



**BETHLEHEM UNITED  
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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**December 25, 2025**

**Christmas Day Worship**

**Worship Leader: Rev. Randy Koppenhaver**

**Organist: Polly Jeanty**

*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

***Joy to the World :: The Lord has Come***

RINGING OF THE BELLS/ "HALLELUJAH!"

CALL TO WORSHIP AND LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

One: Christmas Day is a time for rejoicing!

**All: Arise and shine for our light has come. The time of waiting is over.**

One: Amid all that is still wrong in the world, we proclaim that God comes to us in Jesus Christ.

**All: Arise and shine for our light has come. The glory of God is revealed.**

One: We gather on this joyful day, to celebrate the mystery of Christ's love that will never let us go.

**All: Arise and shine for our light has come. The glory of God is revealed.  
Our Saviour is born.**

One: As we light the Christ candle, trust that the light of God has come in Jesus and can never be put out. Stand open to the presence and power of God with us in Christ, here and now.

*The Christ Candle is lit.*

HYMN/CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP #107 all "Joy to the World"

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

\*OPENING PRAYER (adapted from John 1:1-14)

One: The Word was with God, the Word is with us now.

**All: Thanks be to God for the birth of Jesus.**

One: The light shines in the darkness, the darkness of our troubled world.

**All: Thanks be to God for Jesus, the light-bringer.**

One: Unrecognized, unappreciated, he went about his ministry.

**All: Thanks be to God for Jesus, who brings change through love.**

One: The children of God see his glory and rejoice.

**All: Thanks be to God for God's Word beyond words – graceful, truthful, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

HYMN #123

"Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

## PRAYER OF AFFIRMATION

One: Give us, Almighty God, the reassurance of the angel,

**All: stilling the fear that is within us.**

One: Give us, Living God, the peaceful chorus of the angels,

**All: countering all that is at war within us, and within our relationships.**

One: Give us, Compassionate God, the perception of the shepherds,

**All: to search for the highest good in ourselves, and in others.**

One: Give us, Loving God, the gentleness of Mary,

**All: that it may reveal the harsh and impatient parts of ourselves.**

*Time of silent reflection...*

## WORDS OF GRACE

One: You see clearly, in the light of Jesus Christ.

**All: In the light of Christ, our darkness is exposed, confronted, rejected, and dispelled.**

One: You are now forgiven people, people of the light!

God's peace is yours!

**All: Thanks be to God! Amen.**

\*RESPONSE

"Gloria in Excelsis Deo"

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

**Isaiah 52:7-10 - NIV**

<sup>7</sup> How beautiful on the mountains  
are the feet of those who bring good news,  
who proclaim peace,  
who bring good tidings,  
who proclaim salvation,  
who say to Zion,  
“Your God reigns!”  
<sup>8</sup> Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices;  
together they shout for joy.  
When the Lord returns to Zion,  
they will see it with their own eyes.  
<sup>9</sup> Burst into songs of joy together,  
you ruins of Jerusalem,  
for the Lord has comforted his people,  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.  
<sup>10</sup> The Lord will lay bare his holy arm  
in the sight of all the nations,  
and all the ends of the earth will see  
the salvation of our God.

**Psalm 98** - p. 679 of hymnal – Leader reads odd verses, people even

### **John 1:1-14 - NIV**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome<sup>[a]</sup> it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

<sup>9</sup> The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup> He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— <sup>13</sup> children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup> The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

ANTHEM

“Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth”

LITANY FOR CHRISTMAS DAY by Fran Pratt, 2015

Gracious, generous God:

On this day we celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ, Your Son, Your Self in human form.

**We celebrate the Son of God.**

We are transfixed by the story of Jesus.

We looked for a warrior;

**You sent a baby.**

We looked for royalty;

**You were born to peasants.**

We looked for power

**You showed us meekness.**

We looked among rulers and politicians;

**You were found among cattle and shepherds.**

We looked for military victory;

**You gave us resurrection.**

We looked for riches;

**You gave us selflessness.**

We looked for a king;

**You gave us a servant.**

We worship Jesus, the humble hero of God's Redemption Story.

May we become more sensitive to the themes of that story

**seeking peace,**

**embracing vulnerability,**

**humbling ourselves,**

**looking for glory in lowly places.**

May we recognize our part in the story,

**our place as Christ-followers**

**our calling to gentleness and humility**

**our opportunities to give our most profound gifts.**

May we grow ever more like Jesus, and live in the light of His presence and example. **Amen**

\*HYMN #125 vs. 1,2,4

“Angels from the Realm of Glory”

## HOLY COMMUNION

(God's table is open to ALL, regardless of affiliation or membership. Please hold the elements until all have been served and we will partake together. All bread is gluten free. The inner circles are grape juice, the outer rings are wine.)

### INVITATION

#### THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And with you also.**

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 God thanks and praise.**

Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth...we join the whole creation to lift our hearts in joyful praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

We give you thanks, holy God...and to proclaim the mystery of our faith:

**Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.**

### CONSECRATION OF THE ELEMENTS

#### THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

#### THE DISTRIBUTION

#### PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (worshiptraining.com)

**As this bread is Christ's body for us, send us out to be the body of Christ in the world. Empower us by your Spirit, O God, to be Christ's presence in the world even as Jesus was God-with-us. Give us courage to speak his truth, to seek his justice, and to love with his love. Keep us faithful in your service until Christ comes in final victory and we shall feast with all your saints in the joy of your eternal realm. Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.**

RESPONSE #82 v. 1

“O Come let us Adore Him”

PASTORAL PRAYER ... 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.**

\*HYMN #121 all

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

CALL TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY At Bethlehem United Church of Christ, we collect TWO offerings each Sunday. Our regular operational offering is collected in the wooden plate. In the metal cans, we collect loose change and small bills for a monthly designated benevolent collection. December’s Jingle Change supports the UCC’s Christmas Fund. (*“The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.”*)

OFFERTORY

\*OFFERTORY RESPONSE Doxology to tune of “The First Noel”

**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.**

**Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel**

**Born is the King of Israel.**

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION <sup>(c)</sup>

One: We offer our gifts, remembering the gift of love  
we have received in Jesus Christ.

**All: Gifts to bring a sense of wonder, to those whose vision is limited;  
gifts to bring peace to those who are in conflict;  
gifts to bring love to those who feel unloved.**

One: Bless these our gifts, O God, bless the spirit of our giving,

and bless those in whom these gifts will come alive. Amen.

\*CLOSING SONG #97 all "Good Christian Friends Rejoice"

COMMISSIONING (from John 1)

One: Light shines in the darkness;

**All: a light to all peoples.**

One: This light is the light of truth;

**All: the truth that enlightens us.**

One: The Word became flesh,

**All: and graciously lives with us.**

**Glory to God! Glory to God!**

POSTLUDE

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\*\*liturgies and prayers used with permission from Sparks, David. *Prayers to Share-Year A*, Wood Lake Books, 2002

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Pastor Randy will be out of state 12/25-12/30. In the event emergency pastoral care is needed, Rev. Dan Krueger of Saron UCC has agreed to be on call. 920-946-3351
- Bethlehem's ANNUAL MEETING will be held on Sunday, Jan. 25 after a short worship service. Please plan to attend! Also, any annual report items for the "packet" need to be submitted to Traci by Sunday, Jan. 4. (trabefamily5@gmail.com) Thank you!
- Chili Supper Tickets Available – packets of 10 tickets for the February 4, 2026 Chili Supper are available in the Fellowship Hall. Please sign out any packets you take. If you'd like less than 10 please see Kaye Radder. Payment is due by Feb 4.
- Bethlehem UCC is signed up to work at the Sheboygan Warming Center on Sunday, January 26. The shift is from 6pm-9pm. The work involves setting up for dinner, serving dinner, washing dishes (commercial dishwasher) and cleaning up. There are five slots available. Sign up in the fellowship hall.
- CALLING NEW MEMBERS!! If you've been visiting for a while and feel like Bethlehem is a "good fit" for you, we will be inducting new members on Sunday, February 8. We will meet at 8:45 am that morning for a little paperwork and Bethlehem "education," followed by the induction during worship. We will celebrate after worship with a reception. Please see Pastor if you'd like to join Bethlehem, or if you have questions.

### **Community Announcements – See flyers in fellowship hall for details.**

Do you find technology daunting? The Manitowoc ADRC is holding a workshop on 2/25/26 and 3/4/26 from 2-4pm. See flyer for details.

IN OUR  
*Thoughts and Prayers*

**Those Grieving:**

The Family of Tom Phillip, Jr  
The Family of Jeanette Wriedt  
The Family of Will Mathes

**Those struggling with health issues:**

Louie Bowe	Dawson Horneck
Heidi Konen	Darlene Horneck
Brad Westphalen	Jessica Horneck
Sofia	Melissa
Hubert	Larry
Chase Goekes	Tyler Smith
Mark	Molly
Willow	Margaret

**Those unable to worship with us:**

Merlin Ninmer      Helen Henning

**This Week at Bethlehem:**

**Thursday 12/25:** 9:30am Christmas Worship w/ Communion

**Friday 12/26:**

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

**Sunday 12/28:** NO Sunday School; 9:30am Sunday Worship w/ Hymn Sing

**December Panty Item: Box of Cereal**

