

BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Sunday, December 22, 2024

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Worship Leader: Pastor Randy Koppenhaver

Organist: Kathy Bowe

If listening from your car, please tune to 101.3 FM

***= Please rise in body or spirit**

CENTERING BREATH PRAYER: as you inhale, say the first part of the prayer to yourself, and say the second part as you exhale. Repeat 5x

My spirit rejoices :: in God, my Savior

RINGING OF THE BELLS

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP #216 v.1 "While We are Waiting, Come"
While we are waiting, come. While we are waiting, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, While we are waiting, come.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

**ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY MAGNIFICAT LITANY | LUKE 1:46B-55
AND PSALM 80:1-7. {a}**

My soul magnifies the Lord! My Spirit rejoices in God, our Savior. Holy is his name! Let your face shine upon us, Lord, and we shall be saved.

For the Mighty One has done great things for us. Holy is his name!

His mercy lasts for generations and generations on those who fear him.
Let your face shine upon us, Lord, and we shall be saved.

He has shown strength with his arm.
He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He has pulled down tyrants from their thrones.
He has filled the hungry and sent the rich away empty.

Holy is his name! **Holy is his name!**

Stir up your might and come save us! You who are enthroned above the heavens,
shine with eternal light. **Let your face shine upon us, Lord, and we shall be saved.**

Hear the cries and prayers of your people! Wipe away our tears and give us your
peace. **Turn to us again, Lord! Let your face shine upon us and we shall be saved.**

The Lord is coming in mercy as he promised to our ancestors.
Come quickly, Lord Jesus.— *(The lighting of the advent candles)*

*OPENING PRAYER {b}

**O God, our Savior,
with Mary, our spirits rejoice in you this day,
for you look with favour on your people.
You have done great things for us.
You have scattered the proud and lifted up the lowly.
You have filled the hungry with good things,
and kept the promises made to our ancestors.
Your mercy is known from generation to generation.
And so, we praise and magnify your holy name and worship you
as Creator, Christ and Spirit. Amen**

*OPENING HYMN #111

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

PRAYER OF NEW LIFE AND TRANSFORMATION {b}

Merciful God, in your gracious presence
we confess our sins and the sins of this world.

**Although we have found love in Christ,
we are a people divided against ourselves
and against one another.**

**We have not loved as you love us
and we have too often been careless
with our words, our bodies
and how we treat others and your world.**

**We abuse your good gifts
of imagination and freedom,
intellect and reason,
and have turned them into bonds of oppression.**

**Lord have mercy upon us.
Heal us, forgive us and set us free
to serve you in the world
as agents of your reconciling love in Jesus Christ.**
(moment of silent reflection)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE {b}

Hear and believe this Good News: **our sins are forgiven and we are a new creation**, the old life is gone, **the new life has come**; know that we are forgiven and we should have the courage and love to forgive others. **Thanks be to God!**

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

“Gloria Patri”

**Glory be to the Father, And to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, Is now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen, Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Micah 5:2–5a - The Ruler from Bethlehem

² But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has brought forth;

then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

⁴ And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;

⁵ and he shall be the one of peace.

Luke 1:39–55

39 In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

46 And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

SERMON

*HYMN: #88

“Canticle of the Turning”

PRAYER CONCERNS

CALL TO PRAYER #403 “Lord, Listen to your Children Praying”

**Lord, listen to your children praying, Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying, Send us love, send us pow'r, send us
grace.**

PASTORAL PRAYER {b}... 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into
temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

POST PRAYER RESPONSE #403 “Lord, Listen to your Children Praying”

CALL TO THE OFFERING {c} (Jingle Change for the month of December supports the
Christmas Fund)

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given. God’s gift in the Christ child
arrived in a small town, a humble stable, to a couple no one invited in – and still
that gift changes lives. Our gifts to God this Christmas share in that miracle.

OFFERTORY

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE Doxology to tune of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below.
Praise God above ye, heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION {b}

**God of life and love, receive our gifts as tokens of our love for you and signs
of our willingness to share that love in the world around us. Bless our lives
as well as our gifts, so that we may be a blessing to others for the sake of
the Christ Child, our Savior and our friend. Amen**

*CLOSING SONG

“Go Now in Peace”

*Go now in peace. Never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.
Go now in faith. Steadfast strong and true.
Know he will guide you, in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there, watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love. A-men, A-men, A-men.*

BENEDICTION {c}

As we seek the ways of God and our Creator's intentions for our lives,
May the Spirit of God enliven us as we love boldly,
May the Spirit of God strengthen us as we create paths of peace.
May the Spirit of God awaken us as we love generously and widely.
A season of birth is imminent, **for God's love is with us as we seek our renewal of life.**

POSTLUDE

**This morning's prayers and liturgies are used with permission from: {a} United Theological Seminary, {b} <https://presbyterian.ca/worship/>, and {c} ucc.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- ☐ There will be no Sunday School next Sunday. Sunday school and Confirmation classes will reconvene on Sunday, Jan 5.
- ☐ Thank you to those who contributed to the Heifer International fund raiser. With your contributions plus a donation by the Merry Christians, we are able to send 3 Heifers, 3 Sheep, 3 Goats, 3 Pigs, 3 Bees and 4 Flocks of Chicks.
- ☐ Food Drive!! Please continue to bring in donations for the Reverse Advent Calendar through Dec. 29.
- ☐ If any individuals or groups are seeking a recipient for end-of-the-year financial donations, United Church Camps, Inc (Moon Beach, Daycholah, Cedar Valley) is holding a capital campaign called Roots & Wings to support our church camps. See Randy for more info.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS -See flyers in fellowship hall for more details

- The Sheboygan County Warming Center is a mission of several churches in the city of Sheboygan, including St. John's UCC. This winter the shelter will be operated at St. Luke United Methodist Church. They are seeking donations of clothing, bedding, travel-sized toiletries, and shelf-stable snacks, along with bus passes and Kwik Trip gift cards. See flyer for more info. Bring your donations to Pastor Randy and he will get them to Sheboygan.



Those in our thoughts and prayers:

Those Grieving:

Mark Beitzel
Gary Steinhardt

Those struggling with health issues:

Gary Rabe	Heidi Konen
Will Mathes	Nancy Zimmermann
Jill Wehmeyer-Sheets	Julie and Addison
Brad Westphalen	Darlene Horneck
Jessica Horneck	Mary Beth Molitor
Marie Rietbrock	Dawson Horneck
Tom Lefeber	
Emily (Melissa's cousin)	

Those unable to worship with us:

Merlin Nimmer Helen Henning

2024 Bethlehem UCC Leadership Team

Elder/President - Steven Voland (920)286-0162 or svoland44@gmail.com

Elder - Traci Rabe (920)894-7903 or trabefamily5@gmail.com

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Treasurer - Jane Umland (920)286-2175 jm59umland@gmail.com
Pastor - Randy Koppenhaver (920)286-2531 randynmel5@gmail.com

December Worship Services:

- Sunday, December 22; 9:30am - Fourth Sunday of Advent Service
- Tuesday, December 24; 6:30pm - Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols
- Wednesday, December 25; 9:30am - Christmas Day Communion Service
- Sunday, December 29; 9:30am - Hymn Sing

This Week at Bethlehem:

Today, Sunday 12/22: 9:30am Worship

Monday 12/23:

Tuesday 12/24: 6:30pm Christmas Eve Service of Lessons & Carols

Wednesday 12/25: 9:30am Worship w/ Communion

Thursday 12/26:

Friday 12/27: *Happy Birthday Ryan Jeanty!*

Saturday 12/28:

Sunday 12/29: 9:30am Worship w/ Hymn sing

**December Pantry Items:
Box of Cereal**