



# Welcome to Bethlehem Lutheran Church

God's family working together to welcome all.



**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent  
December 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>**

W8267 Hwy 33 East,  
Portage, Wisconsin 53901

Pastor Jaime Benson

Office: 608-742-8502

[www.bethlehemLCportage.org](http://www.bethlehemLCportage.org)

Church Office Hours:

Mon-Fri 8 am to 11 am  
or by appointment

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**Holy Communion** is celebrated each week; all people of God are welcome. We offer it two ways: prepacked and communion at the altar. You can pick up the prefilled communion cup on your way into the sanctuary or ask the usher for it at communion time. It has a wafer, which you open first by lifting the clear cellophane on top and then the grape juice. If you would like a **gluten free wafer**, please let the usher know before the start of worship. We also offer communion at the altar for those that wish to come up. Please fill out a Communion Card found in the pew racks and give it to the usher when you come up for communion.

**Children's Worship Activity Bags** are available in the Narthex with activities for your children, please help yourself. You can place the used activity bags in the basket located beneath the activity bag tree as you leave. We have a **Cry Room** for your comfort where you can hear and see the service.

**Hearing assistance devices** are available on the counter in the Narthex for your convenience. Please ask the greeter or usher for help.

**Large print copies of the bulletin** are available in the Narthex.

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*Enter to praise*

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*We invite those who are able to stand each time this symbol ❖ appears in the bulletin.*

❖ ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING #240, v. 2 “Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah”

Blessed are you, God of hope, for you promise to bring forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse who will bring justice to the poor, who will deliver the needy and crush the oppressor, who will stand as a signal of hope for all people. As we light these candles, turn our wills to bear the fruit of repentance, transform our hearts to live in justice and harmony with one another, and fix our eyes on the root of Jesse, Jesus Christ, the hope of all nations. O people of hope, come, **let us rejoice in the faithfulness of the Lord. Amen.**

❖ CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation. **Amen.**

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Everlasting God, **you love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation’s bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.**

Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of ✚ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God’s covenant is eternal, and God’s blessing rests upon us all. **Amen.**

❖ GATHERING HYMN #264 V. 1-2 “Prepare the Royal Highway”

❖ GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

❖ PRAYER OF THE DAY

**Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

FIRST READING: Isaiah 40:1-11

<sup>1</sup>Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup>Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. <sup>3</sup>A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. <sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." <sup>6</sup>A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. <sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. <sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. <sup>9</sup>Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" <sup>10</sup>See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. <sup>11</sup>He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep. The Word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

<sup>1</sup>You have been gracious to your land, O LORD; you have restored the good fortune of Jacob. **<sup>2</sup>You have forgiven the iniquity of your people and blotted out all their sins.** <sup>8</sup>I will listen to what the LORD God is saying; for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to you. **<sup>9</sup>Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you, that your glory may dwell in our land.** <sup>10</sup>Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. **<sup>11</sup>Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.** <sup>12</sup>The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, and our land will yield its increase. **<sup>13</sup>Righteousness shall go before the LORD and shall prepare for God a pathway**

SECOND READING: 2 Peter 3:8-15a

<sup>8</sup>Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. <sup>11</sup>Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup>waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? <sup>13</sup>But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. <sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, while you are

waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; <sup>15a</sup>and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. The Word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

❖

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the  
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

❖ GOSPEL: Mark 1:1-8

The holy gospel according to Mark **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. <sup>2</sup>As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; <sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”

<sup>4</sup>John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN’S SERMON (SUNDAY)

SERMON

❖ SERMON HYMN

#256 “Comfort, Comfort Now My People”

❖ THE APOSTLES’ CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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**

MISSION STATEMENT

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church is a growing community where we love inclusively, welcome, serve, and thrive through our relationship with God.**

❖ THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *Pray aloud as the Spirit guides you.*

P: With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration *A brief silence.*

Send forth your faithful people with words of promise and forgiveness. Teach your church to be bold in revealing your good news in word and in deed. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Reveal your majesty in mountain peaks, flowing rivers, and blossoming wilderness roads. Heal the earth where it longs for renewal. Bring wholeness to the earth and all its creatures. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Turn the hearts of the nations toward righteousness and peace. Increase cooperation for justice between countries, commonwealths, political parties, and diplomatic leaders. In times of prosperity, direct leaders to be generous for the sake of all. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Comfort your people with tender words of love and healing. Surround all who are grieving, all who know depression or anxiety, or all who feel lonely or forgotten. Be a steadfast presence when all else feels uncertain. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Grant holy patience to all who are waiting this season especially those on our prayer list and in our hearts. Give hope to those seeking employment. Bring reassurance to people awaiting new diagnoses or treatments. Protect expectant parents. Watch with those who keep bedside vigil. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

With you a thousand years is like a day. Bless the memory of the saints from ages past and the anticipation of saints yet to be born. Inspire us to live with faith as we await your new heaven and new earth. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

P: Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy. **Amen.**

THE OFFERING

*We share our offerings for the mission of Christ through Bethlehem. Thank you for your participation in this ministry to the Glory of God!*

❖ OFFERING PRAYER

God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

...we praise your name and join their unending hymn...

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:  
 Heav- en and earth are full of your glo- ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san - na.  
 Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who  
 comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

❖ WORDS OF INSTITUTION

❖ 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 TO COMMUNION

In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together. Come, take your place at the table.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have  
 mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the  
 world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
 sin of the world; grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*You may come forward to receive communion at this time. If you prefer to celebrate communion in your pew with prepackaged elements, please let the usher know.*

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Poinsettia order forms are available in the narthex. Please return to the office by Dec. 6. The women's group will be hosting the cookie walk on Saturday December 9<sup>th</sup> starting at 9 am. Thank you to all that participated in Gifts of Bethlehem.

### ❖ BLESSING

The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit ✝ remain upon you now and forever.

### ❖ SENDING HYMN

“Angel’s We Have Heard on High”

### ❖ DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.

## **Thanks be to God.**

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“Prayer by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.”

### **This Week’s Worship Team**

Wednesday 5:30 pm 12/6

Altar Guild & Communion Assistant: Cheryl Hebel

Acolyte: Beau Grosklaus

Music: Sam

Sunday Service 9 am, 12/10

Usher: Jim Crawford

Reader: Robin Kvalo

Video Production:

Communion Assistants: Kathryn Crawford

Altar Guild: Ginny Paulson

Acolyte: Leah Haroldson

Music: Jody

Coffee: Quilters

### **Next Week’s Worship Team**

Wednesday 5:30 pm 12/13

Altar Guild & Communion Assistant: Judy Donahue

Acolyte: Claire Langan

Music: Jody

Sunday Service 9 am, 12/17

Usher: Kory Anderson

Reader: Ginny McNeal

Video Production:

Communion Assistants: Darlene Anderson

Altar Guild: Darlene Anderson

Acolyte: Hartley Bell

Music: Jody

Flowers: Steve and Ginny McNeal in honor their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

Coffee: Steve and Ginny McNeal

**Please Pray For**

**Church Prayer List:**

Family of Phyllis Bernicke  
Jim Buckley  
Shelvy Ritter  
Donn Trinrud  
Mark Teslik  
Bonnie Bender

**Our Extended Family Prayer Concerns:**

Janet Aboussleman (sister of Joan Von Haden)  
Julie Grueneberg (daughter of Diane Grueneberg)  
Carly (niece of Jeff & Kerry Melby)  
Sharon Stickford (friend of Ginny Paulson's)  
Lavern Allhiser (brother-in-law of Sandy Sween)  
Freda Manzullo (Mark Teslik's sister)  
Deb Moe & family (Sandra Sween's cousin)  
Tom Teslik (Mark Teslik's son)

**This Week:**

**Wednesday, December 6**

10:30 am Tai Chi  
5:30 pm Worship

**Friday, December 7**

10:30 am Tai Chi

**Saturday, December 9**

9 am Cookie Walk

**Sunday, December 10**

9 am Worship

**Monday, December 11**

10:30 am Tai Chi  
1 pm Card Club  
6 pm SREA

Poinsettia order forms are available in the Narthex near the bulletins. There are different options available this year, please return the form and payment to the church office. Please have the forms back to the church office by December 6<sup>th</sup>.



As Advent begins and we prepare to remember our Lord's coming into our world, the choir will be sharing their musical gifts. We will also be sharing our hearts and singing voices to those in the church and community as we go Christmas Caroling on Sunday December

17<sup>th</sup>. We will meet at the church. Join us in spreading some Christmas cheer! After worship some refreshments will be served. We are planning to depart around 12 pm and we will be caravanning to a variety of homes and care facilities. We will wrap up around 2:30 pm. Everyone is welcome including children.

**Cookie Walk**



December 9th from 9 am to noon.

We will be having our annual cookie walk. You don't have to worry about doing holiday baking this year! Purchase your box of cookies right here at Bethlehem.

Do you love to bake and want to help contribute towards the cookies? We'd love that too!

Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
W8267 Hwy 33 E  
Portage, WI 53901

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN'S

**Christmas**

SERVICE SCHEDULE  
2023

December 20th  
5:30 Blue Christmas Service

December 24th Christmas Eve  
Worship Service  
2 pm (live streaming)  
4 pm

December 27th  
No Worship

December 31st  
9 am Lessons and Carols

