

Bethlehem Lutheran &
St. Stephen's Episcopal



Fourth Sunday of Advent

Announcements

Welcome to all who came to Bethlehem Lutheran Church today!

Holy Communion may be received at the altar with individual cups of wine/juice and bread; or if you choose to remain seated, individual cups of wine/juice and wafer are available in the narthex. Those at home, we welcome you to the table with your own bread and wine/juice.

We welcome Jim Reindollar as our worship leader today. Father Stephen Day will give the sermon. Jim Reindollar, a Lay Pastoral Associate, has been authorized by the Bishop of the Montana Synod to provide pastoral services in our congregation this Sunday.

Bethlehem Council Meeting after service today.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: Weds, Dec 24 at 5:00pm
CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE: Thurs, Dec 25 at 10:00am

Poinsettias for Christmas Services

Gainans is offering discount prices for red, pink and white poinsettias and they will deliver them to the church before Christmas. If you wish to donate to purchase a poinsettia, put your gift in the offering globe with a note.

Special Offering for December is Lutheran Disaster Resources

Please remember in your prayers: Rob E, Jeanne W, Lyle, Lisa & Lindsey, Pastor Kim & Terri W, Eva, Josh, Steve, Peggy and the Gerstner Family
Special note: Prayer requests will be listed for one month with the understanding that prayers will be extended beyond that with notification.

If you are in need of pastoral leadership or spiritual counsel, please leave a message at the church (406)248-6427 or email bethlehembillings@gmail.com.

The link for the service is: www.facebook.com/BethlehemBillings

Showers for our unhoused neighbors –We at Bethlehem, in cooperation with St Vincent DePaul and the Salvation Army, provide showers for our unhoused neighbors on Mondays and Wednesdays. If you are willing to help, call Chelsea at 360-915-2762 or Terri Wilker at 406-425-3713

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church

St Stephen's Episcopal Church

40 10th Street West

Billings, MT 59102

4th Sunday of Advent

December 21, 2025

9:30 Worship – Holden Morning Prayer

Introduction

Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES *ELW 240 v 1-4 Light One Candle
To Watch for Messiah*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father,

and of the ✝ Son,

and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

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

Most merciful God,

C: We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.

Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

GATHERING HYMN *ELW #259 Fling Wide the Door*

GREETING

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

C: **And also with you.**

SERVICE OF LIGHT

Leader:
Jesus Christ, you are the light of the world;

All:
the light no darkness can o - ver - come;

Leader:
You dawn upon us as the morn - ing sun ,

All:
And guide our feet into the way of peace

Leader:
Let your light scat - ter the darkness,

All:
and shine within your peo-ple here. —

2 poco rit.

Morning Hymn



1. Joy-ous light of heav-'nly glo - ry, lov - ing
 2. In the stars that grace the dark - ness, in the
 3. You who made the heav-en's splen - dor, ev - 'ry



glow of God's own face, you who sing cre - a - tion's
 blaz - ing sun of dawn, in the light of peace and
 danc - ing star of night, make us shine with gen - tle



sto - ry, shine on ev 'ry land and race. Now as
 wis - dom, we can hear your qui - et song. Love that
 jus - tice, let us each re - flect your light. Might - y



Morning dawns a - round us, we shall raise our songs to
 fills the night with won - der, love that warms the wea - ry
 God of all cre - a - tion, gen - tle Christ who lights our



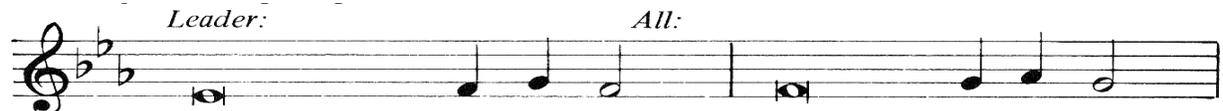
you, God of day - break, God of shad - ows, come and
 soul, Love that bursts all chains a - sun - der, set us
 way, Lov - ing Spir - it of sal - va - tion, lead us



light our hearts a - new. _____
 free and make us whole. _____
 on to end - less day. _____

THANKSGIVING

Leader: *All:*



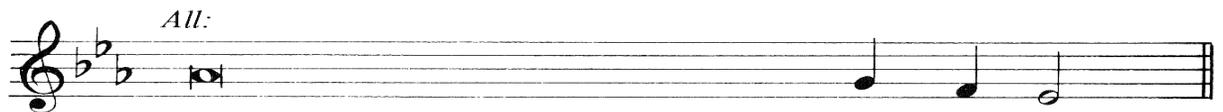
May God be with you all, and al - so with you;

Leader:



Let us sing our thanks to — God,

All:



It is right to give God thanks and praise.

L: Blessed are you, Creator of the Universe – from old you have led your people by night and day. May the light of your Christ make our darkness bright, for your Word and your presence are the light of our pathways, and you are the light and life of all creation.

PSALMODY Psalm 141

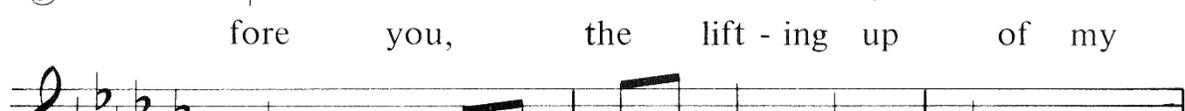
All:



Let my prayer rise up like in - cense be -

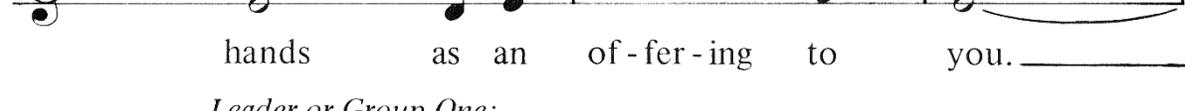


fore you, the lift - ing up of my



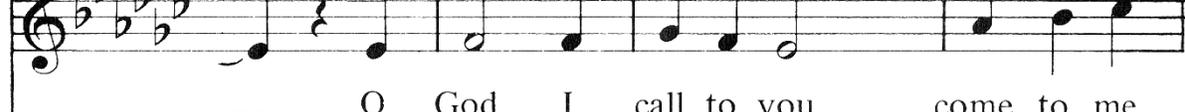
hands as an of - fer - ing to you. —

Leader or Group One:



— O God, I call to you, come to me

All or Group Two:



O God, I

now; O hear my voice when I
call to you, come to me now; O

cry to you. ————— Let my prayer rise
hear my voice when I cry to you.

up like in cense be - fore you, the
Let my prayer rise up like in - cense be -

lift-ing up of my hands as an of-fer-ing to
fore you, the lift-ing up of my hands as an

you. ————— Keep watch with - in me, God;
of-fer-ing to you. Keep

deep in my heart may the light of your love be
 watch with - in me, God; deep in my heart may the

burn - ing bright. _____ Let my prayer rise
 light of your love be burn - ing bright.

up like in - cense be - fore you, the
 Let my prayer rise up like in - cense be -

lift - ing up of my hands as an of - fer - ing to
 fore you, the lift - ing up of my hands as an

you. _____ All praise to the God of all - Cre -
 of - fer - ing to you. All

a - tor of life; all praise be to Christ and the
praise to the God of all— Cre - a - tor of life; all

Spir - it of love. ————— Let my prayer rise
praise be to Christ and the Spir - it of love.

up like in - cense be - fore you, the
Let my prayer rise up like in - cense be -

lift - ing up of my hands as an of - fer - ing to
fore you, the lift - ing up of my hands as an

you. —————
of - fer - ing to you.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!

¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel.

¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

P: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. (*Ps. 80:7*)

¹ Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

² **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and come to help us.**

³ Restore us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

⁴ **O LORD God of hosts,
how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**

⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

⁶ **You have made us the derision of our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

⁷ Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

¹⁷ **Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

¹⁸ And so will we never turn away from you;
give us life, that we may call upon your name.

¹⁹ **Restore us, O LORD¹ God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7

A reading from Romans.

Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

P: The word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**



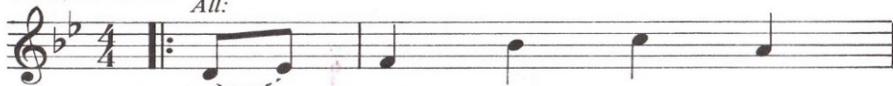
P: The Light Shines in the Darkness

C: and the Darkness overcame it.

L. An angel went from God to a town called Nazareth to a woman whose name was Mary. The angel said to her, "Rejoice, O highly favored, for God is with you. You shall bear a child, and his name shall be Jesus, the Chosen One of God Most High." And Mary said, "I am the servant of my God, I live to do your will.

The Magnificat

Luke 1: 46-55



1.3. My soul pro - claims your
2. You have cast the might - y



great-ness, O God, and my spir - it re-joic - es in
down from their thrones, and up lift - ed the hum - ble of



you, You have looked with love on your
heart, You have filled the hun - gry with



ser - vant here, and blessed me all my life through.
won-drous things, and left the wealth - y no part.



Great and might - y are you, O Ho - ly One,
Great and might - y are you, O Faith - ful One,



strong is your kind - ness ev - er - more.
strong is your jus - tice strong your love,



How you fa - vor the weak and low - ly one,
As you prom - ised to Sar - ah and A - bra - ham,



hum - bling the proud of heart.
kind - ness for - ev - er - more.

P: The Gospel according to Matthew the first chapter
C. Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do 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 as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus. The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON Father Stephen Day

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW 257 *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

LITANY AND PRAYERS

A *All:*
Repeat continuously

(Hmmm)

B

God — of mer - cy, hold us in love.

Leader: **A** **B**

1. In peace, in peace, we pray_ to you:

Leader: **A** **B**

2. For peace and sal-va-tion, we pray to you:

Leader: **A** **B**

3. For peace be-tween na-tions, for peace be-tween peo-ples:
4. For us who are gath-ered to wor-ship and praise you:
5. For all of your ser-vants who live out your gos-pel:
6. For all those who gov-ern, that jus-tice might guide them:
7. For all those who la-bor in ser-vice to oth-ers:
8. Grant weath-er that nour-ish - es all of cre - a - tion:
9. Keep watch on our loved ones and keep us from dan-ger:
10. For all the be - lov - ed who rest in your mer-cy:

Leader:

Help us, com - fort us, all of our days:

All:

Keep — us, hold — us, gra - cious God.

PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

Share a sign of peace with your neighbors.

OFFERING

The collection globe is available at the rear of the church. Online viewers may send a check to Bethlehem Lutheran Church at 40 10th Street West, Billings, MT 59102 Thank you for the support of our ministries.

OFFERING PRAYER

Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right....

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

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (Spoken)

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

On 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, and 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.

LORD'S PRAYER

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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.

LAMB OF GOD (spoken)

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, grant us peace.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Here is life. God is with us.

Come, receive what God has promised.

DISTRIBUTION

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

COMMUNION HYMN *ELW #266 All Earth Is Hopeful*

Prayer after Communion

P: God, our host,

C: at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN *ELW #267 Joy to the World*

BLESSING

Leader:  *All:* 

Let us bless our God: praise and thanks to you.

Presider: 

May God, Cre - a - tor bless us and keep us, may



Christ be ev - er light for our lives, may the



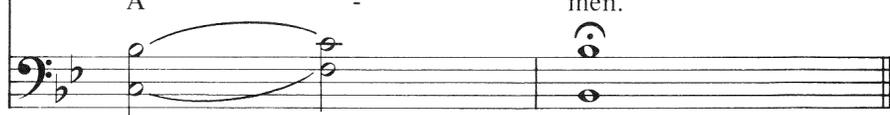
Spir - it of Love be our guide and path, for



all of our days. _____

All: 

A - men.



DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.

C: Thanks be to God.

All Are Welcome

Christian community should be a place of absolute welcome. Christ has welcomed us, whoever we are. Because of this, we at Bethlehem Lutheran Church are glad to welcome you. None of the distinctions that seem to divide our world apply here!

We welcome you if you are:

- * young, old or in between;
- * white, black, native, Hispanic, or whatever your ancestry;
- * married, single, divorced, a single parent, or whatever your family of choice;
- * rich, poor, middle class, employed or unemployed;
- * a lifelong Christian, just now seeking faith, or not really sure;
- * straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, questioning, or any other identity;
- * healthy of mind and body, living with mental illness, disabled or sick;
- * struggling with addiction, in recovery, or if you love those who are;
- * liberal, conservative, or ambivalent;
- * homeless, a former convict, or in any way someone longing for acceptance.

At Bethlehem, we offer safety, love and the ministry of Word and Sacrament to everyone who seeks it. Come and be part of this welcome, as an equal, as a free and beloved child of God!

ALL ARE WELCOME!

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