

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.”*

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

9:00 am Sunday, December 22, 2024

Pastor Dave Johnson



TODAY'S REFLECTION

Cradle and cross are inextricably connected on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Between a lovely tribute to the little town of Bethlehem and Mary’s magnificent song of praise, the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in no uncertain terms that Christ’s advent is for “the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” It is the kind of tension in which the church always lives as when in holy communion—with high delight—“we proclaim the Lord’s death.”

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**

“Lord Of All Hopefulness”, 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 your power, Lord Christ, and come.

With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, 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 (NRSV)

The First Reading is from Micah 5:2-5

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace. If the Assyrians come into our land and tread upon our soil, we will raise against them seven shepherds and eight installed as rulers.

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

▼ God's Word from the Psalms (NRSV)

Psalm 80:1-7

To the leader: on Lilies, a Covenant. Of Asaph. A Psalm.

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 neighbours; our enemies laugh among themselves.

Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

▼ God's Word from the Scriptures (NRSV)

The Second Reading is from Hebrews 10:5-10

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, "See, God, I have come to do your will, O God" (in the scroll of the book it is written of me).'

When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sin-offerings' (these are offered according to the law), then he added, 'See, I

have come to do your will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

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

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

The Holy Gospel according to Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

Glory to you, O Lord.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

[Mary's Song of Praise: And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.']

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

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

▼ **Hymn of the Day**

"Canticle Of The Turning", 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

Father, our hearts yearn for your peace, justice, mercy, and righteousness. Let them shine on our broken world and heal our sad divisions. You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, come quickly to save and heal us! Let us gaze upon the face of Jesus, and see in Him your mercy, salvation, and blessing. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Restore your Church, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that she may be saved. Fill her with your Holy Spirit. Through Word and Sacrament, bring Jesus to many who do not know him. Grant that your persecuted people, who have been fed the bread of tears because they bless the name of Jesus, may be filled with good things. Humble their tormentors, and lead them to repent of their evil. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless our children, O God, and let your face shine, that they may be saved. Help us share with them a childlike wonder and delight in the gifts of peace, mercy and joy that you give us in your Son. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Restore our congregation, O God. Let your face shine, that we may be saved. Grant that through words and deeds, we may cause many hearts to leap with joy at the close approach of their Savior. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Restore your world, O God; let your face shine, that it may be saved. Cast down the haughty from their thrones. Raise up rulers who rejoice in doing your will. Shield from harm everyone who protects us from mayhem and terror. Fill all our hearts with humility and compassion, so that the poor and hungry may be filled with good things. Remember your promise of mercy, and establish your peace among all nations, kindred, families and tribes upon earth. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Restore all who are afflicted by pain, grief, fear or despair, O God. Let your face shine, that they might be saved. *We pray especially for those we name before you now (either in silence or out loud).* Remove the cup of tears from their lips, and remember unto them your promise of mercy. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You have shone your face upon our beloved dead, O God, and have bestowed on them the fullness of your salvation. With gratitude and affection, we commend them into your care. Grant comfort to those who still eat the bread and drink the cup of tears. Feed us with the good things given by your beloved Son. As we approach the celebration of Jesus' birth, fill us with heavenly joy and peace. Bring us, with cherubim and seraphim, with the hosts of heaven, with the blessed Mother of our Lord, with the countless throngs of prophets, apostles, martyrs, saints, and with your whole new creation, before your heavenly throne. There let us rejoice in your light and love, shining upon us in the face of your Son Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **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**

“Joy To The World”, 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!

Lord of All Hopefulness



1 Lord of all hope - ful - ness, Lord of all joy,
 2 Lord of all ea - ger - ness, Lord of all faith,
 3 Lord of all kind - li - ness, Lord of all grace,
 4 Lord of all gen - tle - ness, Lord of all calm,



whose trust, ev - er child - like, no cares could de - stroy:
 whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe:
 your hands swift to wel - come, your arms to em - brace:
 whose voice is con - tent - ment, whose pres - ence is balm:



be there at our wak - ing, and give us, we pray,
 be there at our la - bors, and give us, we pray,
 be there at our hom - ing, and give us, we pray,
 be there at our sleep - ing, and give us, we pray,



your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.
 your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.
 your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.
 your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

Canticle of the Turning

Text: Rory Cooney, b. 1952, based on the Magnificat
 Music: STAR OF COUNTY DOWN, Irish traditional
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1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
 2 Though I am small, my . . . God, my all, you . . .
 3 From the halls of pow'r to the for - tress tow'r, not a
 4 Though the na - tions rage from . . age to age, we re -



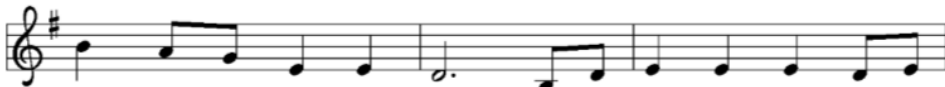
God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
 work great . . things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
 stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
 mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
 depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
 jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant . . . from his throne.
 liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
 Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
 The hun - gry poor shall . . weep no more, for the
 This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
 those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
 food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry
 prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be



name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.

Refrain

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.



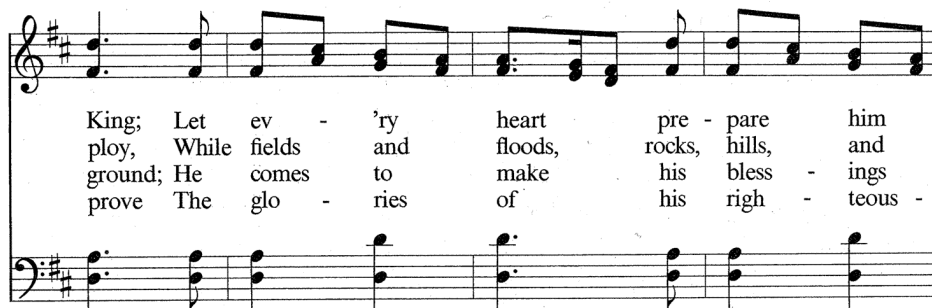
Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

Joy to the World

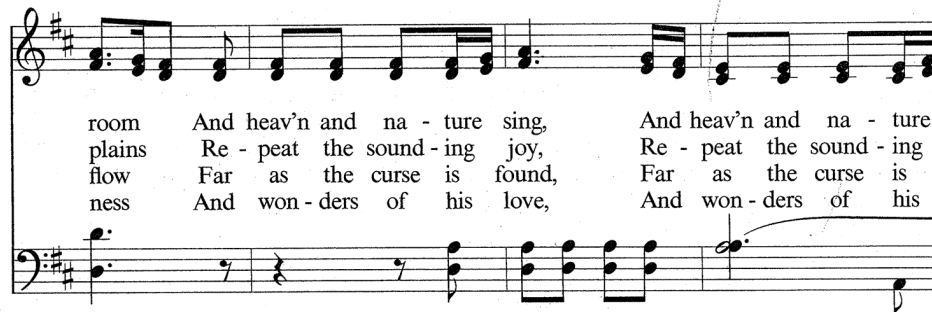
39



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive its
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their songs em -
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow Nor thorns in - fest the
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the na - tions



King; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
 ploy, While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
 ground; He comes to make his bless - ings
 prove The glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room And heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n and na - ture
 plains Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing
 flow Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is
 ness And won - ders of his love, And won - ders of his



sing, And heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, Re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, Far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, And won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church

130 O'Dill Drive, Norway, Michigan 49870 www.norwaybethany.org
OFFICE PHONE 906-563-8472 EMAIL bethanyoffice@norwaymi.com

Pastor Dave Johnson

PHONE/TEXT 651-769-3365 EMAIL ftp565@yahoo.com

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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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