

# 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."*

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## SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

9:00 am Sunday, January 5, 2025

*Pastor Dave Johnson*

### TODAY'S REFLECTION

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 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**

*“O Little Town Of Bethlehem”, (2 Verses), page 9*

▲ **Confession & Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
whose steadfast love is everlasting. **Amen.**

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

*Silence for Reflection*

God-with-us,  
**we confess that we have turned away  
those seeking shelter,  
claiming there is no room when we have plenty.  
We have made power and wealth our idols,  
while you show us true glory: a baby in a manger.  
We have overlooked the shepherds,  
expecting good news in prettier packaging.  
Too often, we have valued violence  
instead of your peace.  
Turn us from our ways to your ways.  
Grant us the grace to begin again.  
Free us from all that keeps us bound,  
and forgive our sin,  
through Jesus Christ, who gives himself for us. Amen.**

Hear the good news and rejoice!  
You are God's chosen ones,  
holy and beloved,  
† forgiven in Christ,  
and freed to respond in joy. **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)

*The First Reading is 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 labour, 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 (NRSV)

*Psalm 147:12-20*

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!

**For he strengthens the bars of your gates; he blesses your children within you.**

He grants peace within your borders; he fills you with the finest of wheat.

**He sends out his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly.**

He gives snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes.

**He hurls down hail like crumbs— who can stand before his cold?**

He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow.

**He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and ordinances to Israel.**

He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his ordinances.

**Praise the Lord!**

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

*The Second Reading is 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 towards 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**

*“In The Bleak Midwinter”, 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**

With joy and gratitude for the gift of Jesus, let us draw near to our heavenly Father in prayer, asking his mercy for the Church, the world, and all who need his loving-kindness.

*A brief silence*

Holy God, thank you for Jesus. He shares our life, and shares your life with us. He grew in wisdom and understanding, and gives us the Holy Spirit so we can, too. He takes our sin, and gives us his pure, holy grace and love. He is your unfailing Light in the darkest days and places we endure. Thank you. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your Son adorned the earthly Temple with his presence as a baby and as a growing lad. He is your Holy of Holies in our midst. Make your Church a Temple fit for his habitation. Grant that it may adorn his dear presence with faithful words, heartfelt worship, and deeds of love and mercy. May it draw all people to Jesus’ feet, there to learn from him the Good News of our salvation. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Grant to your persecuted servants your imperishable inheritance of grace, faithfulness, and endurance. Make us generous in aiding, defending, and praying for them. Turn the hearts of their adversaries away from sin and hatred, and toward you in repentance and faith. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless this congregation, so that people gladly come here to encounter you in Word and Sacrament, in fellowship, learning, and service. Make us wise in the ways of charity and faithfulness, so that all may find your precepts to be sweeter than honey. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray your favor upon this new year; upon our hopes for a better future; and upon all who find no release from the sorrows and cares of the previous years. Give us wisdom and strength to seek your will for our common good. Draw us toward that eternal New Year that you alone shall bring. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Solomon prayed for wisdom to lead your people according to your precepts. The wise men heeded your guiding and warning words. The prophets attended to your wisdom and counsel. Give that wisdom to all of our earthly rulers. Fill them with deep love for justice, mercy, wisdom, and integrity. Let all people live free from the consequences of malice, stupidity, and calamity. Crown not just this new year, but all of our years, with the blessings of your peace. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

These are perilous times, dear Lord! Guide, strengthen and protect our military and first responders. May they accomplish all that is in accordance with your will. Return them swiftly to their loved ones. Bring them healing, hope, and renewed opportunities to serve you in the world. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Be the light and salvation of everyone who calls on you in times of trouble. We plead *especially for those we name before you now (either in silence or out loud)*. Grant them health, wholeness, and hope. Ease the burdens and bless the labors of all who care for them. Refresh their spirits, and bind us all together in cords of mutual care and compassion. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

The generations rise and fall and pass before you, O Lord. We entrust our beloved dead into your merciful care. Comfort those who grieve, and whose hope falters. Give us eyes to see the suffering around us; lips to pray and encourage; hands to extend in blessing; and hearts to beat with compassion and forgiveness. Grant to all whom you have redeemed through your dear Son, a portion in the imperishable inheritance you have prepared for them. Bring us into your Kingdom, where you reign in unity with your Son and the Holy Spirit, God forever. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Thank you for hearing our prayers, dear Lord. We entrust them, and our lives, into your merciful care. **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*

January—March Mission Designation ~ **World Hunger**

#### ▼ *Offering Prayer*

God of heaven and earth  
**from the beginning, you have called forth life,  
 in which you take delight.**  
**The trees, the fields, and the seas sing for joy.**  
**Bless now these gifts, received from your bounty,  
 that we may join the chorus of creation  
 to tell of your salvation from day to day. 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**

A child has been born for us, a Son given to us.

Come, receive the gift of Jesus.

### Let Us Break Bread Together



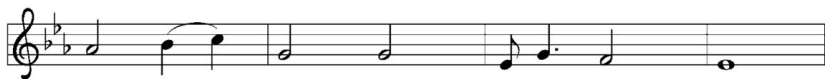
1 Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees;  
2 Let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees;  
3 Let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees;



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.

▼ **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**

Merciful God,  
**we thank you for Jesus, who is our heavenly food.**  
**Strengthened by this goodness, send us forth to announce your peace,**  
**comfort the afflicted, and share the good news of great joy.**  
**Amen.**

**THE SENDING**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world*

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▼ **Closing Hymn**

*“The First Noel”, (2 Verses), 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. The Word of God dwells in you richly.  
**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**



## O Little Town of Bethlehem



O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!  
 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove  
 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!  
 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;  
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.  
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.  
 cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.  
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,  
 No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,  
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.  
 and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!  
 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.  
 oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893

Music: ST. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908

## In the Bleak Midwinter



1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,  
 2 Heav - en can - not hold him, nor . . . . earth sus - tain;  
 3 An - gels and arch - an - gels may have gath - ered there,  
 4 What . . . can I give him, poor . . . as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;  
 heav'n and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign;  
 cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim throng - ed the air;  
 If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed  
 but his moth - er on - ly, in her maid - en bliss,  
 if I were a wise man I would do my part;



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.  
 the Lord . . . . God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.  
 wor - shiped the Be - lov - ed with a kiss.  
 yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

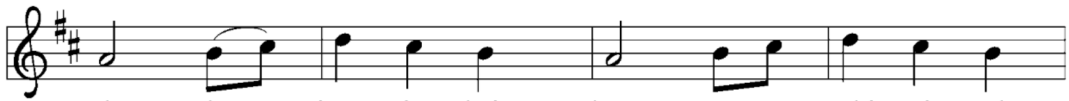
## The First Noel



1 The first No - el the an - gel did say was to  
 2 They look - ed up and saw . . . a star shin - ing  
 3 And by the light of that . . . same star three . .  
 4 This star drew near to the . . . north - west, o'er . .  
 5 Then en - tered in those wise . . . men three, full . .



cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where  
 in . . . the east . . . be - yond . . . them far; and to the  
 wise . . . men came . . . from coun - try far; to seek for a  
 Beth - le - hem . . . it took . . . its rest; and there it  
 rev - 'rent - ly . . . up - on . . . their knee, and of - fered



they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's  
 earth it gave . . . great light, and . . . so it con -  
 king was their . . . in - tent, and to fol - low the  
 did both stop . . . and stay right . . . o - ver the  
 there in his . . . pres - ence their . . . gold, . . . and

*Refrain*

night that was so deep.  
 tin - ued both day and night.  
 star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -  
 place where Je - sus lay.  
 myrrh, and frank - in - cense.



el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

## Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church

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are available following these easy steps from our secure Website or Facebook Page

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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

<b>Sunday</b>	9:00 am Worship, in the Great Room and Facebook Live-Stream/Video
<b>Tuesday</b>	9:00 am Community Coffee in Great Room 9:00 am Cover Girls in Classroom
<b>Wednesday</b>	10:00 am Women's Bible Study via ZOOM
<b>Thursday</b>	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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