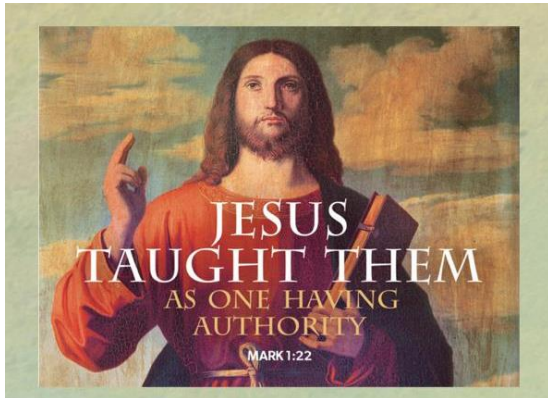




Welcome to Bethlehem Lutheran Church

God's family working together to welcome all



Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

January 24 & 28, 2024

W8267 Hwy 33 East,
Portage, Wisconsin 53901

Pastor Jaime Benson

Office: 608-742-8502

www.bethlehemLCportage.org

Church Office Hours:

Mon-Wed 9am – 3pm

Thurs-Fri 9am -12pm

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.

Ways to stay connected. Follow us on



@BLCPORTAGE

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

❖ CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, creator of darkness and light, word of truth, wind sweeping over the waters. **Amen.**

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

God, our rock and refuge,

we pour out our hearts before you. We have known you but have not always loved you. We have wounded one another and sinned against you. We have not always recognized the Holy Spirit dwelling in each of us. Remember your covenant. Renew your creation. Restore us, that we might proclaim your good news to all. Amen.

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters. God has spoken: The time of grace is now. In Jesus, the reign of God has come near. By the authority of ☩ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. You are God's beloved. **Amen.**

❖ GATHERING HYMN

#611 "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say"

❖ 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

Compassionate God, you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Bring wholeness to all that is broken and speak truth to us in our confusion, that all creation will see and know your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 18:15-20

[Moses said:] ¹⁵The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. ¹⁶This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: "If I hear the voice of the LORD my God anymore, or ever again see this great fire, I will die." ¹⁷Then the LORD replied to me: "They are right in what they have said. ¹⁸I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. ¹⁹Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. ²⁰But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die." The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 111

¹Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.

²**Great are your works, O LORD, pondered by all who delight in them.**

³Majesty and splendor mark your deeds, and your righteousness endures forever.

⁴**You cause your wonders to be remembered; you are gracious and full of compassion.**

⁵You give food to those who fear you, remembering forever your covenant.

⁶**You have shown your people the power of your works in giving them the lands of the nations.**

⁷The works of your hands are faithfulness and justice; all of your precepts are sure.

⁸**They stand fast forever and ever, because they are done in truth and equity.**

⁹You sent redemption to your people and commanded your covenant forever; holy and awesome is your name.

¹⁰**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who practice this have a good understanding. God's praise endures forever.**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

¹Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.”

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ²Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; ³but anyone who loves God is known by him.

⁴Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists,” and that “there is no God but one.” ⁵Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—⁶yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

⁷It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸“Food will not bring us close to God.” We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. ⁹But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? ¹¹So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. ¹²But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall. 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 1:21-28

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

²¹[Jesus and his disciples] went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²²They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” ²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” ²⁶And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” ²⁸At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee. The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN’S SERMON (Sunday)

SERMON

❖ SERMON HYMN

“The Healing”

❖ 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: As we celebrate Christ embodied in human form, we pray for God’s blessing on the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

Loving God, we pray that your example of teaching with confidence and authority builds up your church in love. May all church leaders and teachers honor your instruction and model your inclusive ways. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Renewing God, we pray for all of creation, that waterways flow clean and clear, natural spaces are protected, and our planet is healed. Let us commit to thoughtful care of the earth. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Justice-seeking God, we pray for those in government and community leadership, that they lead with honor and mindfulness. May they remember their covenants and be upright in their ways. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Compassionate God, we pray for all in need, especially those who have known rejection, any who struggle with long-term illness or chronic pain, those without access to safe housing or health care, and any who suffer especially those on our prayer list and those we name before you in our hearts. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Still-speaking God, we pray for our congregation, for its artists and musicians, for its educators and caregivers, that all gifts are used to care for those in need and to live out your example of accompaniment, gospel witness, and love. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

Eternal God, we remember all who have been teachers, mentors, and companions in the church and in our lives. We trust that all who have died rest in your loving care. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

P: Knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we offer these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

❖ PEACE

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

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

Blessed are you, Holy One, for all good things come from you. In bread and cup you open heaven to us. Meet us at this table, that we receive what we seek and follow your Son, Jesus, in whose name we pray. **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 the 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

At Jesus' table, heaven and earth are joined as one. Come and see.

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

Giver of every gift, Christ's body is our food, and we are Christ's body. Raise us to life by your power for the benefit of all and to your glory, now and forever. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Annual Meeting will be on January 28th directly after worship
- Please pick up your offering envelopes, annual contribution statements, & church directories in the narthex.

❖ BLESSING

God who names you, Christ who claims you, and the Holy Spirit who dwells in you, ✠ bless you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

❖ SENDING HYMN

#612 "Healer of Our Every Ill"

❖ DISMISSAL

Go in peace. You are God's beloved. **Thanks be to God.**

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Depart to share

This Week's Worship Team

Wednesday 5:30 pm, 1/24

Music: Samantha

Acolyte: Clara Georgeson

Altar Guild: Cara Druckrey

Sunday Morning Service 9am, 1/28

Music: Carla, Choir

Reader: Bobbie Goodman

Usher: Jim Crawford

Video Production: Lori & Brady Cox

Acolyte: Zane Bovre

Altar Guild: Marie Kucksdorf

Communion Assistants: Marie Kucksdorf & Bobbie Goodman

Coffee Hour: _____

Next Week's Worship Team

Wednesday 5:30 pm, 1/31

Music: Jody

Acolyte: Avri Anderson

Altar Guild: Cara Druckrey

Sunday Morning Service 9am, 2/4

Music:

Reader: Youth

Usher: Youth

Video Production: _____

Acolyte: Leah Haroldson

Altar Guild: Lisa Cook

Communion Assistants: Youth

Coffee Hour: Youth



**Sunday,
Jan. 28th
Following 9 am
worship**

Please Pray For

Church Prayer List:

Mike & Mary Ellen Miller & family
Shelvy Ritter
Donn Trinrud
Mark Teslik
Bonnie Bender



Our Extended Family Prayer Concerns:

Tatiana Sampson (niece of Jean Elliott)
Don Honaker (friend of Jack & Ginny Paulson)
Kallee Stewart (granddaughter of Donna Stewart)
Julie Grueneberg
Carly (niece of Jeff & Kerry Melby)
Sharon Stickford (friend of Ginny Paulson)
Lavern Allhiser (brother-in-law of Sandy Sween)
Freda Manzullo (sister of Mark Teslik)
Deb Moe & family (cousin of Sandra Sween)
Tom Teslik (son of Mark Teslik)



We are in need of four voting members to represent Bethlehem at Synod Assembly on May 18 in Janesville, WI. We can have one male and one female adult rep., as well as one male and one female youth rep. Youth is defined by voting members under the age of 30. We will vote on these at the annual meeting which is January 28th. You can find out more about this event [here](https://scsw-elca.org/2024assemblydraft/): scsw-elca.org/2024assemblydraft/



We need people to sign up for the Lenten drama! Sign-up is in the narthex.

The following groups are assigned to serve the soup supper:

Feb 14	-Women's group
Feb 21	-Praise team, choir and organists
Feb 28	-High school youth group
March 6	-Sunday school and Council
March 13	-Confirmation
March 20	-All committee members

This Week:

Sunday, January 28

9 am Worship and
Annual Meeting

Monday, January 29

1 pm Card Club

Tuesday, January 30

9 am Quilters

Wednesday, January 31

5:30 pm Worship

Sunday, February 04

9 am Worship

10:15 am Sunday School