www.bethanylutheran.org/preschool/](http://www.bethanylutheran.org/preschool/)

To sign up for the weekly **Bethany Broadcast**: <https://bit.ly/BethanyBroadcastSignUp>

## **DONATE TO BETHANY'S FLOWER FUND!**

Flowers are used to decorate the altar every Sunday, for special seasons such as Christmas and Easter, as well as other important dates during the church calendar. You are able to make two types of donations to the Altar Flower Fund: a general donation and a special request with recognition.



• **A Special Request with Recognition\*** is a special type of Altar Flower donation. This request will be printed in the bulletin.

For example, it could be given in memory of a person who has gone before us, for a wedding anniversary, baptismal birthday or a birthday celebration, etc. **This recognition has a suggested donation of \$75.**

• **A General Donation to the Altar Flower Fund** enables Bethany to have flowers in worship and for our shut-in and hospitalized members to receive flowers from our flower ministry team, even when no one has ordered flowers for specific purposes on Sunday. **This General Donation is for any amount you wish to give.**

\*If you are making a **Special Request with Recognition**, please use this form to let us know of your donation **for a specific Sunday date** and what the significance of that donation is towards. **IMPORTANT:** Please complete this form at least **2 weeks prior** to that date, so that information regarding your donation can be printed in the Sunday bulletin for the date requested.

Sign up to donate to Bethany's Altar Flower Fund, please use this URL:

**<https://bit.ly/BLCAltarFlowers>**



Or scan Bethany's Flower Fund QR code to the right: