

Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church
First Sunday of Advent, Year A
November 30, 2025

Pastor Kim Swenson

Musician Michelle Oakland

Worship Assistants

Assisting Minister: Cindy Michalski

Reader: Dawn Schroeder

Altar Guild: Debbie Kasulke

Communion Assistant: Dawn Schroeder

Ushers: Doug Scholes &

Dar Schuurmans

Video Tech: Rick Johnson



The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

GATHERING

Welcome

In the hustle and bustle, **it is hard to feel still.**

Our to-do lists are long; **it is hard to be present.**

Yet, we are called to stillness; **We long to be still.**

What can you let go of, so that you might rest?

What can we not do, so that we might be present with Christ?

In the name of the ✚ Triune God in whose presence we wait,
the Holy Parent, fulfilling the promise,
the Holy Child, waiting to be born,
the Holy Spirit, illuminating the way. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn

Christ, Be Our Light

vss 1,2,3,5



1 Long - ing for light, we wait in dark - ness. Long - ing for
2 Long - ing for peace, our world is trou - bled. Long - ing for
3 Long - ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long - ing for
4 Long - ing for shel - ter, man - y are home - less. Long - ing for
5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,
hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone
wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,
warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,
hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.
has pow'r to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.
bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.
shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.
to one an - oth - er, signs of your king - dom come.



Refrain
Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the



dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957

Music: CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT, Bernadette Farrell

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Confession & Forgiveness

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

Ever-present God,

we long to feel you close.

We long to feel your presence in our lives.

**We long for you to break through the chaos
and suffering of this world.**

**However, if we're honest, we rarely stand still
long enough to feel you in our midst.**

Forgive our rushing and distractions.

Forgive our wandering hearts, and center us in this space.

**Remind us that even in the time of Herod,
even on the longest nights, you are always there. Amen.**

Family of faith, even when we doubt God's presence,
even when we fail to notice God's fingerprints in this world,
God is always moving closer to us.

Hear and believe the good news this Advent season:

Nothing can keep God's love away.

We are seen. We are forgiven. We are not alone. Amen.

Hymn of Praise

Blessed Be the God of Israel



1 Blessed be the God of Is - ra - el who comes to set us free
2 With prom-ised mer - cy will God still the cov - e - nant re - call,
3 My child, as proph - et of the Lord you will pre-prepare the way,

and rais - es up new hope for us: a Branch from Da - vid's tree.
the oath once sworn to A - bra-ham, from foes to save us all;
to tell God's peo - ple they are saved from sin's e - ter - nal sway.

So have the proph-ets long de-clared that with a might-y arm
that we might wor - ship with-out fear and of - fer lives of praise,
Then shall God's mer - cy from on high shine forth and nev - er cease

God would turn back our en - e - mies and all who wish us harm.
in ho - li - ness and righ - teous-ness to serve God all our days.
to drive a - way the gloom of death and lead us in - to peace.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944, based on Luke 1:68-79

Music: FOREST GREEN, English folk tune

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Prayer of the Day

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

Let us pray, With-us God, **in the time of Moses, you spoke through water in the desert and a pillar of smoke. In the time of the judges, you spoke through the prophets. In the time of Herod, you spoke through angel choruses and unlikely miracles. In every time you have been speaking. So today, in our time, we ask that you would speak again. Break through the chatter and the distraction of our weary minds and speak to us once more. With hope we pray, Amen.**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

WORD

Candle Lighting – Hope

In a world full of fear, where do you see hope?

We see hope when we look to the next generation.

We feel hopeful when we gather together.

**We know hope, deep in our bones,
when we dream of a better world.**

Even in a fearful world, hope is all around us.

Today we light the candle of hope

as a reminder of this good news.

May this flicker of light help us remember

that we have reason to hope.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Hymn *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

***O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.***

Refrain

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.***

Text: *Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite
Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.
Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

First Lesson: Lamentations 3:55-57

⁵⁵ I called on your name, O LORD,
from the depths of the pit;

⁵⁶you heard my plea, "Do not close your ear
to my cry for help, but give me relief!"

⁵⁷You came near when I called on you;
you said, "Do not fear!"

Word of God. Word of Promise! **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Acclamation: *Canticle of the Turning*

1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
Refrain
My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.
Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a-bout to turn.

Gospel: Luke 1:5-13

The Gospel according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

⁵In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was descended from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord.

⁷But they had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in

years.⁸ Once when he was serving as priest before God during his section's turn of duty,⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to offer incense.¹⁰ Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside.¹¹ Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense.¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified, and fear overwhelmed him.¹³ But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *In the Time of Herod* (Tune of ELW 294) **Insert**



In the time of Her - od, fear had ta - ken hold
Thick as fog the fear grew, slow - ly creep - ing in
Pierc - ing through the stra - tus comes the an - gels' song
In the time of Her - od, fear has ta - ken hold



Hope was bur - ied deep and hid - den, rare as gold
Day by day the peo - ple bent and drew with - in
"Do not fear!" rings hol - low when we've feared so long
Still we share a long - ing for a glimpse of hope



Or - di - na - ry peo - ple dared not speak a - loud
With the clouds so hea - vy, who could see the stars?
Still in the re - cess - es of our wea - ry souls
Or - di - na - ry peo - ple shout the truth we trust:



Dreams of the Mes - si - ah break - ing through the clouds
Hope - less - ness had trapped them, strong as pris - on bars
Some - thing is a - wak - ened— could it be our hope?
God will stop at no - thing to be here with us

Affirmation of Faith

We have seen the valley.

We have seen a sky without stars.

We have seen the longest night,

and still we believe.

We believe in a with-us God.

**We believe in the hope of tomorrow.
We believe that good news is louder than fear.
We believe this good news is for all people.**

**So even when our knees shake,
even when our voice trembles,
even when fear is all around us,
we will hold onto that good news.
We will reach for each other.
We will look for God in our midst.
We will sing songs of joy.
We will proclaim:
Unto us, love is born.
We have seen the longest night,
and we have seen unimaginable love.
So still, we believe. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

God of the people, we come seeking wisdom and instruction. Uphold and strengthen lay leaders, teachers, deacons, pastors, and bishops. Teach us your ways and lead us in your paths. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

God of the earth, we seek your goodness in the grandeur of creation. Empower us to care for forests and oceans, as we see you in the world around us. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

God of the nations, grant wisdom to leaders, judges, and mediators. Cast out words of hate and transform them into words for building up community. Remake implements of war to sow peace. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

God of healing, bring comfort and strength. We pray for our kindred and companions who are ill or despairing *especially those affected by HIV and AIDS as we remember World AIDS Day*. Surround all with care and consolation. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

God of new possibilities, when addiction wounds, jealousy tears down, and relationships fray, show us how to journey with one another. Nurture therapists, counselors, and sponsors in their care for others. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

For what else are the people of God praying for?

Spoken and silent prayers welcome.

God of all time, build up our lives that we would reflect your grace. At the last, bring us with all the saints to your holy city where peace and goodness make a home. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

Amen.

Peace

Glory to God in the highest, **and peace to God's people on earth.**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

MEAL

Invitation to the Offering

Fear tells us that nothing will change. But hope whispers that God is breaking in—even now. When we give, we join that holy interruption, planting seeds of hope in a fearful world. Let us offer our gifts as signs of trust in God's promise.

Offering

Offering Prayer

Let us pray, **God of hope, in a world that trembles with fear, we dare to believe that Your light will shine. Take these gifts and use them to break through despair with hope, through darkness with light, through fear with love. Amen.**

The Great Thanksgiving

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

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

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Blessed is our brother Jesus, the coming one who makes all things new; who, on the night when he was betrayed, while speaking of the fulfillment of salvation, took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said: **"This is my body, which is for you. Do this to remember me."**

In the same way, he also took the cup, after supper, saying: **"This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, whenever you drink it, to remember me."**

Remembering the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus,
we await the day until Christ comes again, crying,

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

We see the hungry in our world, and we cry,

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

We see the broken, the sick, the dying, and we cry,

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

We see those we consider less than ourselves, and we cry,

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

We cry, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and we wait...

Send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts of bread and wine,
and upon us, your gathered community.

Empower us, fed by your body and blood, to be your Body in the world:

to feed the hungry, to heal the broken, pray for the sick,

to welcome the hurt and the marginalized,

to be as Christ to one another. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our God in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on Earth, as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

Lamb of God, *to the tune of Still, Still, Still*



Lamb of God, you take a - way our sin. Lord, have mer-cy
on us, and may your peace be with us.
Lamb of God, you take a - way our sin.

Prayer After Communion

Let us pray, Loving God,
In a world racked with fear,
you gather us together.
You set the table.
You meet us here.
You nourish our bodies
as you nourish our spirits.
You remind us that this is a joyful feast,
and that fear cannot win every time.
So with renewed courage,
with renewed hope,

**with renewed conviction,
send us out into the world.
Help us to feed others as you have fed us.
With gratitude we pray, Amen.**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

SENDING

Announcements

Sending of Pastor Kim

Litany of Thanksgiving at the Conclusion of a Call

... As you leave this preaching ministry, we thank God for your proclamation of the gospel. **THANKS BE TO GOD!**

... As you leave this font, we thank you for your ministry surrounding baptismal promises. **THANKS BE TO GOD!**

.... As you leave this table, we thank you for presiding at the Sacrament of Holy Communion. **THANKS BE TO GOD!**

.... As you leave this sanctuary, we thank you for your presence in times of loss.
THANKS BE TO GOD!

People of God, members and friends of Bethel, do you release Pastor Kim from service as your pastor?

We do, and we give thanks to God for our ministry together.

Pastor Kim, do you recognize and accept the completion of your ministry at Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church?

I do, and I give thanks to God for our ministry together.

...You watch over our going out and our coming in:
bless this time of ending and beginning.

You surround your people in every time and place:
keep us close in your love.

You accompany your people in times of joy and times of trial:
prosper all that has been done to your glory in this time together;
heal and forgive all that has fallen short of your will for us.

Help Pastor Kim, Malik, and all of us,
to live with courage and gladness in the future you give to us. As she has been a
blessing to us, so now send her forth to be a blessing to others; through Jesus Christ,
our Savior. **Amen.**

Blessing

In a fearful world,
may you look for God's spirit.
May you reach for each other's hands.
May you choose courage whenever you can.
And in all things, may you remember
that good news is louder than fear.

In the name of the Triune God,
the one who calls,
the one ☩ who journeys with us
and the one who sends,
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,
and good news to share today and always. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn *Hark, the Glad Sound!*



1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, the Sav - ior
2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, in Sa - tan's
3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, the bleed - ing
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of peace, your wel - come



prom - ised long; let ev - 'ry heart pre -
bond - age held. The gates of brass be -
soul to cure, and with the trea - sures
shall pro - claim, and heav'n's e - ter - nal



pare a throne and ev - 'ry voice a song.
fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield.
of his grace to en - rich the hum - ble poor.
arch - es ring with your be - lov - ed name.

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702–1751

Music: CHESTERFIELD, Thomas Haweis, 1734–1820

Dismissal

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

Funding for Mission & Budget

Monthly Receipts through 11/24/25	\$19,788.64
Monthly Budget Expenses:	\$20,033.00
YTD Receipts through 10/31/25:	\$187,255.00

Bethel Weekly

Special Fellowship: will be after worship to celebrate Pastor Kim and her time here at Bethel. There will also be a basket for cards to leave best wishes for Pastor Kim.

Set up for Advent Event: will be Friday December 5th starting at 9am. Please come help get ready for this fun day of fellowship.

Midweek Advent Service: will be available at Resurrection Lutheran at 6:30pm on Wednesdays starting December 3rd.

Advent Event: On Saturday December 6th starting at 9am Joy and BBB's Bible study groups are combining forces to present a morning full of food, friendship, gifts, and laughter. Plan to bring family and friends. See the sign up sheet in the hallway and list the number of people who will be attending with you. If you would like, you can bring 2 dozen cookies to share. Also don't forget to bring a wrapped gift for the Holiday Gift Auction. The proceeds go toward the Haiti Christmas Party.

Fellowship Hour: Please see the sign up sheet to volunteer to host a fellowship hour after worship in December.

Digital Bulletins: We have been using iPads for the large print bulletins but anyone who wants to bring a tablet can scan the QR code in the lounge to get access to the bulletin. Eventually we could save a lot of paper this way.

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