

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."*

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

9:00 am Sunday, December 8, 2024

Pastor Dave Johnson

TODAY'S REFLECTION



Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the Lord of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."

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

*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**

▲ **Opening Hymn**

“Awake, Awake, And Greet The New Morn”, page 9

▲ **Confession & Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
alive in the world, reviving creation,
arriving soon. **Amen.**

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

Silence for Reflection

God of mercy,

we confess that we have sinned.

We trust earthly powers and human authority alone.

We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.

God of might,

we confess that we have sinned.

We have turned away from our neighbors.

We have trusted false promises.

God in our midst,

confess that we have sinned.

We plead: come to us.

Bring your mercy to birth in us.

A righteous branch springs forth:

it is Christ the Lord, our Savior,

in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy.

By the power of the Holy Spirit,

receive the grace and forgiveness of God

through † Christ Jesus, whose day draws near. **Amen.**

▲ Prayer of the Day

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son.

By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; 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)

The First Reading is from Malachi 3:1-4

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

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

▼ God's Word from the Psalms (NRSV)

Luke 1:68-79

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people
and redeemed them.

**He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David,
as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,**
that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.

**Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and has remembered his holy covenant,**

the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we,
being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear,
in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

**And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the
Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.**

By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace."

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

The Second Reading is from Philippians 1:3-11

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

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

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

The Holy Gospel according to Luke 3:1-6

Glory to you, O Lord.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

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

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

▼ **Hymn of the Day**

"Prepare The Royal Highway", 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*

For the Church, the world, for one another, and for the sake of all people, let us pray to the Lord.

A brief silence

Thank you, dear Father, for your refining fire. Purge away our sin. Purify us, body and soul, heart and mind, to worship you and care for one another in the name of your Son. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Make your Church the herald of good tidings, fearless in proclaiming your Word. Through it, comfort those who are lost and afflicted by sin, sorrow, and suffering. Let your Church constantly and faithfully announce: "Behold: Here is your God!" Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Be merciful to our persecuted brothers and sisters who proclaim the name of Jesus even amidst their enemies. Make their witness shine as a light in the world's darkest places. Pierce the hearts of their tormentors with the truth of the Gospel. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless and prosper the work of this congregation: its pastors and council members, its committee members and other volunteers, and all who worship with us. Keep us steadfast in faith, fervent in worship, radiant in holiness, patient in adversity, and beautiful in our love for you and for your people. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Grant wisdom to our earthly leaders. Burn away all self-seeking, lust for power and prestige, and unjust actions. We earnestly pray that nation will no longer raise sword against nation. Guide us all in the pathways of your righteousness and peace. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

John spoke wise words to soldiers who came to him for baptism. Grant integrity, courage, and competence to our military and first responders. Use them to restore safety and justice in dangerous places. Spare them from death. Heal them in mind and body. Strengthen their families. Bring them home swiftly when their task is done. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Remove the burden of pain and sorrow from all who suffer, *especially for those we name before you now (either in silence or out loud)*. Bring them into a broad and spacious place. Let them rejoice in your goodness and give thanks for their deliverance. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father, we entrust into your never-failing care our beloved dead. Comfort those whose grief runs deep. Revive our spirits, direct our days and our deeds in your peace, and make us abound in every good work. Strengthen our hearts with the gift of your Spirit, so that we may be blameless at the coming of Jesus. And gather us, with all the redeemed, into your eternal Kingdom, where we shall rejoice in your goodness and righteousness forever. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all these things; for all we lift before you in the silence of our hearts; and for everything that you know we need, we pray in the name and power of our Lord Jesus Christ, and commend into your mighty and merciful hands. **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**

October—December Mission Designation ~ **Adopt-A-Family/Senior**

▼ **Offering Prayer**

Creator God,

you made the whole world,

even the farthest stars,

and you draw near to feed us.

We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine.

Strengthen us with this food

that we may live in expectation

for the advent of your Son, 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**

God feeds us with tender mercy.
Come to the table..

Let Us Break Bread Together



1 Let us break bread to - geth-er on our knees;
2 Let us drink wine to - geth-er on our knees;
3 Let us praise God to - geth-er on our knees;



let us break bread to - geth-er on our knees.
let us drink wine to - geth-er on our knees.
let us praise God to - geth-er on our knees.



When I fall on my knees, with my face to the ris - ing



sun, O Lord, have mer-cy on me.

Text: African American spiritual

Music: BREAL 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**

Generous God,
**we thank you for the gift of life,
 for the bread of salvation.**
**We thank you for coming among us,
 for leading us into peace.**
**We thank you for showering us with mercy,
 for sending us into the world.**
**Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us
 as we feed the hungry in your name. Amen.**

THE SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

▼ **Closing Hymn**

“Let There Be Peace On Earth”, 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. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

633 Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn

1 A - wake! a - wake, and greet the new morn, for
 2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
 3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when
 4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though

G Am⁷ G C D

an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing, Sing out your joy, for
 man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is
 all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so
 dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall

G C Am⁷ D⁷ G Am⁷

soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
 qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
 qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing,
 crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.

G C D G Am⁷ D C G

Prepare the Royal Highway



- 1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
 2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing; your own e - ter - nal king!
 3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
 4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.

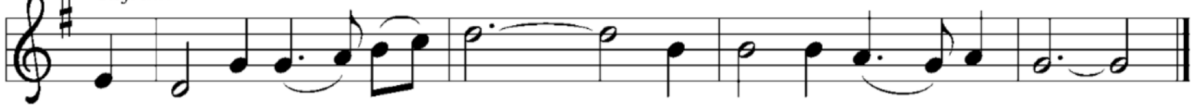


Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!
 Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
 Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.
 His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:
 God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!
 All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:
 So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:

Refrain



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

Let There Be Peace On Earth

Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me
Let there be peace on earth
The peace that was meant to be
With God as our Father
Brothers all are we
Let me walk with my brother
In perfect harmony

Let peace begin with me
Let this be the moment now
With ev'ry step I take
Let this be my solemn vow
To take each moment
And live each moment
In peace eternally
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me

CCLI Song # 93690

Jill Jackson | Sy Miller

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MORE SPECIAL WAYS TO GIVE THROUGH YOUR TIME AND TALENTS

Sunday Worship Lectors and Communion Assistants are needed

Service Assistant to advance projected bulletin slides

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	10:00 am Women's Bible Study via ZOOM
Thursday	7:00 am Men's Breakfast and Bible Study in Great Room 10:00 am Women's Bible Study in Conference Room

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