

# Sunday December 17, 2023

## Third Sunday of Advent



### **BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH OF MALMO**

21590 State Highway 47, Isle, MN 56342

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Church Web Site: [blcmalmo.org](http://blcmalmo.org)

## **Pastor James Muske**

320 583-5796

Parish Nurses: Darlene Christensen, RN 320-279-0097

Kathy Berland RN ANP 218-838-6181

Prayer Chain Contacts: Char Berg 320-684-2102 or

Darlene Christensen 320-279-0097

Church Secretary: Mary Braun

Ministers: All Members of the Congregation

### ***MISSION STATEMENT***

*We will **LIVE** and **SERVE** through **FAITH***

*we will **ACT** with **LOVE** and **KINDNESS***

*we will **GIVE** hope and **SUPPORT** to all.*

**Hearing Assistance is available during the service.**

**Please notify usher if you would like assistance.**

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **PRAYER & CARE LIST:**

**CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S CLUB** Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> at 12:30 at Wahkon Inn. Lunch and sing-along. \$13 call Lois for reservations (320) 674-0136. See the poster in the Narthex for more information.

**LOOKING FOR A COUNCIL SECRETARY** Judie Birk is resigning from her secretary position on the council, and we are looking for a replacement starting in Jan. 2024. Thank you, Judie, for your years of service.

**LECTORS NEEDED** we are looking for volunteers to read aloud the scriptures on Sunday mornings. Sign-up sheets are in the Fellowship Hall and include the weekly readings.

**MISSION & EVANGELISM PLANNING SESSION** We're trying to collect ideas from as many people who are willing to participate in a brainstorming session after the Band Concert lunch on Dec 19.( about 1:00-1:30). Our goal is to create an agenda that covers Bethesda's giving of dollars and service but also how to make a visible outreach that attracts new members. If you have an idea or suggestions but can't make the meeting, please send an email to this group. Last year many of us met to plan The Year of Service which involved Temple Talks sharing awareness of the needs and opportunities to serve various organizations. That was a successful plan, and we hope to come up with something similar.

**CHRISTMAS GIVING 2023** Part of our local benevolence money goes to giving families in our area food gift cards to help with holiday expenses. There is a suggestion box in the entry way to fill out for someone in the area who could use a gift card (Gift cards come from either Teals or Paulbecks). Give us their name and address by December 18<sup>th</sup> so cards can be mailed to them before Christmas.

**ELCA CHRISTMAS GIVING** is also available. There is a display in the fellowship hall, or you can go online at <https://goodgifts.elca.org/>. This is an opportunity to give food support to needy countries by purchasing an animal in the name of someone on your Christmas list.

**CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP** 10:00am Worship – Potluck to follow. Signup sheet in the Fellowship Hall.

**ISLE HIGH SCHOOL  
CHRISTMAS BAND CONCERT**

**PERFORMING AT BETHESDA  
LUTHERAN CHURCH MALMO**

**TUESDAY, DEC. 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2023  
11:00 AM**

**LUNCH SERVED AFTER CONCERT  
*FREE WILL OFFERING***



<b>THIS WEEK AT Bethesda</b>			<b>December 18, 2023 – December 25, 2023</b>
Monday	12/18	11:30 am	Pinochle
		7:00 pm	AA/Alanon
Tuesday	12/19	9:00 am	Chair Yoga
		11:00 am	Isle High School Band Concert & Lunch
Wednesday	12/20	9:00 am	Women’s Bible Study
Thursday	12/21	8:00 am	ROMEOS
		9:15 am	Chair Yoga
		12:30 pm	Christian Women’s Club
Sunday	12/24	3:30 pm	Christmas Eve Worship Live & Streaming
		5:00 pm	Christmas Eve Worship
Monday	12/25	10:00 am	Christmas Day Worship
		11:00 am	Potluck Dinner-all are welcome!

**ADVENT PRAYER**

Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow.  
 You bring water to parched ground and life out of death.  
 Bless us as this light grows,  
 and send sorrow and sighing to flee away.  
 Give us strength and patience,  
 trusting that you are true to your promises.  
 Transform the lives of all who suffer

with your wonders near at hand.

**Amen.**

**OPENING HYMN**

**“Hark, the Glad Sound!”**

**#239 ELW**

*(Please Stand on the last Verse)*



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.

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

**Amen.**

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Everlasting God,

**you love justice and you hate wrongdoing.**

**We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness  
that make us reluctant to work against oppression.  
We are complicit in systems of exploitation.  
We choose comfort over courage.  
We are careless with creation's bounty.  
Look upon us with mercy.  
Turn our hearts again to you.  
Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways  
for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.**

Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all.

**Amen.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

*Stir up our hearts, Lord God,*

**to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

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## **SCRIPTURE**

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### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11**

<sup>1</sup>The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; <sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; <sup>3</sup>to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

<sup>4</sup>They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

<sup>8</sup>For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

<sup>9</sup>Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

<sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

<sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God**

### **PSALM: Psalm 126**

<sup>1</sup> When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.

<sup>2</sup> **Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.”**

<sup>3</sup> The LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

<sup>4</sup> **Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses of the Negeb.**

<sup>5</sup> Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.

<sup>6</sup> **Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

### **SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**

<sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise the words of prophets, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast to what is

good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup>May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God**

## **GOSPEL: John 1:6-8, 19-28**

### **Glory to you, O Lord**

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

<sup>19</sup>This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” <sup>20</sup>He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.”

<sup>22</sup>Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” <sup>23</sup>He said,

“I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ ”

as the prophet Isaiah said.

<sup>24</sup>Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup>They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” <sup>26</sup>John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, <sup>27</sup>the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” <sup>28</sup>This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

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

## **CANTATA “The Advent of Hope, the Birth of Peace”**

### **PRAYERS of INTERCESSION**

With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God’s day of restoration.

*A brief silence.*

Fill our mouths with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy as we bear witness to the great things you have done. Give your church a spirit of gladness as we gather and as we are sent. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Let the trees of the field sing your praise. Protect forests, orchards, rainforests, and all wooded areas from disease and deforestation. Keep us grateful for their gifts of oxygen, food, shade, and shelter. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

You love justice and promise your favor to those who are oppressed, brokenhearted, and incarcerated. Grant wisdom and compassion to those who work for public safety and all who work within prisons, jails, and courts, that mercy may increase and violence wither away. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Give us strength to pray for our world without ceasing and provoke us toward love and good deeds for all who are in need (*especially*). Provide for all without adequate housing, food, employment, or access to health care. Empower us as helpers and advocates. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Open our hearts to those who serve as truth-tellers in our church and in our society. Bless leaders in church and society in their task of proclamation. Amplify voices of peacemakers, advocates, and especially those whose voices are ignored or marginalized. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

With gratitude we rejoice in the saints (*especially*) who witnessed to your life in all circumstances, in whom your Spirit was not quenched, even in death. Through them, teach us always to hold fast to what is good. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

**Amen.**



**PEACE** *Please be seated for the passing of the offering plate.*

**OFFERING** - *Please stand as the ushers bring the offering to the altar.*

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

God our provider,

**by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

### **THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD**

Let us pray.

Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you. For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

**Amen.**

### **BLESSING**

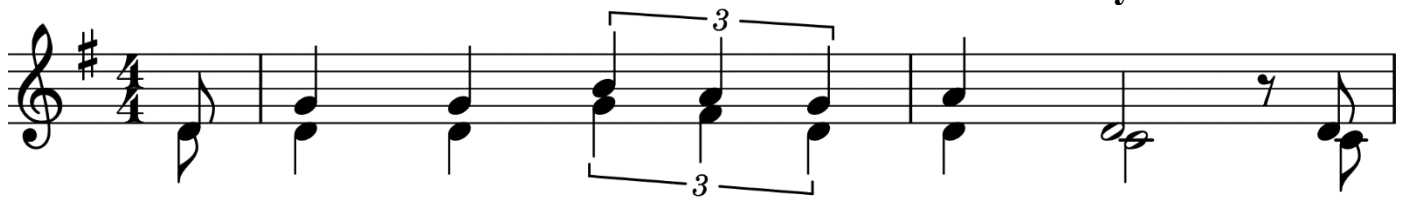
The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit ✠ remain upon you now and forever.

**Amen.**

**CLOSING HYMN:**

**“He Came Down”**

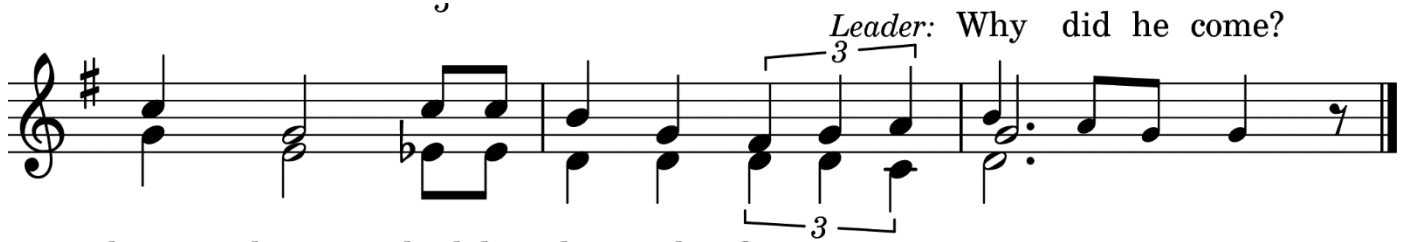
**Music by John Koziol**



1 He came down that we may have love; he  
2 He came down that we may have light; he  
3 He came down that we may have peace; he  
4 He came down that we may have joy; he



came down that we may have love; he came down that we may  
came down that we may have light; he came down that we may  
came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may  
came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may



have love; hal-le - lu - jah for-ev - er - more.  
have light; hal-le - lu - jah for-ev - er - more.  
have peace; hal-le - lu - jah for-ev - er - more.  
have joy; hal-le - lu - jah for-ev - er - more.

TEXT: Cameroon song

MUSIC (HE CAME DOWN, LM): Cameroon melody; transcr. and arr. John L. Bell, 1986; arr. © 1986 WGRG, Iona Community (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

*Visitors! It has been great having you join us for worship!  
Please come again.*

**THOSE SERVING THIS WEEK**

Music: Adult Choir and John Koziol

Greeters: Wally & Bev Swenson

Ushers: Gary & Brenda Sjerven

Lector: Merrily Jones

Hospitality:

*Thank you for your service!*

Response to God's Word Last Week

Sunday, December 10, 2023: In Person: 9:00am 60 Online: x