



**CHRISTMAS EVE**

# BETHEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | York, Nebraska

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*December 24, 2021*

## WELCOME TO WORSHIP

We are pleased that you have chosen to worship the Lord with us today. Large print hymnals and hearing assist devices are available upon request. Restrooms are located on the north side of the main level and in the lower level. If you have any questions or need assistance with anything please ask one of our ushers.

**Connection cards:** Visitors, or members with contact information changes, please fill out our online connection card at [bethelyork.com](http://bethelyork.com), member connect tab, or scan this code.



## SERVICE NOTES FOR THIS SUNDAY

### Worship Materials

The order of service and the hymns for today are printed for you in this folder. It is also in "Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal" which is in the hymnal rack on the back of each pew. Watching the theme and passage on the screen may help you prepare for worship.

## SERVING IN WORSHIP

**Worship Leader**

Pastor Mark A. Haefner

**Pianist/Organist**

**Reader**

Mr. Noah Worster

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# CHRISTMAS EVE

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*A special service of word and praise in honor of the birth of our Savior, Jesus.*

## OPENING HYMN

*On Christmas Night | 338*

1 On Christmas night all Christians sing  
To hear the news the angels bring;  
On Christmas night all Christians sing  
To hear the news the angels bring,  
News of great joy, news of great mirth,  
News of our merciful King's birth.

2 When sin departs before your grace,  
Then life and health come in its place.  
When sin departs before your grace,  
Then life and health come in its place.  
Angels and saints with joy may sing  
All for to see the newborn King.

3 From out of darkness we have light  
Which made the angels sing this night.  
From out of darkness we have light  
Which made the angels sing this night:  
"Glory to God and peace to men  
Now and forevermore, Amen."

*Stand*

## EXHORTATION AND PRAYER

**M** Beloved in the Lord: In this Christmas season it is our duty and delight to hear again the message of the angels and, in heart and mind, to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us, the Christ-child, lying in a manger.

Let us read and learn in Holy Scripture the history of the loving purposes of God from the first days after our fall to the birth and glorious redemption brought to us by this Holy Child. Let us hear how peace was lost, and how peace is restored.

But first, let us pray, for this is good and right.

Heavenly Father, we pray for ourselves and all people who worship you and your Son this holy night. By your holy Word, lead us to say with the angels,

**C Glory to God in the highest!**

**M** We pray for your blessing upon the people of our city, our state, our nation, and our world.

**C Glory to God in the highest!**

**M** We pray for the poor and helpless, the cold and hungry, the sick and sad, that you would give them the joy of your salvation and the comfort of your presence.

**C Glory to God in the highest!**

**M** We pray for unbelievers and enemies of the Church, that through your Law and Gospel you would lead them to recognize your Son as their only hope for eternal life.

**C Glory to God in the highest!**

**M** Finally, we remember before you all those who rejoice with us in heaven, who live in greater light and beauty than we, that multitude which no one can number, who died in faith, and now praise you in your heavenly temple. We confess that we are united with them and with one another.

**C Glory to God in the highest!**

**M** We humbly offer up these prayers and praises in the words of Christ himself.

**C** **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**

## **NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS**

### **A PROMISED CHILD**

#### **FIRST LESSON**

*Genesis 3:8-15*

*Humanity's separation from God dates to the beginning of time, to the fall into sin by the first humans, Adam and Eve. As tragic as this was, the account ends with God's promise of rescue—that the woman's offspring, Christ, would ultimately defeat Satan, and the rule of sin and death.*

<sup>8</sup> Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

<sup>10</sup> He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

<sup>11</sup> And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

<sup>12</sup> The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

<sup>14</sup> So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.

<sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

**M** The Word of the Lord

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

*Old Testament believers from the centuries before Jesus was born and 21st century believers looking forward to his second coming have something in common. We plead for his presence, rescue, and redemption.*

#### **HYMN**

*What Hope! An Eden Prophesied* | **304**

1 What hope! An Eden prophesied Where tame live with the wild;  
The lamb and lion side by side, Led by a little child!

2 A shoot will sprout from Jesse's stem, A branch from David's line,  
A Prince of Peace in Bethlehem: The fruit of God's design.

3 As banner of God's love unfurled, Christ came to suffer loss,  
That by His death a dying world Would rally to the cross.

4 Come, Jesus, come, Messiah Lord, Lost Paradise restore;  
Lead past the angel's flaming sword -- Come, open heaven's door.

### **A CHILD WHO IS THE WONDERFUL, MIGHTY, EVERLASTING KING**

#### **SECOND LESSON**

Isaiah 9:2,6,7

*In love God promised a rescue already to Adam and Eve. Through the prophets he repeated that promise many times over centuries before the birth of Jesus.*

<sup>2</sup> The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

<sup>6</sup> For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup> Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.  
He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.  
The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

**M** The Word of the Lord

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

*This child is both God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and man, born of the Virgin Mary. He is the one whose hands set each star in place, now clinging to his mother's breast. What a glorious mystery!*

#### **HYMN**

*Joy Has Dawned* | **352**

1 Joy has dawned up - on the world, prom - ised from cre - a - tion—  
 2 Sounds of won - der fill the sky with the songs of an - gels  
 3 Shep - herds bow be - fore the Lamb, gaz - ing at the glo - ry.

God's sal - va - tion now un - furled, hope for ev - 'ry na - tion.  
 as the might - y Prince of life shel - ters in a sta - ble.  
 Gifts of men from dis - tant lands proph - e - sy the sto - ry:

Not with fan - fares from a - bove, not with scenes of glo - ry,  
 Hands that set each star in place, shaped the earth in dark - ness,  
 gold— a king is born to - day; in - cense—God is with us;

but a hum - ble gift of love— Je - sus born of Mar - y.  
 cling now to a moth - er's breast, vul - n'ra - ble and help - less.  
 myrrh— his death will make a way, and by his blood he'll win us.

Text and music: Keith Getty, b. 1974; Stuart Townend, b. 1963; alternate setting: arr. Kristin Campbell

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4 Son of Adam, Son of Heav'n, given as a ransom;  
 Reconciling God and man, Christ, our mighty champion!  
 What a Savior! What a friend! What a glorious myst'ry  
 Once a babe in Bethlehem, not the Lord of hist'ry

## A CHILD WHOSE BIRTHPLACE WAS FORETOLD

### THIRD LESSON

Micah 5:2-4

*Old Testament prophecies included unexpected details, such as the exact tiny village where Jesus would be born—and the expansion of his impact “to the ends of the earth.” This wonder of fulfilled prophecy continues to validate the story of God’s love even today.*

<sup>2</sup> “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
though you are small among the clans of Judah,  
out of you will come for me  
one who will be ruler over Israel,  
whose origins are from of old,  
from ancient times.”

<sup>3</sup> Therefore Israel will be abandoned  
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,  
and the rest of his brothers return  
to join the Israelites.

<sup>4</sup> He will stand and shepherd his flock  
in the strength of the Lord,  
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.  
And they will live securely, for then his greatness  
will reach to the ends of the earth.

**M** The Word of the Lord

**C** Thanks be to God.

### HYMN

*O Little Town of Bethlehem* | 333

1 O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep And dreamless sleep The silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears Of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

2 For Christ is born of Mary, And, gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, The angels keep Their watch of wond’ring love.  
O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing To God the King And peace to all the earth.

3 How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts To human hearts The blessings of his heav'n.  
No ear may hear his coming, But in this world of sin  
Where meek souls will Receive him still, The dear Christ enters in.

4 O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin And enter in; Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;  
Oh, come to us, Abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

### **A CHILD BORN OF A VIRGIN**

#### **FOURTH LESSON**

Luke 1:26-38

*God could have initiated the climax of his plan in some stunning manner. But he chooses a humble virgin. Along with Mary we might say, "Why?" And along with Mary we humbly accept God's plan and marvel at it.*

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

<sup>34</sup> "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup> The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail."

<sup>38</sup> "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

**M** The Word of the Lord

**C** Thanks be to God.

## HYMN

*We Praise You, Jesus, at Your Birth* | 359 v. 1, 2, 3, 7

*This less familiar hymn was written by Martin Luther." The Christmas story is full of paradoxes. For example, the king of the universe is born of a humble virgin. Note the many paradoxes in this hymn.*

1. We praise You, Jesus, at Your birth;  
Clothed in flesh You came to earth.  
The virgin bears a sinless boy  
And all the angels sing for joy.  
Alleluia!
  
2. Now in the manger we may see  
God's Son from eternity,  
The gift from God's eternal throne  
Here clothed in our poor flesh and bone.  
Alleluia!
  
3. The virgin Mary's lullaby  
Calms the infant Lord Most High.  
Upon her lap content is He  
Who keeps the earth and sky and sea.  
Alleluia!
  
7. All this for us our God has done  
Granting love through His own Son.  
Therefore, all Christendom, rejoice  
And sing His praise with endless voice.  
Alleluia!

### **A CHILD WITH A CARING STEPFATHER**

## FIFTH LESSON

Matthew 1:18-25

*The wonder of fulfilled prophecy is valuable for Joseph . . . and for us. The many fulfilled prophecies are one way that God demonstrates the truth of his Word.*

<sup>18</sup> This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.<sup>19</sup> Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.<sup>20</sup> But after

he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”). <sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. <sup>25</sup> But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

**M** The Word of the Lord

**C** Thanks be to God.

## HYMN

*Once In Royal David's City* | **343**

*Imagine Joseph's confusion! And yet God's love for him—and angelic intervention—enabled him to believe that this child is the Lord in heaven above. He had come to lead his children to the place where he is gone. There, with Joseph, we will see him.*

1 Once in royal David's city  
Stood a lowly cattle shed,  
Where a mother laid her baby  
In a manger for his bed;  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.

2 He came down to earth from heaven  
Who is God and Lord of all,  
And his shelter was a stable,  
And his cradle was a stall;  
With the poor and mean and lowly  
Lived on earth our Savior holy.

3 But our eyes at last shall see him  
Through his own redeeming love,  
For that child, so dear and gentle,  
Is our Lord in heav'n above,  
As he leads his children on  
To the place where he is gone.

4 Not in that poor, lowly stable  
With the oxen standing by  
Shall we see him, but in heaven,  
Set at God's right hand on high.  
Then like stars his children crowned,  
All in white, his praise will sound.

## THE CHILD'S BIRTH

### SIXTH LESSON

Luke 2:1-20

*We hear the good news of the birth of the child who is the one promised to Adam and Eve, the son of David, the Savior. His birth is good news that brings great joy to all people.*

<sup>1</sup>In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup>(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup>And everyone went to his own town to register.

<sup>4</sup>So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup>He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup>and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

### HYMN

*What Child Is This* | 344

1 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!

2 Why lies he in such mean estate  
Where oxen now are feeding?  
Good Christians, fear; For sinners here  
The silent Word is pleading.  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through;  
The cross he'll bear for me, for you.  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,  
The babe, the Son of Mary!

3 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!

*Luke 2:8-20*

<sup>8</sup>And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup>An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup>Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup>Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

<sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

<sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

<sup>17</sup>When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

## **HYMN**

*A Glory Fills the Midnight Sky* | **357**

A glory fills the midnight sky  
and splendors blaze abroad,  
a herald sent from God on high,  
the angel of the Lord;  
the shepherds tremble at his voice  
and terror-struck are dumb,  
but at his news let earth rejoice,  
her promised King has come.

This homeless child to shepherds shown,  
an infant king new-born,  
has come to make a cross his throne,  
his crown a crown of thorn;  
the Son of God to save us all,  
to bear our earthly pains,  
this child within the cattle-stall  
as King of glory reigns!

### **A CHILD WHO MAKES US CHILDREN OF GOD**

#### **SEVENTH LESSON**

*Galatians 4:4-7*

*We become God's children through faith—that is, by trusting in God's rescue plan which cancels the alienation caused by our rebellion.*

<sup>4</sup>But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son to be born of a woman, so that he would be born under the law, <sup>5</sup>in order to redeem those under the law, so that we would be adopted as sons. <sup>6</sup>And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts to shout, "Abba, Father!" <sup>7</sup>So you are no longer a slave, but a son. And if you are a son, then you are also an heir of God through Christ.

**M** The Word of the Lord

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

#### **OFFERING HYMN**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing | **350**

*We join the Angels in singing "Glory to the newborn King" as our offerings are presented to the Lord.*

1 Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all you nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies;  
With th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Refrain:  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail th' incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel!

Refrain

3 Hail, the heav'nly Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings, Ris'n with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by, Born that we no more may die,  
Born to raise us from the earth, Born to give us second birth.  
Refrain

## CANDLE LIGHTING

*During the singing of "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" acolytes will light their candles from the Christ Candle. They will proceed down the center aisle so that you may light your candles from theirs. Please keep lighted candles upright, tipping only unlighted candles to receive the flame from lighted ones.*

*Stand*

## CLOSING PRAYER

**M** O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your only Son, Jesus Christ; grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, so may we also behold him with sure confidence when he shall come to be our judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen.**

## BLESSING

**M** May he who by his incarnation gathered things earthly and heavenly into one, fill us with such joy that comes with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life.

And the blessing of God Almighty  
— the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit —  
be upon you and remain with you always.

**C** **Amen.**

## CLOSING HYMN

*Silent Night* | **337**

1 Silent night! Holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright,  
Round yon virgin mother and child.  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,

Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

2 Silent night! Holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight.  
Glories stream from heaven afar;  
Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia;  
Christ, the Savior, is born!  
Christ, the Savior, is born!

3 Silent night! Holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

