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# BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH OF MALMO

21590 State Highway 47, Isle, MN 56342

November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

9:00 a.m.

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## First Sunday of Advent



We are a community that is passionate about sharing the love of Jesus Christ, and we provide as many opportunities as we can to help everyone grow spiritually, and in loving service to the community and the world.

Whether you are joining us in-person or online, we're glad you're here. We are a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and celebrate the work we're able to do together as a denomination (to learn more about the ELCA visit [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)).

Please take a moment to sign the friendship notebook in the black folder at the end of your pew. Passing it along is a simple act of hospitality that helps us learn one another's names and extend the warmth of Christ's welcome to all.

We celebrate the presence of children in worship and at Holy Communion.

We believe worship is for all of God's people, no matter the age.

For those who may need a quieter space, an unstaffed nursery is available through the double doors to the left as you exit the sanctuary. Caregivers are invited to assist children in extending their hands if they wish to receive the bread and wine. Children's bulletins and activity bags are available at the sanctuary entrance.

‡ **GATHERING IN GOD'S PRESENCE** ‡

~ *The assembly responds together with texts in bold print* ~

**WELCOME**

**LIFE TOGETHER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Find the full list of Life Together announcements near the end of the bulletin.*

## CALL TO WORSHIP

On Sundays and Mondays,  
**on good days and bad days,**  
early in the morning and very late at night,  
**here in this room, and out in the world,**  
**God, we long for you to break in.**

Meet us in this space.

**Surprise us with your presence.**

Fill this room with your good news.

**With hope, we sing, we worship, we pray. Amen!**

## CANDLE LIGHTING

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.**

You are right. 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.**

### My Lord, What a Morning

*Refrain*



My Lord, what a morn-ing; my Lord, what a morn - ing; oh,



my Lord, what a morn-ing, when the stars be - gin to fall.



- 1 You will hear the trum - pet sound,
- 2 You will hear the sin - ner cry, to wake the na-tions un-der - ground,
- 3 You will hear the Chris-tian shout,



look-ing to my God's right hand, when the stars be-gin to fall.

*Refrain*

Text: African American spiritual  
Music: BURLIEGH, African American spiritual

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

*The presiding minister leads the call to confession*

*The gathering responds:* Join me as we invite God to draw closer, to break in here.  
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.**

## **GREETING**

The immeasurable grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the rich mercy and love of God, and the unity of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

## **PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION**

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.**

## **✠ HEARING GOD'S WORD ✠**

## **POETRY READING**

### ***"In the Time of Herod"***

*by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org*

I didn't live during Herod's time—that brutal, murderous king, *God save his soul.*  
But even hundreds of years later, I know the prayers of his people.  
I know the prayers of the mothers and the children under his rule.  
I know the prayers of the young men under his angry arm.  
I know their prayers, because anyone who has ever lived in this soft world for more than two days knows how to pray for a miracle.  
We rub our hands together.  
We fold weary shoulders in,  
a cage of bone to protect our bleeding hearts.  
We sing, *we shall overcome and bind my wandering heart to thee.*  
We walk across bridges and in front of powerful buildings.  
We cover our cars in stickers that scream, *we will not give up!*  
We allow a hungry cry to slip from our lips,  
giving our lament a life of its own (with room to dance!).  
And when all of that is said and done, we whisper to our creator,  
*God, break through the yelling and the fear. Break through the violence and the oppression. Get past the Herods of this world, and come be here.*  
Like every bleeding heart before, we pray for a miracle.

## SCRIPTURE READING

Lamentations 3:55-57

In these words from Lamentations, we hear a voice crying out from a place of fear and deep sorrow. The poet's honesty becomes a kind of prayer naming the darkness, while trusting that God still listens. As we enter this season of watching and waiting, we're reminded that even in our lowest places, God draws near and whispers, "Do not be afraid."

A reading from Lamentations

<sup>55</sup> I called on your name, O Lord,  
from the depths of the pit;  
<sup>56</sup> you heard my plea, "Do not close your ear  
to my cry for help, but give me relief!"  
<sup>57</sup> You came near when I called on you;  
you said, "Do not fear!"

*Following the reading the gathering responds:*  
Word of God. Word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL READING

Luke 1:5-13

In today's Gospel, fear meets promise. Zechariah stands in the holy place, doing what he has always done and suddenly, the ordinary shimmers with the presence of God. An angel appears, and fear fills the room. Yet the first word spoken is grace "Do not be afraid." For even in our trembling, God is already at work, birthing new hope we cannot yet imagine.

The Holy Gospel according to Luke  
This is the story of God's unconditional love flowing down.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>5</sup> In 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. <sup>6</sup> Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. <sup>7</sup> But they had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

<sup>8</sup> Once when he was serving as priest before God during his section's turn of duty, <sup>9</sup> he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to offer incense. <sup>10</sup> Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. <sup>11</sup> Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup> When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified, and fear overwhelmed him. <sup>13</sup> 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 is proclaimed, concluding:*  
This is the story of grace upon grace that covers us.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

# In the Time of Herod

CRANHAM 11.11.11.11

Words by Anna Strickland, 2025

Music by Gustav Holst, 1906



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

In a world where fear can feel louder than hope, we return to what we believe. These are words to remind our hearts that even in the longest night, God is with us. Let us join together in our Words of Affirmation.

**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

Inbreaking God, every time we read the story of Zechariah in the temple, we remember that you are a God that draws near.

**You are a God that breaks into the messy middle of our lives to offer hope, love, and good news. You are a God who sees our fears and offers words of comfort.**

So once more, present God, we bow our heads.

**Once more we quiet the racing thoughts in our minds.**

**Once more we allow our spirits to lean toward you like trees in the wind.**

**And as we do, we bring you our prayers.**

God, today we are grateful for the many amazing things in this world that leave us speechless.

*The presiding minister shares prayers of gratitude...*

It can be hard to put into words how grateful we truly are. However, in addition to prayers of gratitude, gracious God, we also bring you prayers of grief.

*The presiding minister shares prayers of lament...*

God, the hurt and longing in this world is enough to leave us speechless.

**So just as you did for Zechariah, draw near to us, O God, remind us that we are not alone and that our prayers have been heard as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. Amen.**

## PEACE

May Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, fill you with love, mend you with mercy and grant you peace. **And also with you.**

*Christ's peace is a gift that renews and connects us. Having received that peace, we now share it with one another as a sign of God's love among us.*

*The gathering is seated.*

## OFFERING

*Giving is an act of worship our response to God's goodness and grace.*

*Your gifts support the ministry of Bethesda Lutheran Church and extend God's love into the world. During this time the table is set.*

*For the healing of this world, let us give our tithes and offerings.*

Ways to Give:

Place your offering in the plate as it is passed by the ushers.

Give electronically through Vanco Services. Forms available in the Narthex.

Use the giving app by scanning the QR code.

Recurring or one-time online options <https://app.autobooks.co/pay/bethesda-lutheran-church-of-malmo>



*Thank you for your faithful and generous support.*

## **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

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.**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

*The presiding minister leads the communion liturgy.*

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

As beloved children of God, with hope,  
in our hearts we unite our voices to pray the prayer Jesus taught us, saying:  
**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.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

*Holy Communion is a gift of grace, where we receive the presence of Jesus in bread and wine and are reminded that we are deeply loved. All who hunger for mercy and hope are welcome at this feast. Jesus is the host, and the invitation is wide.*

Communion Notes:

- Gluten-free wafers are available, please let your server know.
- Alcohol-free juice is located in the center of each tray (lighter in color).
- If you prefer to receive communion at your seat, please inform an usher.
- If you choose not to commune, you are warmly invited to come forward to receive a blessing.

Here is life. God is with us.  
Come, receive what God has promised.

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

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.**

## **BENEDICTION**

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.**

# Christ, Be Our Light



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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*We're so glad you joined us for worship today.*

*Wherever life finds you, know that this community welcomes you with open hearts.*

*Come again and share in our life of service, prayer, and fellowship.*

*Join us in the Fellowship Hall after worship for coffee, tea, treats, and conversation.*

*It's a wonderful time to connect, and we're grateful for all*

*who help make this time of fellowship possible.*



Acknowledgements: Texts and hymns from [sundaysandseasons.com](http://sundaysandseasons.com) copyright © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License # SAS028183. New Revised Standard Version updated edition Bible Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Additional Liturgical texts © 2025 Reverend Christina Kadelbach. Words for worship by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org) Adapted for Bethesda Lutheran by Reverend Christina Kadelbach.

## **LIFE TOGETHER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Life Together highlights the rhythms of our shared life at Bethesda- upcoming events, ways to connect, serve, and grow in faith together. Take a look at what's happening and join in where you feel called. There's a place for you here!*

**PRAYER & CARE LIST** PRAYER & CARE LIST: Teri Carlson, Myra Honl, Darlene Meinert, the family of Sandy Miller, Janice Olson, Brenda Sjerven, & Sherry Whipple.

*As a community of faith, we are committed to holding one another in prayer and care. We invite you to pray for those listed here and offer support as you are able. To request prayers for yourself or someone else (with their permission) please contact the church office.*

**COFFEE SERVERS NEEDED** Please sign up to help with hospitality. There are treats in the freezer, we just need your help with serving and clean up.

**LECTORS NEEDED** We need readers to help bring sacred stories of Advent & Christmas to life. The lessons for each week are available on the table in the Narthex. Thank you for sharing your voice.

**BETHESDA QUILTERS** will be displaying and selling their quilts on Sunday, Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>. All quilts are priced to sell.

**CANTATA** will be on December 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am. It will feature the Choir, Bells, & Praise Team.

**POINSETTIA SALES** Orders for poinsettias to be placed in the sanctuary's Christmas poinsettia tree will be taken; the cost is \$15. A member of Altar Care will be in the Fellowship Hall after church services to take orders.

**ANNUAL MEETING** is next Sunday following worship service. Annual reports and 2026 Budget reports are available in the Fellowship Hall.

**HELP DECORATE THE SANCTUARY** Hanging of the Greens for Christmas will be on Thursday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at 10am. All are welcome to help.

**GLORY BAPTIST CHURCH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SALAD LUNCHEON** is Wednesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 12:30pm. This year's theme is "From Broken to Beautiful". See poster in Narthex for more information.

**CHRISTMAS GIVING** 2025 Part of our local benevolence money goes to giving families in our area food cards to help with holiday expenses. Early December there will be a name suggestion box in entry way. Please think about someone in the area who could use a gift card from Petry's, Teals or Paulbeck's. Give us their name and address by December 17<sup>th</sup> so cards can be mailed to them before Christmas.

**ELCA GOOD GIFTS!!** The usual ELCA Christmas Giving is also available. There will be a catalog display in the fellowship hall or go online to 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.

**NAME TAGS HELP US CONNECT** Wearing a name tag is a simple and meaningful way to help us learn each other's names and grow in community. Please remember to wear your reusable name tag each Sunday. Guest name tags are available near the guest book at the main entrance.

**PASTORAL CARE** We care about you! If you are hospitalized, going through a difficult time, or in need of support, please reach out. Contact Pastor Christina or one of our parish nurses, we're here for you.

**WELCOME** If you're visiting today, we're so glad you're here! Your presence is a gift to this community. Pastor Christina would love the chance to get to know you, please

say hello after worship or reach out during the week. You can also leave your name and contact information in the friendship/welcome notebook so we can connect.

### **RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD LAST WEEK**

Sunday, Nov. 23<sup>RD</sup>, 2025: In Person: 94 Online: 16

### **THIS WEEK AT BETHESDA**

Monday	12/1	11:30 am	Pinochle
		3:00 pm	New Testament Bible Study
		7:00 pm	AA/Alanon
Tuesday	12/2	9:00 am	Chair Yoga
		4:00 pm	Bell Practice
		5:30 pm	Cantata Practice
		6:30 pm	Praise Team Practice
Wednesday	12/3	9:00 am	Women's Bible Study
		12:30 pm	Glory Baptist Church Luncheon
Thursday	12/4	8:00 am	ROMEOS
		9:15 am	Chair Yoga
		10:00 am	Hanging of the Greens
Sunday	12/7	9:00 am	Worship in Person & live stream
		10:30 am	Annual Congregational Meeting

### **Bethesda Lutheran Church [blcmalmo.org](http://blcmalmo.org)**

Office: 320-684-2123 (1-877-684-2123) Fax: 320-684-2836

E-mail address: [blcmalmo@gmail.com](mailto:blcmalmo@gmail.com)

*A member congregation of the NE MN Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

**Ministers:** All People of Bethesda Lutheran Church

**Pastoral Ministries:** Reverend Christina Kadelbach

[blc.reverend@gmail.com](mailto:blc.reverend@gmail.com) 218-213-6731

**Church Secretary:** Mary Braun

**Custodial and Maintenance:** Gary Sjerven

**Music Specialist & Sound Technician:** Jim Christensen

**Parish Nurses:** Darlene Christensen, RN, Kathy Berland RN ANP

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

Darlene Christensen 320-279-0097

**Choir Director:** Teri Carlson (currently recovering)

**Interim Choir Director:** Sheila Penoyer

**Hand Bell Choir Director:** Donna Myhre

**Praise Choir:** Darlene & Jim Christensen, Sheila Penoyer, Sherry Whipple

**November Altar Care:** Dianne Jones and Carol Pantsari

**Ushers:** Barry & Donna Ansell

**Greeters:** Jim & Darlene Christensen

**Lector:** Karen Carron

**Hospitality:** *Need Volunteers*

### **Those serving on December 7<sup>th</sup>:**

**Ushers:** Mark & Mary Vukelich

**Lector:** *Need Volunteers*

**Greeters:** Bob & Kat Carlson

**Hospitality:** *Need Volunteers*