

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 CHRISTMAS

9:00 am Sunday, January 4, 2026

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.

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**

"Arise, Your Light Has Come" page 9

▲ **Confession & Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty Savior,
Prince of Peace. **Amen.**

Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness,
let us confess our sin.

Silence for Reflection

Reconciling God,
**we yearn for your presence to transform
our grief, pain, and despair.**

**We confess that we have not always prepared
room in our hearts for your love;
we have not always recognized
your presence among us;**

we have not always embraced your message of peace.

**We cry out, weary with the burden of violence,
oppression, and fear.**

**We confess our failure to make room
for those seeking refuge;
our participation in violent systems
that harm your innocent ones;**

our reluctance to embody your good news.

Be born in us today

and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation. Amen.

God's grace upon grace flows over you. † Christ's presence redeems the whole creation.
Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad! **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 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 where 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 does 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

Extol 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 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 1:1-18

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 overtake 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 the only Son, himself God, 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** “Be Thou My Vision”, 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**

Let us pray that the light of Christ may shine upon the Church, the world, and all people according to their need.

A brief silence

Heavenly Father, thank you for the Light of the World, your dear Son Jesus! Thank you for revealing your mercy and loving-kindness to all people. Thank you that he reveals you as the God of every kindred, nation, and tribe, until the world ends and Christ is all in all. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Make your Church a faithful steward of the mysteries of Christ. Fill your pastors with wisdom, holiness, and faithfulness. May the Church’s worship, fellowship, and acts of charity be as frankincense, gold, and myrrh offered to her infant Redeemer. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Make this congregation a place where even sinners, strangers, and Gentiles encounter the living Christ. Shape us into “magi” who eagerly seek, study, and worship Jesus. And send us home “by a different way” – as his disciples, and as his sisters and brothers. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Protect and bless your Church wherever it suffers from malice, persecution, and scorn. Give even to its enemies a teachable heart and questioning mind, so your goodness, holiness, justice, and mercy may touch and transform them. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray on behalf of scholars, teachers, scientists, philosophers, and especially seminary professors and students. Increase their numbers and their zeal for seeking your truth! Give them grace to adore you, the source of truth and wisdom. And give them generous hearts, to freely share their wisdom, knowledge, curiosity, and faith. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Put your Spirit upon the leaders of this and every nation, that they may faithfully bring forth and establish justice throughout the world. Give them the wisdom and the will to rightly protect and provide for their people. And grant peace and blessing to all in this new year. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

6 We lift before you everyone charged with protecting life and liberty. Grant them such integrity and courage that those whose lives are most in danger may call on them with confidence. Bring them safely home to their loved ones, and heal those who are wounded in body, mind or soul. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bring the light of Christ to everyone who dwells in the shadows of suffering, sin or sorrow, *especially for those we name before you now (either in silence or out loud).* Give competence, compassion, and patience to everyone charged with their care; and grant health and hope according to your merciful wisdom. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We thank you for the lives of all your faithful servants who through word and example have been stewards of your Gospel. Give to us wisdom and devotion, so that we seek your will throughout our earthly life; and give us the strength and the means to do it. And, in your good time, lead us “by another way” to the eternal home and inheritance you have prepared for all who are redeemed by your beloved Son. For there, we will adore your glorious wisdom and delight in your merciful love in the power of your Holy Spirit forever. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All these things, and whatever else you see that we need, grant to us, dear Father, for the sake of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. **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 glory,

great are your wonders among us

and many are the blessings you bestow.

**Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world,
that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace,
through Christ our Savior. 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 is now in flesh appearing.
Come to the feast of joy!

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**

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table.
**May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts
the mystery of your presence.**
**Move us to discover the wonders of your love
in the everyday moments of our lives,
through Christ born in us.**
Amen.

THE SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

▼ **Closing Hymn**

“Go Light Your 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.

Glory to God in the highest!
And peace to God’s people on earth!
Go in joy. Embody God’s redeeming grace.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

Arise, Your Light Has Come!

1 A - rise, your light has come! The Spir - it's call o - bey;
 2 A - rise, your light has come! Fling wide the pris - on door;
 3 A - rise, your light has come! All you in sor - row born,
 4 A - rise, your light has come! The moun - tains burst in song!

show forth the glo - ry of your God which shines on you to - day.
 pro - claim the cap - tive's lib - er - ty, good tid - ings to the poor.
 bind up the bro - ken - heart - ed ones and com - fort those who mourn.
 Rise up like ea - gles on the wing, God's pow'r will make us strong.

Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947

Music: FESTAL SONG, William H. Walter, 1825–1893

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Be Thou My Vision



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
 3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,
 4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.
 thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:
 may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,
 Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,
 thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
 great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

Go, Light Your World

Words and Music by
CHRIS RICE



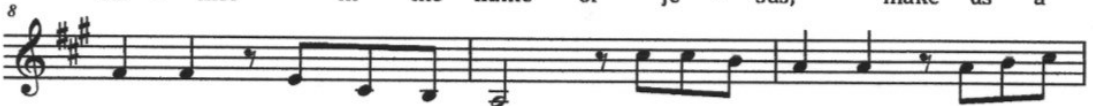
There is a can - dle in ev - 'ry soul, — some burn - ing
Frus - tra - ted broth - er; see how he's tried to light his own
We are a fam - 'ly whose hearts are blaz - ing: let's raise our



bright - ly, some dark and cold. — There is a
can - dle some oth - er way? — See now your
can - dles, light up the sky. — Pray to your



Spir - it who — brings a fire, — ig - nites a
sis - ter she's been robbed and lied — to, still holds a
Fa - ther in the name of Je - sus; make us a



can - dle, and makes His home. Car - ry your can - dle, run to the
can - dle with - out a flame.
bea - con in dark - est times!



dark - ness; seek out the hope - less, con - fused and torn. — Hold out your



can - dle for all to see it; take your can - dle, and go, light your



world. Take your can - dle, and go light your world.

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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 11:00 am Crossroad's Bible Study For ALL in Conference Room |

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