

BETHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

"You have a place here! Joyfully we profess our faith through God's unconditional love. Here and now God dwells in all of our lives, bears our sins on the cross, and forgives us all."

TODAY WE CELEBRATE THE FIRST SUNDAY IN CHRISTMAS

9:00 am on Sunday, December 27, 2020

Holy Communion Worship, *Pastor Dave Johnson, presiding*



The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

ALL ARE WELCOME

The family of Bethany hopes that your worship experience is spiritually fulfilling and your day begins with our Lord's gifts of peace and joy.

As Christians of the Reformation tradition, we believe that the Sacrament of the Altar is the Real Presence of Christ's body and blood, instituted by Christ Himself as a sign of unity. All baptized and confessing believers are welcome to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion. For those who are worshipping online at home, communion kits may be picked up in the parking lot at Bethany on Saturdays between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. and on Sundays between 8 and 8:30 a.m.

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR PENTECOST SEASON

Minister/Leaders speak regular print—Congregation speaks bold print

THE GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

▼ **Prelude Reflections for Meditation**

▼ **Welcome and Greeting**

▼ **Prayers and Praises**

▲ **Invocation**

We gather together in the name of the Father,
the † Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

▼ **Opening Hymn**

“Joy to the World,” page 12

▲ **Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who was in the beginning,
who makes a dwelling among us,
who covers us with justice and mercy.

Amen.

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

God of goodness and lovingkindness,
we confess that we have sinned against you and our neighbors.

We have turned away from your invitation to new life.

We have turned away from the lowly and downtrodden.

**In your abundant mercy, forgive us our sins,
those we know and those known only to you,**

for the sake of the one who came to live among us, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

Hear the good news of peace and salvation!
 God forgives us all our sins,
 not through our own work,
 but through † Jesus Christ, made known to all people.
 With all who come to the manger,
 rejoice in this amazing gift of grace.
Amen.

▲ **Prayer of the Day**

Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and
 yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy,
 let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity,
 Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and
 the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

THE WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song

▼ **God's Word from the Scriptures (NRSV)**

A reading from Isaiah 61:10-62:3

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

▼ **God's Word from the Psalms**

Let us read responsively from Psalm 148

¹Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!

²**Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!**

³Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!

⁴**Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!**

⁵Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.

⁶**He established them forever and ever;**

he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

⁷Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,

⁸**fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!**

⁹Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!

¹⁰**Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!**

¹¹Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!

¹²**Young men and women alike, old and young together!**

¹³Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted;

his glory is above earth and heaven.

¹⁴**He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the Lord!**

▼ **God's Word from the Scriptures (NRSV)**

A reading from Galatians 4:4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

God's Word from the Gospel (NRSV)

▲ The Holy Gospel according to Luke 1:26-38
Glory to you, O Lord.

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too." There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

▼ *Sermon—God’s Word Applied to Life*

▼ *Hymn of the Day*

“Silent Night,” page 16

▲ *The Apostles’ Creed*

**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 Intercession*

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church,
 the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Night and day, all creation praises you, O God. Strengthen your church across
 nations, denominations, and traditions. Fill us with wisdom and unify our
 proclamation of your forgiveness and mercy.
 Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

All creation is holy to you, O God. You cause the earth to bring forth its shoots and gardens to spring up. Protect hibernating animals and frozen lands that wait earnestly for longer days of awakening and growth.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The nations are upheld by your hand, O God. Cause righteousness and praise to spring forth, inspiring leaders to serve with compassion and integrity.

Send your spirit of discernment upon legislators grappling with complex decisions for the sake of the common good.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Send the spirit of your Son into our hearts, O God. Come quickly to hearts that race with fear, hearts that break with grief, and hearts that long for wholeness.

Reveal your power to heal to *the family of Donna Anderson, Jim Trudeau, Lorrie Walters, Ruby Burrus, Arlene, Pam Nelson, Joy, Montee, Tim, Barbara, and Ava Johnson Mitchell. We pray for those who are having difficulties with being shut in for months because of COVID -19; those who received prayer shawls and are in need of comfort; and those who requested special prayers through our website.*

Hear now these other prayers that we offer aloud or in silence.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Adopt us into your family, O God. Bless our elders with the peace and joy of Simeon and Anna. Strengthen those who have retired, those who work in older age, and those in need of income, food, company, or health care.

Connect young and old across generations.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Let us depart in peace, O God, according to your word.

For all your saints, we give you thanks.

Prepare our salvation in the sight of all your witnesses of every time and place.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

▲ **Sharing of the Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

Greet each other with love and the sign of Christ's peace.

THE MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

▲ **Offering and Presentation of the Gifts**

October—December Mission ~ Adopt-A-Family

▲ **The Great Thanksgiving and Words of Institution**

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, 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.

▲ **The 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.**

▲ **Invitation To Communion**

Even as we watch and wait, Christ is here.
Come, eat and drink.

Distribution of Communion

▲ **Post Communion Blessing**

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
strengthen you and keep you in His grace until He comes again.
In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

Gracious and abundant God,
you have done great things for us, and we rejoice.
In this bread and cup you give us life forever.
In your boundless mercy, strengthen us
and open our hearts to the world's needs,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

THE SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

▲ **Hymn of Sending**

Go Tell It On The Mountain, Page 12

▲ **Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you.
 The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
 The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.
 In the name of the Father and the † Son and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

▼ **Announcements**

Anyone is welcome to announce upcoming events or share thoughts of interest.

▼ **Dismissal**

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.
Thanks be to God.

Altar Flowers

*are given to the Glory of God by Gerry Nickels
 and
 in memory of parents Lois and Lawrence Giuliani
 by daughter Debbie and Greg Vargo*

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Announcements and Upcoming Events

Bethany's Annual Meeting will be held on the internet on Saturday, January 30 at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom. A link to the meeting will be sent to everyone in the congregation who has an e-mail list. Committee reports are due in the church office on January 8 so that the annual report can be created.

Bethany Needs YOU! Through term limits and resignations, Bethany Council will be in need of four new members to serve beginning in January. Please prayerfully consider serving Bethany as a Council member. If you have ideas for our church, would like to have input on church matters, or if you are just interested in serving Bethany as a Council member, please contact Pastor Dave or any current Council member ASAP. Current members are Erv Sparapani, Mike Randall, Ray Anderson, Vicki Underhill and Sally Borga. As we look to the future and what that may look like for our church, we would like to do so with a full Council. Again, please consider helping lead Bethany into the future.

Bethany is offering an online Women's Bible Study via Zoom, meeting every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. resuming on January 6 after a Christmas break. Call or e-mail the church office to receive more information and the Zoom link to the discussion group.

Two weekly events at Bethany are open to members and friends: **Community Coffee** at 9 a.m. every Tuesday and **The Men's Breakfast and Bible Study** at 7 a.m. every Thursday. The Men's Breakfast/Study will not meet on December 31.

Social Night returns January 5, meeting biweekly online on Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. Details coming soon.

Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Office Hours: 9:00 a.m.—12 noon, Monday and Thursday, and by appointment.

Tuesday and Wednesday: by appointment.

Lori Ward, Secretary

Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
 Let earth receive her king;
 let ev'ry heart prepare him room
 and heav'n and nature sing,
 and heav'n and nature sing,
 and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

He rules the world with truth and grace
 and makes the nations prove
 the glories of his righteousness
 and wonders of his love,
 and wonders of his love,
 and wonders, wonders of his love.

Silent Night

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
 round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
 sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
 glories stream from heaven afar, heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!
 Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
 radiant beams from your holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
 Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

Go Tell It On the Mountain

Refrain

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;
 go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
 behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. *Refrain*

Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;
 and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*