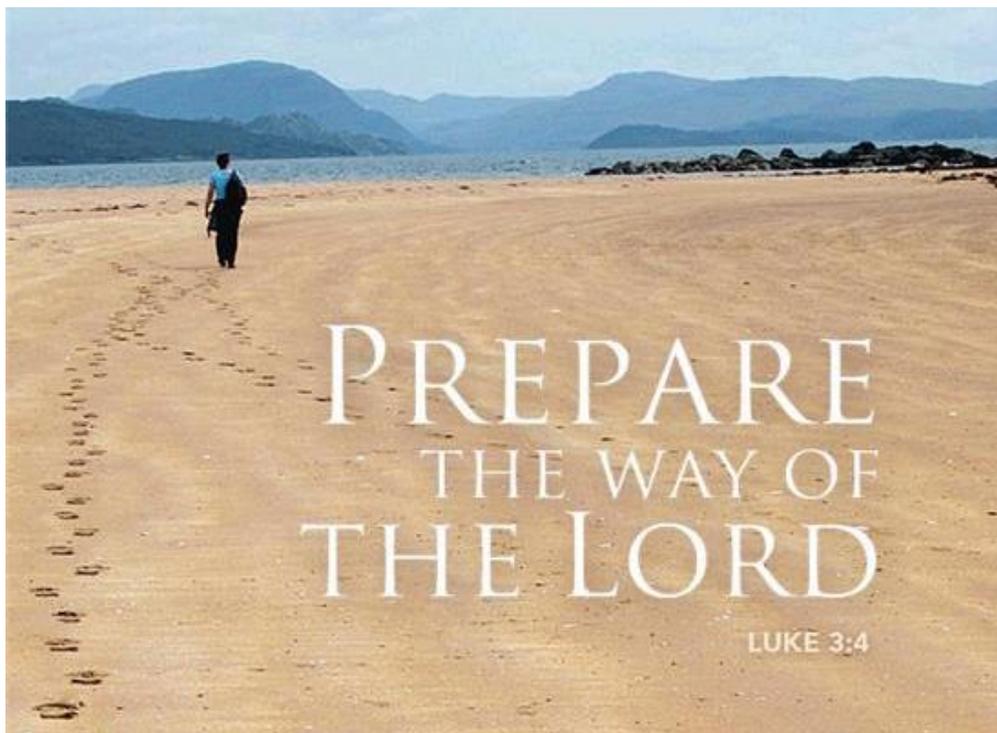




Welcome to Bethlehem Lutheran Church

God's Family Serving Christ with Love



2nd SUNDAY OF ADVENT, December 1 & 5, 2021

W8267 Hwy 33 East, Portage, Wisconsin 53901

Pastor Jaime Benson pastor.jaime.benson@gmail.com

608-742-8502 www.bethlehemLCportage.org bethluch15@gmail.com

Church Office Hours: Mon-Wed 9am-3pm, Thurs & Fri 9am-12pm

Holy Communion is celebrated each week; all people of God are welcome. Please fill out a Communion Registration card found in the pew racks, and put it in the offering bowl as you leave the sanctuary. **Please either pick up your prepackaged communion elements on your way into the sanctuary or you may come up to the altar to receive it.** It contains 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.

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. Due to Covid-19 we are asking that you **reserve the Cry Room** and it will only be for one family at a time.

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.

Enter to Praise

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

#257, v. 1 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

P: At every beginning there is a yearning for the one who is coming. O Emmanuel,

Prepare us for your coming.

P: We gather together to get ready for what? Only heaven knows. O Emmanuel,

Prepare us for your coming.

P: We wait for the day when God will create a prevailing peace on the earth, and natural-born enemies turn into newborn friends. O Emmanuel,

Prepare us for your coming.

P: We get ready for God to come close by laying our lives open to Jesus, asking him to sort through all our mixed motives. O Emmanuel,

Prepare us for your coming.

P: Jesus, we welcome your presence now with the lighting of these candles, whose flames bring warmth to winter and fill this place with the glow of hope.

Amen.

Light two candles.

Song

#257, v. 6 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Please rise in body and/or spirit.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, who alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God for whom we wait,

in the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you. We fail in believing that your good news is for us. We falter in our call to tend your creation. We find our sense of self in material wealth. We fear those different from ourselves. We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love. Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.

God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you! Through the power of the Holy Spirit, ✚ your sins are forgiven. You are children of the Most High, inheritors of the eternal promise, and recipients of divine mercy. God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN

#264, “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 give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

You may be seated for the readings

FIRST READING: Malachi 3:1-4

God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means “my messenger”) will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God’s people, as silver and gold are refined.

¹See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years. The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Luke 1:68-79

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us. (Lk. 1:78)

⁶⁷Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

⁶⁸Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel, you have come to your people and set them free.

⁶⁹**You have raised up for us a mighty Savior, born of the house of your servant David.**

⁷⁰Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us from our enemies,

⁷¹from the hands of all who hate us,

⁷²**to show mercy to our forebears, and to remember your holy covenant.**

⁷³This was the oath you swore to our father Abraham:

⁷⁴to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

free to worship you without fear,⁷⁵ holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life.

⁷⁶And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,

for you will go before the Lord to pre- pare the way,

⁷⁷**to give God’s people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.**

⁷⁸In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

⁷⁹**to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death,**

and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

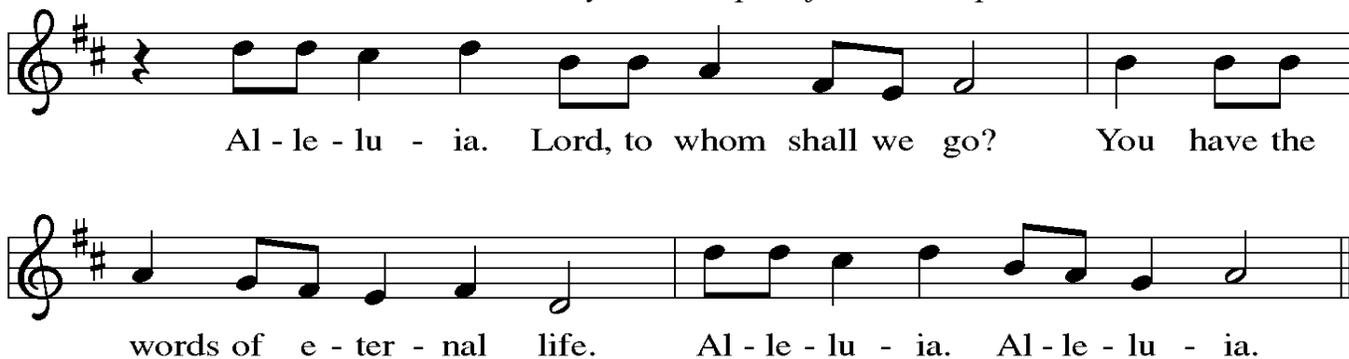
⁸⁰The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

SECOND READING: Philippians 1:3-11

The apostle Paul was the pastor of many new churches. He writes in this letter about his joy to be in partnership with the Christians of Philippi. Listen to how tender-hearted Paul, sometimes a stern preacher, is with his friends as he encourages them to grow in love and knowledge.

³I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Please rise in body and/or spirit for the Gospel



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: Luke 3:1-6

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

John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by “repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁵Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; ⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’” The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

You may be seated

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE (Sunday)

SERMON

Please rise in body and/or spirit

SERMON HYMN

#249, v. 1-2 "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry"

NEW MEMBER INSTALLATION (Sunday)

Dear friends, we give thanks for the gift of baptism and for *these people*, one with us in the body of Christ, whom we welcome as new *members* into the life and ministry of this congregation.

Beth, June, Tyler, Kristy, Mikayla, Zane have come to join our congregation.

Apostles' Creed

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**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 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.**

Address and Questions

In baptism, we are welcomed into the body of Christ and sent to share in the mission of God. We are called to live among God's faithful people, to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

Siblings in Christ,

do you intend to continue in the covenant of your baptism among God's people in this place?

Those being welcomed respond.

I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

People of God,
do you promise to support and pray for these new members in their life in Christ?
We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.

Welcome

Let us welcome siblings in Christ to this community of faith.

**We rejoice with you in the life of baptism.
Together we will give thanks and praise to God
and proclaim the good news to all the world.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *Pray aloud as the spirit guides you*

P: In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

A brief silence.

You send messengers into the world to proclaim the day of your coming. Make our bishops, pastors, deacons, and lay preachers confident in their preaching, that their words and our lives witness to your grace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Send your Spirit to all living creatures that are endangered. Provide them with shelter and care, and bring us into right relationship with the earth that you create and call good. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Send leaders to our nations, cities, schools, and businesses to work on behalf of those who have lost parents, spouses, and loved ones; immigrants; the imprisoned; those living in poverty; and all who are oppressed. Make them bold in their commitments to justice and reconciliation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Send your servants to care for those who suffer. Use our ministries and our lives to reach out with compassion to those who are hungry, oppressed, lonely, or ill especially for all those on our prayer list. Grant them healing and wholeness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Send prophets to speak difficult truths, even when they are poorly received. Embolden those who ask hard questions and challenge accepted ways. Instill in youth and elders alike a passion for pointing to Jesus in all things. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We remember your saints, both those publicly celebrated and those more humbly remembered. Confident that your work will be completed, we live in faith until the day of your coming. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give you thanks for our new members whom you have drawn to yourself by the love of Jesus Christ and whom we have welcomed into this household of faith. Keep us close together in your Spirit, in the breaking of bread and the prayers, and in service to others. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P: God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

Due to Covid-19, we will not be collecting offerings as usual. You may put your offering in the bowl upon leaving the sanctuary. 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 of our waiting and watching, we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives to the service of all your people. Prepare the way before us as we meet you in this simple meal, through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace. **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.**

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.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to Christ's banquet. Feast on God's gift of grace.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Communion is celebrated with individual elements in your pew or you may come up to the altar to receive the prepackaged elements. You may sit after receiving Communion

You may be seated

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Most High God, you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Need worship volunteers for all of December
- You can start to bring in your donated baskets for the Gifts of Bethlehem auction. Deadline is Friday, Dec. 3rd, the auction start Sunday Dec 5th
- Looking for people to be on the Church Council. See the bulletin and newsletters for more info

Please rise in body and/or spirit

BLESSING

The God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus for whom we wait. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

#239, "Hark, the Glad Sound!"

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is near. **Thanks be to God.**

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Depart to Share

Today's Worship Team

Wednesday 5:30 pm, 12/1

Music: Carla

Usher: Geoff Gilbert

Next Week's Worship Team

Wednesday 5:30pm, 12/8

Music: Samantha

Usher: Geoff Gilbert

Sunday Morning Service 9am, 12/5

Music: Carla

Reader: Kerry Melby

Usher: Jeff Melby

Video Production: Brady & Lori Cox

Coffee Hour: _____

Altar Flowers: Dean & Judy Traut

Sunday Morning Service 9am, 12/12

Music: Samantha

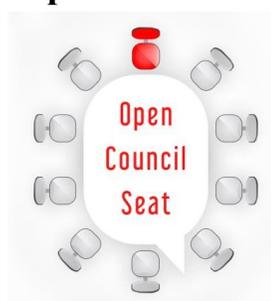
Reader: _____

Usher: _____

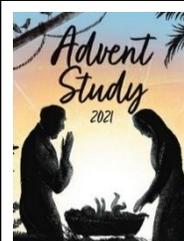
Video Production: _____

Coffee Hour: _____

Open Church Council Seats in 2022



Looking for members interested in being on the church council. It is a 3 year term and you must be a voting member. Term would start at the end of the 2022 annual meeting. Let Pr. Jaime, a current council member or the office know if you'd like to put your name on the ballot.



Rejoice & reflect this Advent season through study & prayer. ELCA World Hunger's 2021 Advent study is full of weekly devotions.

These booklets & matching advent calendars will be in the narthex for anyone who wishes to use them. Please only take one calendar per household.

Please Pray For

Church Prayer List:

Jeremy Schilling
Bonnie Bender
Lynn Grueneberg
Noretta Moran

If you have added someone to the prayer list, please contact church staff with an update and if you'd like them still listed. New prayer requests will be listed for one month. We then ask that you contact the office if you'd like them to remain on the list. Thank you.

This Week:

Wednesday, December 1

10:30 am Tai Chi
5:30 pm Worship
6:30 pm Confirmation Pot Luck & Acolyte Training

Friday, December 3

9 am Marketplace set up
10:30 Tai Chi

Saturday, December 4

9 am Christmas tree set up & decorating

Sunday, December 5

Silent Auction Starts

9 am Worship - New member installation
10 am Sunday School, Parent & Pastor Meet & Greet
10:15 am Gifts of Bethlehem Concert Rehearsal

Monday, December 6

10:30 Tai Chi
1:00 pm Card Club
6:30 pm D.R. Mtg

Tuesday, December 7

5 pm Finance Mtg

Wednesday, December 8

Food Pantry Helpers

10:30 am Tai Chi
5:30 pm Worship
6:30 pm Confirmation Game Night

Our Extended Family Prayer Concerns:

Lynn Henrickson (Del & Margaret Molden's in-law)
Norma Jenkins (Sue Conner's mother)
Quintin and Oliver Kuhl (Grandson & great grandson of Kathy & Bud Lawrence)
Fred Richardson
Nelson Richardson
Jody Crosby
John & Judy Skille (Tania Anderson's parents)
Brad Kohnke
Deb Moe & family (Sandra Sween's cousin)
Randy Von Ruden
Betty Hayes (Chad Hayes' grandma)
Steve Rohrbacher (Marie & Ed's son)
Randy
Tom Teslik (Mark Teslik's son)
Rick Voight (Halley Harms' father)
Shannon Henderson
Patty McGee
Natalie Pierce



ELCA Good Gifts Giving Tree

Help provide critical support to ministries & programs. 1. Pick an ornament (you take this home), 2. fill out the Good Gift Envelope (your name & which gift you picked), put your money in the envelope (checks made out to BLC), 3. Turn with your offering or to office

GIFTS OF BETHLEHEM



We are looking for donations for the basket auction. The deadline to drop off is Fri. Dec. 3rd. In person bidding starts Dec. 5th, online starts Dec. 6th

You can bid on items in person or online. Here is the link to bid and view items online:

<https://www.biddingowl.com/BLC>

Online bidding closes at 3 pm Dec 12. In person bidding closes after the end of the concert.

Gifts of Bethlehem Concert, Sunday, Dec. 12th at 4pm.

New Members

W • E • L • C • O • M • E



Bovre Family

Tyler, Kristy, Mikayla & Zane. Tyler and Kristy are both teachers within Portage schools. Mikayla is 11 years old and Zane is 9 years old; they both attend John Muir Elementary.

Beth Gilpin

Welcome Beth!

June Benson

June retired from a career in education and real estate sales and management 2 ½ years ago in San Diego, CA, where she was born. She now lives in Portage where her son, his wife & daughters (Tom & Janice, Greta & Britta) live. Her most wonderful memory was her first memory when she was 3 years old and was baptized. She remembers her father carrying her to the front of church and the minister sprinkling water on her head. She has many fond memories of church growing up as she lived 2 houses away from her church where they attended all the activities and services. She also remembers she and her siblings playing out front, having pretend weddings where her brother pretended to be the minister (he ended up becoming a Lutheran minister!).





Christmas Worship Schedule

December 22nd: 5:30 pm Blue Christmas Evening Prayer – looking for people to read

December 24th: 2:30 pm, 4:30 pm, and 6:30 pm. Masks are highly encouraged.

December 26th: Lessons & Carols – we are looking for a few people to read for this service.

December 29th: No Worship

HOPE HOUSE: Sun, Dec 19th there will be a bake sale to raise money for **Hope House** of South Central Wisconsin. They are in need of certain items. You can help by donating a baked good for the bake sale, bringing in needed items (see list) or shopping online using their [Amazon Wish List](#).



Choir members and anyone who likes to sing. The Praise Team would like to get going again. We need guitar players, drummer and singers. We will meeting after church on January 9. Not a singer, but interested in helping make some music? You do not have to be able to read music. Anyone interested in joining a choir chime group (open to anyone grades 3 and up) please contact Carla Gerhardt 608-697-2887 or email: cgerhardt@frontier.com.

← Hope House



Things we need most often and run out of are:

- Toilet Paper
- Paper Towel
- Kleenex
- Ziploc bags
- Lysol Laundry Sanitizer/Disinfectant
- Tall Kitchen Trash Bags
- Laundry Detergent
- Non bleach toilet bowl cleaner
- Healthy Snacks
- Condiments
- Carnation Instant Breakfast
- Coffee
- Hot Cocoa

Other needed items:

- White Towels & Wash clothes
- Liquid Hand soap
- Dishwasher soap
- 13 Gal Trash Bags
- Recycle Trash Bags
- Salad Dressing
- Non-powdered vinyl gloves
- Backpacks
- Duffle Bags

25 ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR advent calendar

Make a
Paper Chain
with 25
Rings

Bake
Christmas
Cookies

Deliver
Cookies to a
Local
Nursing
Home

Read a
Christmas
Story

Build a
Snowman

Fill a shoebox
for Operation
Christmas
Child

Play
Outside in
the Snow

Try Ice
Skating

Go to a
Local
Christmas
Play

Visit/Donate
to a Local
Animal
Shelter

Bring
Cookies to
Your
Neighbors

Donate
Unused Toys
to a Local
Toy Drive

Donate
School
Supplies to
a Teacher

Watch a
Christmas
Movie

Wear
Christmas
Pajamas

Go
Christmas
Caroling

Pay for the
Person Behind
You in the
Drive-Thru

Make a
Christmas
Ornament

Leave
Snacks out
for UPS/
FedEx

Visit
Santa
Clause

Bring Socks
to a Local
Homeless
Shelter

Send a
Christmas
Card to Your
Grandparents

Shovel
Your
Neighbors
Sidewalk

Listen to
Christmas
Music

Make a
Meal for
Someone

It's the most wonderful time of the year!