

Bethel Lutheran Church
First Sunday of Christmas
Sunday, December 28, 2025



Pastor Jan LaVake

Musician: Kadin Yach

Worship Volunteers

Assisting Minister: Doug Hanson

Reader: Linda Wery

Alter Guild: Linda Wery

Communion Assistant: Sheila Greenwood

Ushers: Carl Andrews & Rick Johnson

Video Tech: Yvonne Pamperin

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

GATHERING

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

In worship, we hear God's story and we ask,

“What did God do long ago?”

In worship, we hear God's story, so we ask,

“What is God doing, here and now?”

In worship, we hear God's story, then we ask,

“What can I do to respond to it all?”

Listen, God is speaking.

Listen, it may be time to act.

Let us worship our moving, inspiring, with-us God. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn *Joy to the World*

Cranberry 267



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the

ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -

room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
found, far as, far as the curse is found.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748

Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty Savior,
Prince of Peace. **Amen.**

Family of faith, the invitation of our faith is simple. We are invited to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God. And yet, those acts have always been easier said than done. That is why we need the Prayer of Confession. In confession, we speak honestly with God. We tell the truth of our lives, and in response, God offers us grace. God picks us up, shakes the dust off our weary bones, and shows us how to keep walking toward God. So let us go to God in prayer, not because we have to, but because God will always meet us there.

Emmanuel, God with us,
**scripture tells us that you were a refugee,
but we love to forget that information.
We love to forget every act of gun violence.
We love to forget how many people go hungry,
or how many students do not have access to good education.
We love to forget the injustices in our world
that feel too big for us to face.
But you are a God who refuses to forget.
So today we pray:
make it impossible for us to overlook the stories of those in need.
Make it impossible for us to sweep injustice under the rug.
Open our eyes along with our hearts,
so that the anger we feel around injustice
might fuel a fire for action.
With hope for a better tomorrow we pray. Amen.**

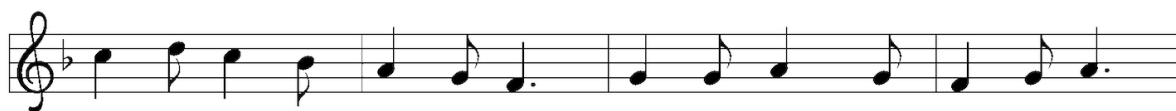
Church family,
even when we fail to do justice,
even when we fail to love kindness,
even when we allow fear to override action, freezing us in place,
God still loves us.
So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:

On our best days and on our worst days, we belong to God.
 We are invited into community. We are held in God's grace.
 We are forgiven. And we are sent to serve.
 Thanks be to God for a love like that. **Amen.**

GLORY *Good Christian Friends Rejoice* **Cranberry 288**



1 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
 2 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
 3 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
 He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866
 Music: IN DULCI JUBILO, German carol, 14th cent.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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

Let us pray, **God of angel choruses and contagious laughter, open our ears and hearts to hear what it is that you are saying. Meet us in this joy. Meet us in this delight. Meet us in the hope of this Christmas season and reveal the wisdom we need to hear today. With hearts full of gratitude we pray. Amen.**

Please be seated.

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

WORD

We are ready to celebrate the mystery of Christmas. Let us go to Bethlehem. But who will show us the way? In Bethlehem the Savior has come.

Pulpit: Good News!

Lectern: Great Joy!

All: Go, tell it!

Who Will Show Us the Way? Mary and Joseph:

Matthew 1:18-25

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; 19 and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; 21 she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

22 All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

Let us go to Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph will show us the way. In Bethlehem the Savior has come.

Pulpit: Good News!

Lectern: Great Joy!

All: Go, tell it!



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,
 2 He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and Lord of all,
 3 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re - deem - ing love;
 4 Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the ox - en stand - ing by,



where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for his bed:
 and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall;
 for that child so dear and gen - tle is our Lord in heav'n a - bove;
 we shall see him; but in heav - en, set at God's right hand on high;



Mar - y was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.
 with the poor and meek and low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
 and he leads his chil - dren on to the place where he is gone.
 there his chil - dren gath - er round, bright like stars, with glo - ry crowned.

Text: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818–1895
 Music: IRBY, Henry J. Gauntlett, 1805–1876

Who Will Show Us the Way? The Manger: Luke 2: 1-7

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Let us go to Bethlehem. The manger will show us the way. In Bethlehem the Savior has come.

Pulpit: Good News!

Lectern: Great Joy!

All: Go, tell it!

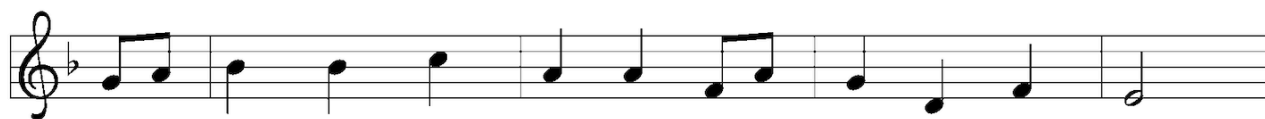
Carol

Away in a Manger

Cranberry 278



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed,
2 The cat - tle are low - ing; the ba - by a - wakes,
3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay



the lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down his sweet head;
but lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes.
close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.



the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
I love you, Lord Je - sus; look down from the sky
Bless all the dear chil - dren in your ten - der care



the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
and stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
and fit us for heav - en, to live with you there.

Text: North American, 19th cent.

Music: CRADLE SONG, William J. Kirkpatrick, 1838–1921

Who Will Show Us the Way? The Shepherds: Luke 2:8-18

8 And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. 10 And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; 11 for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!" 15 When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." 16 And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. 17 And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; 18 and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told were astonished.

Let us go to Bethlehem. The shepherds will show us the way. In Bethlehem the Savior has come.

Pulpit: Good News!

Lectern: Great Joy!

All: Go, tell it!

SERMON

Pastor Jan LaVake

HYMN OF THE DAY

Angels We Have Heard on High

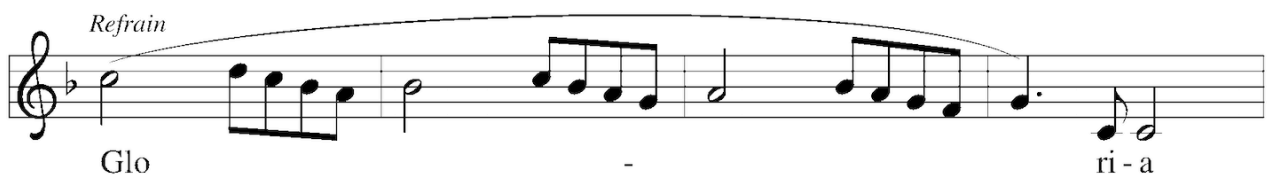
Cranberry 289



1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
 2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;

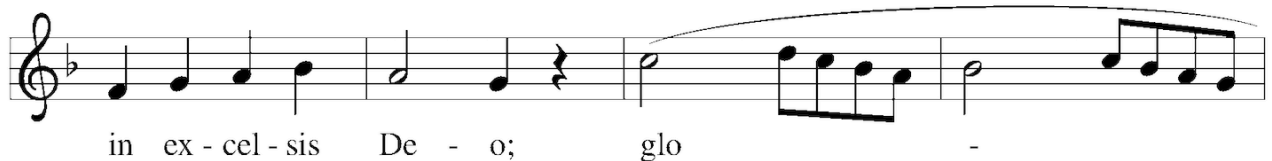


and the moun-tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
 What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
 come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.



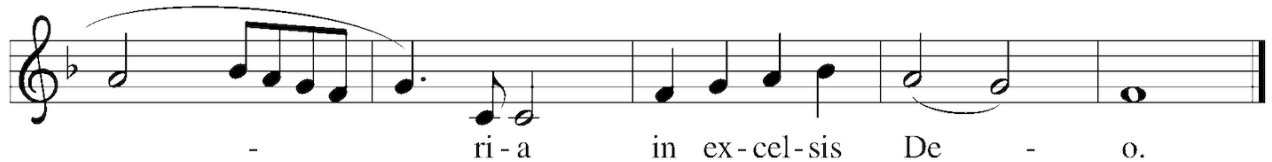
Glo

ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o;

glo



ri - a

in ex - cel - sis

De

o.

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864
 Music: GLORIA, French carol

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of righteousness, when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice, you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of life, you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ's siblings. Pour out your compassion in every place your people suffer, and protect them in the palm of your hand.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

For what else do the people of God pray?

Spoken and silent prayers welcome.

God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones. Even as we mourn, we offer thanks for those who have gone before us, trusting in your comfort and protection. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

PEACE

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

Please pass the peace of Christ with one another.

Please be seated.

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

MEAL

OFFERING

OFFERTORY CAROL

What Child is This

Cranberry 296

*What child is this, who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!*

OFFERTORY PRAYER

God of glory,
great are your wonders among us
and many are the blessings you bestow.
Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world,
that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace,
through Christ our Savior. 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 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



1 The first No - el the an - gel did say was to
 2 They look - ed up and saw . . a star shin - ing
 3 And by the light of that . . same star three . .
 4 This star drew near to the . . north - west, o'er . .
 5 Then en - tered in those wise . . men three, full . .



cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where
 in . . the east . . be - yond . . them far; and to the
 wise . . men came . . from coun - try far; to seek for a
 Beth - le - hem . . it took . . its rest; and there it
 rev - 'rent - ly . . . up - on . . their knee, and of - fered



they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's
 earth it gave . . . great light, and . . so it con -
 king was their . . . in - tent, and to fol - low the
 did both stop . . . and stay right . . o - ver the
 there in his . . . pres - ence their . . gold, . . . and



night that was so deep.
 tin-ued both day and night.
 star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -
 place where Je - sus lay.
 myrrh, and frank - in - cense.



el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

Text: English traditional

Music: THE FIRST NOWELL, English traditional

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Incarnate God,

you are among us at this table.

**May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts
the mystery of your presence.**

**Move us to discover the wonders of your love
in the everyday moments of our lives,
through Christ born in us. Amen.**

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

SENDING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you to Pastor Jan LaVake for leading worship today and thank you to Kadin for the music!

On January 4th our worship service will not have communion. We will be having readings & carols.

Elta & Laurance, our Haitian friends & students are expecting a baby boy mid February. We would like to shower them with gifts of needed baby boy items. Please bring items to church by January 11th.

Please rise in body or in spirit.

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 one who calls,
the one who sends,

and the one who journeys with—
go in peace and be not afraid. **Amen.**

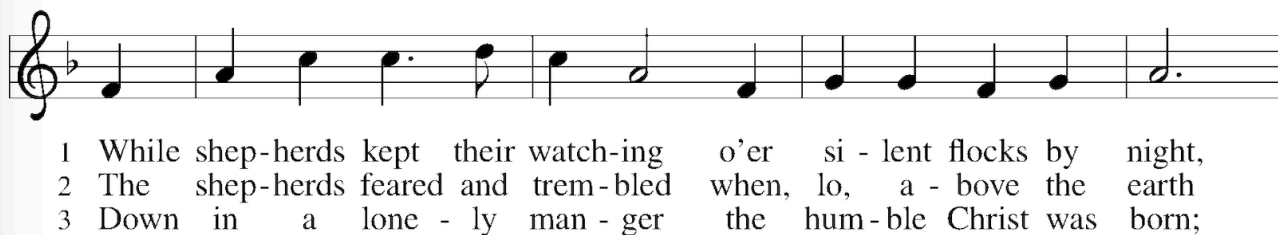
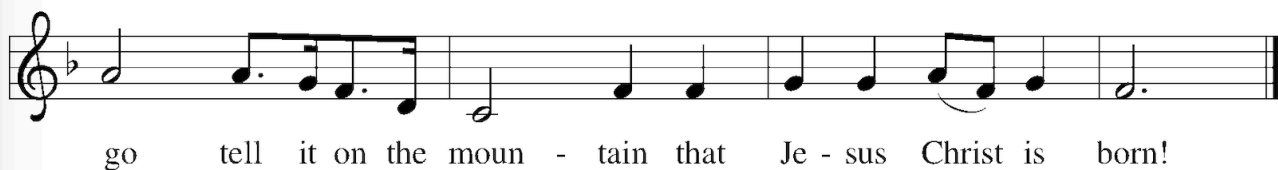
The God of love,
Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit,
lavish you with grace,
illumine your path,
and increase your joy,
today and always. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

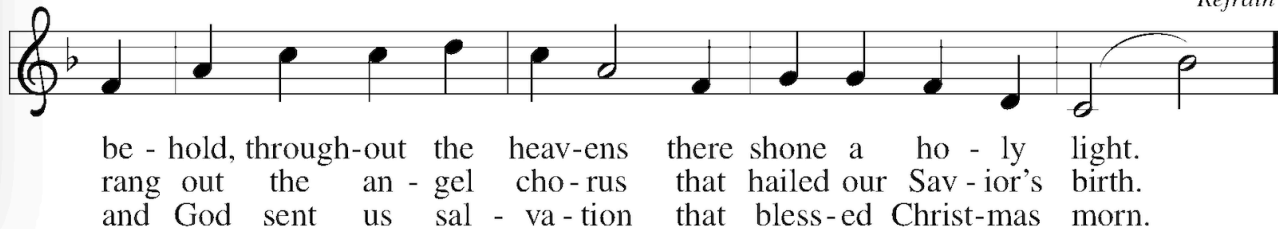
Go Tell It on the Mountain

Cranberry 290

Refrain



Refrain



Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872–1925, stanzas, alt.
Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

DISMISSAL

Let us go to Bethlehem. We can show the way.
In Bethlehem the Savior has come.

Pulpit: Good News!

Lectern: Great Joy!

All: Go, tell it!

Funding for Mission & Budget

Monthly Receipts through 12/22/25	\$16,720.50
Monthly Budget Expenses:	\$20,033.00
YTD Receipts through 11/30/25:	\$209,184.00

The Bethel Weekly

Thank You: to Pastor Jan LaVake for leading today's worship and Kadin Yach for providing the music.

Reverse Advent Calendar: Don't forget to keep checking the list and adding items for the Resurrection Food Pantry.

Baby Shower: Elta & Laurance, our Haitian friends & students are expecting a baby boy mid February. We would like to shower them with gifts of needed baby boy items. Please bring items to church by January 11th.

Fellowship Hour: Please, if you are able to help on a future date in January, sign up in the hallway.

2026 Offering Envelopes: Are available in the lounge.

Annual Reports Due: All Bethel committee and organization chair-persons are asked to turn in their annual reports to the church office **by January 15th** so that the 2025 Annual Report can be printed and made available to the congregation by February 1st.

Bethel Photo Directory: Ashley has been updating the Directory. Please let her know if you have contact information to update. If you'd like an updated photo you can email the church or bring it to the office for scanning.

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Great Thanksgiving adapted from *Connections: Worship Companion YrC Vol1* edited
by David Gambell.

Liturgy adapted from *How Does a Weary World Rejoice?*

written by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org