

# **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 SECOND SUNDAY IN CHRISTMAS**

**9:00 am on Sunday, January 3, 2021**

*Holy Communion Worship, Pastor Doug Johnson, presiding*



Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

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### **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.**

##### ▲ **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 have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word.  
 By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do,  
 through Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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 Jeremiah 31:7-14

For thus says the Lord: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel." See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock." For the Lord has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and

over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the Lord.

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

▼ ***God's Word from the Psalms***

Let us read responsively from Psalm 147:12-20

<sup>12</sup>Worship the Lord, O Jerusalem;  
praise your God, O Zion,

<sup>13</sup>**who has strengthened the bars of your gates  
and has blessed your children within you.**

<sup>14</sup>God has established peace on your borders  
and satisfies you with the finest wheat.

<sup>15</sup>**God sends out a command to the earth,  
a word that runs very swiftly.**

<sup>16</sup>God gives snow like wool,  
scattering frost like ashes.

<sup>17</sup>**God scatters hail like bread crumbs.  
Who can stand against God's cold?**

<sup>18</sup>The Lord sends forth the word and melts them;  
the wind blows, and the waters flow.

<sup>19</sup>**God declares the word to Jacob,  
statutes and judgments to Israel.**

<sup>20</sup>The Lord has not done so to any other nation;  
they do not know God's judgments. Hallelujah!

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

A reading from Ephesians 1:3-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

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

**God's Word from the Gospel (NRSV)**

- ▲ The Holy Gospel according to John 1:[1-9] 10-18  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.] He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own

people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

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

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

▼ **Hymn of the Day**

*"What Child is This,"* page 12

▲ **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.*

Redeeming God, you gather together your people from the farthest parts of the  
earth. Protect your church from stumbling. Let it not be overcome  
by sorrow, division, or despair. Make us radiant with goodness,  
that we might live always to the praise of your glory.

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

You bring together heaven and earth. All creation testifies to your splendor.  
Hold the ecosystems of this earth in delicate balance, from coastlands to  
farmlands, forests to wetlands, deserts to rainforests.

Show us new ways to live in harmony with the world around us.

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

You overflow with grace upon grace.

Expand the imaginations of those who serve in positions of authority.

Open their hearts to the needs of their nations and communities.

Protect all those in harm's way and those risking danger for the sake of others.

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

You bring consolation to those who weep. Embrace those who feel far-off, excluded,  
or defeated. Accompany those living with chronic and invisible illness. Sustain the  
weak and weary. Refresh those who labor under the weight of pain or sickness  
including *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 us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You come to us in the beauty of darkness and of light.

Bring justice and reconciliation to communities divided by oppressions and misuse  
of power. Guide us to speak holy words of advocacy and truth. Help us to honor  
your image in one another.

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

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

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

You turn our mourning into joy. We give thanks for those who have died in faith.

With all the saints, give us our inheritance in Christ.

In the fullness of time, gather us all together in your mercy.

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**

▲ **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**

The Word is revealed in a manger, in simple bread and wine.  
Come meet Christ in this meal.

**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**

We give you thanks, gracious God,  
**that you have once again fed us from your very self  
with the body and blood of Christ.  
Through this mystery, send us forth  
to proclaim your promise to a world in need,  
through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior.  
Amen.**

▼ **Hymn of Sending**

*"The First Noel," 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.**

*The feast of Epiphany on January 6 concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God's glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God's love to all people.*

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## Announcements and Upcoming Events

**Social Night returns January 5, meeting at 5:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of every month.** Everyone who has an e-mail address on file with Bethany will receive a link to join the conversation and spend time together.

**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 address. **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.

### **Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church**

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Pastor Dave Johnson, phone and e-mail: 651-769-3365, [ftp565@yahoo.com](mailto:ftp565@yahoo.com)

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

Tuesday and Wednesday: by appointment.

Lori Ward, Secretary

### *What Child Is This*

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
 Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?  
 This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
 haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!  
  
 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him.  
 The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.  
 Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;  
 joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

### *The First Noel*

The first Noel the angel did say  
 was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
 in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,  
 on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

#### *Refrain*

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!  
 Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star  
 shining in the east beyond them far;  
 and to the earth it gave great light,  
 and so it continued both day and night.

#### *Refrain*