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."

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
9:00 am Sunday, November 29, 2026

Pastor David Johnson



TODAYS REFLECTION

Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

All baptized and confessing believers are welcome to receive Holy Communion.

THE GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

We hope that your worship experience is spiritually fulfilling and your day begins with our Lord's gifts of peace and joy

▼ ***Prelude Reflections for Meditation***

▼ ***Welcome Greeting—Prayers and Praises***

The Candle of Hope

Pastor: Today we light the first candle of the Advent wreath, the Candle of Hope. We light it to remind us that God keeps His promises. In a world often darkened by suffering and fear, we wait with expectant hearts for the coming of the Messiah.

Congregation: We place our hope in the Lord, for He is our help and our shield.

Pastor: A reading from the Prophet Isaiah Chapter 9, verse2

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined."

Prayer: God of hope, **come to us today. Wake us up from our spiritual slumber and open our eyes to Your presence. As we light this candle, let its flame remind us that Your light always overcomes the darkness. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

▲ ***Opening Hymn***

"My Lord What a Morning" page 9

▲ ***Confession & Forgiveness***

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who calls out to the weary,
whose word endures forever. **Amen.**

A voice cries out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord!"
We are called to confess our sin and turn back toward God's love.

Silence for reflection.

Comforting God,
we are your people, but we have neglected to call on your name.
We are your people, but we have not remembered your ways.
We are your people, but we have forgotten your hold on us.
We are your people, but now we fade like a leaf,
and our sins, like the wind, take us away.
Restore us as your people. Cleanse us from our sin, and clothe us in your righteousness. Amen.

"Comfort, comfort my people!" says your God,
who has clothed you with the garments of salvation
and wrapped you in the robe of righteousness.
God has given you a mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
In the name of ☩ Christ, your sins are forgiven:
Rejoice in the Lord!
Rejoice in the Lord!
Amen.

▲ ***Prayer of the Day***

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. **By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father 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 (NRSVUE)***

The First Reading is from Isaiah 64:1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence—as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down; the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.

You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

There is no one who calls on your name or attempts to take hold of you, for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

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

▼ ***God's Word from the Psalms (NRSVUE)***

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, **you who lead Joseph like a flock!**
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, **shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.**
Stir up your might, **and come to save us!**
Restore us, O God; **let your face shine, that we may be saved.**
O Lord God of hosts, **how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?**
You have fed them with the bread of tears **and given them tears to drink in full measure.**
You make us the scorn of our neighbors; **our enemies laugh among themselves.**
Restore us, O God of hosts; **let your face shine, that we may be saved.**
But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, **the one whom you made strong for yourself.**
Then we will never turn back from you; **give us life, and we will call on your name.**
Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; **let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

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

The Second Reading is from 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— so that you are not lacking in any gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the partnership of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

▼ ***Children's Sermon***

▲ ***God's Word from the Gospel (NRSVUE)***

The Holy Gospel according to Mark 13:24-37

Glory to you, O Lord.

"But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

"Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels and gather the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

"But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

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

▼ ***Sermon—God's Word Applied to Life***

▼ ***Hymn of the Day***

"Oh Come, Oh Come Emmanuel" page 10

▲ **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 the Church***

In hope and expectation, we bring to God our prayers for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Strengthen your church in this season of anticipation. Nourish all people who gather around word and water, bread and cup. Reassure any whose faith feels dry that you are always near. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Come and restore the earth. Give rest to weary lands and renewed life to species at risk. Make us wise stewards of the places we call home. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Bring peace among all nations and communities. Embolden leaders to seek creative and sustainable resolutions to war and conflict. Show us new possibilities in places where peace has been elusive. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Sustain all who are heavy with weariness, grief, illness, or worry (*especially those we name before you now*). Comfort families who are estranged from one another and any who are separated from loved ones. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Inspire liturgists, preachers, musicians, and all who lead our worship and prayer. May we be prepared as we await Christ's coming this Advent season. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

You embrace all the saints from the far reaches of the earth. We remember with care all who have died and now abide in their eternal home. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

We entrust these and the prayers of our hearts to you, most holy God, in the name of Christ Jesus our Savior. **Amen.**

▲ ***Sharing of the Peace***

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.
Greet each other with a sign of Christ's peace.

THE MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

▼ ***Offering and Presentation of the Gifts***

Mission Designation October-December - **Adopt-a-Family/Senior**

▼ ***Offering Prayer***

Holy Creator,
we are the clay and you are the potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
Receive these gifts shape them and our lives for your purpose,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

▼ ***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.

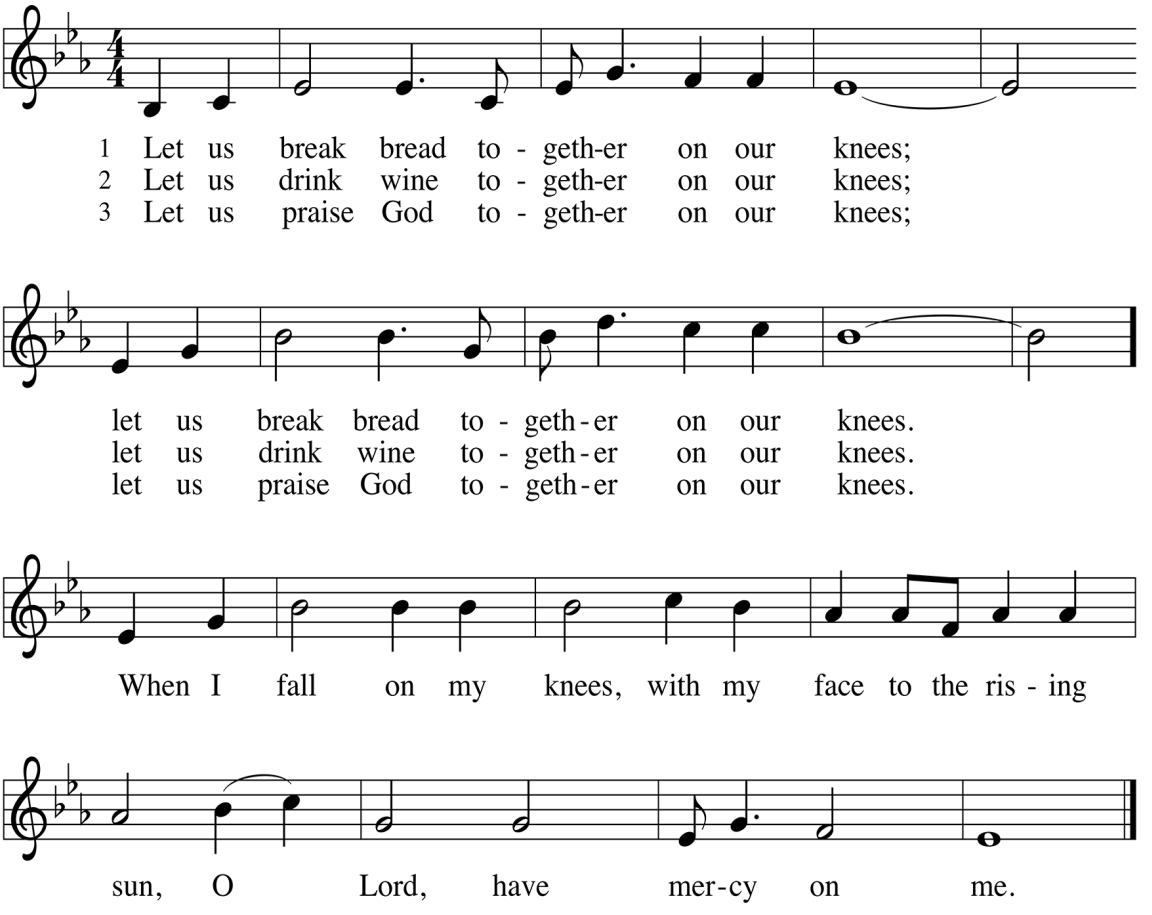
▼ *The Lord's Prayer*

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 and Distribution of Communion*

The glory of the Lord is revealed!
Come and taste God's presence.

Let Us Break Bread Together



Text: African American spiritual
Music: Break Bread Together, African American spiritual

▼ *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*

Providing God,
you feed your flock like a shepherd
and gather your people in your arms.
We praise you for the care and sustenance
you give at this meal and always.
As we leave your table, carry us near your heart,
and send us with confidence in the way
of Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

THE SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

▼ *Closing Hymn*

"Soon and Very Soon" page 11

▼ *Announcements*

Anyone is welcome to make announcements at this time

▲ *Blessing and Dismissal*

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.

Go in peace. Bring good news the brokenhearted.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

My Lord, What a Morning

Refrain



Text: African American spiritual
Music: BURLEIGH, African American spiritual

Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel



Text: *Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. John M. Neale, 1818–1866, alt.
Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.

Soon and Very Soon



Text: Andraé Crouch, b. 1945
Music: VERY SOON, Andraé Crouch
Text and music © 1976 Bud John Songs, Inc./Crouch Music, admin. EMI Christian Music Publishing

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MORE SPECIAL WAYS TO GIVE THROUGH YOUR TIME AND TALENTS

Sunday Worship Lectors and Communion Assistants are needed
Maintenance chores around the facility
Christian Education Volunteers

BETHANY WEEKLY EVENTS CALENDAR

Sunday	9:00 am Worship, in the Great Room and Facebook Live-Stream/Video
Tuesday	9:00 am Community Coffee in Great Room 9:00 am Cover Girls in Classroom
Wednesday	10:30 am Women's Bible Study via ZOOM
Thursday	7:00 am Men's Breakfast and Bible Study in Great Room 11:00 am Women's Bible Study in Conference Room 6:30 Pub Theology

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