
BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH OF MALMO

21590 State Highway 47, Isle, MN 56342

December 28th, 2025

9:00 a.m.

First Sunday of Christmas



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).

Those joining worship online, whether live or later in the week, households are invited to prepare their worship space by creating a home altar. You might include meaningful linens, candles, a cross, enough bread or crackers and wine or juice for everyone at your table, and anything that helps you engage more fully in worship. This altar becomes a gathering place for prayers, songs, communion, and a shared sense of God's presence in your home.

✝ GATHERING IN GOD'S PRESENCE ✝

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

WELCOME

The presiding minister leads the welcome to worship.

LIFE TOGETHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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.**

What Child Is This



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898
Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

The presiding minister leads the call to confession

The gathering responds: Let us pray.

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.

The presiding minister leads the words of forgiveness.

*The gathering responds: **Amen.***

GREETING

*Following the greeting, the gathering responds: **And also with you.***

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O Lord God, **you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

✠ HEARING GOD'S WORD ✠

POETRY READING

"Until We Reach the Sun"

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

Buffaloes are the only animals that run into a storm.
They can smell the snow coming. They can feel the temperature change—
deep in their bones. So they gather together, a pack on the plains.
And with their large lumbering bodies, they run.
They run through snow and ice, wind and rain.
They do not stop until they reach the sun.

When you are afraid, because this world is cruel and harsh,
or because humans are deported and shot without reason,
or because we cannot remember how to talk to each other civilly,
I will be your pack. I will stay by your side.
I will run with you until we reach the sun.

PSALM 148

Psalm 148 is read responsively by whole verse.

The gathering's response is in bold print.

¹ Hallelujah! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise God in the heights.

² **Praise the Lord, all you angels; sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**

³ Praise the Lord, sun and moon; sing praise, all you shining stars.

⁴ **Praise the Lord, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.**

⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord, who commanded, and they were created,

⁶ **who made them stand fast forever and ever,
giving them a law that shall not pass away.**

⁷ Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;

⁸ **fire and hail, snow and fog, tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**

⁹ mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;

¹⁰ **wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds;**

¹¹ sovereigns of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the world;

¹² **young men and maidens, old and young together.**

¹³ Let them praise the name of the Lord,

whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

¹⁴ **The Lord has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants, the children of Israel, a people who are near the Lord. Hallelujah!**

Following the reading, the gathering responds:

Word of God. Word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 2:13-23

In a dream, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus from the jealousy of Herod.

The Birth of a baby is a special thing.

This is the story of God's unconditional love flowing down. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹³ Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

This is the story of grace in the manger that covers us. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

Reverend Christina Kadelbach

It Came upon the Midnight Clear



1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,
2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come with peace - ful wings un - furled,
3 And you, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,
4 For lo! The days are has - t'ning on, by proph - ets seen of old,



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
and still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world.
who toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and slow:
when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,



“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all - gra - cious king.”
A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing,
look now, for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing;
when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.
and ev - er o'er its ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.
oh, rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - gels sing!
and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810–1876
Music: CAROL, Richard S. Willis, 1819–1900

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Let us join together in the 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

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

Silence is held as we prepare for prayer.

Each petition ends with "Hear us, O God."

The gathering responds, "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

*The presiding minister and the gathering greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ. The gathering responds: **And also with you.***

We are changed by Christ's peace and now we have the holy opportunity to extend that peace to others. Share a sign of Christ's peace with others.

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 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.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

*The presiding minister leads the communion liturgy. The gathering responds: **Amen.***

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Rejoicing in the nearness of God, who is born among us in love, and trusting the words our Savior taught, we pray: **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. Even across time and space, God is present in these gifts, and we, the community, are present to one another.

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.

God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!

The First Noel

1 The first Noel 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 . .

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

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

Refrain

night that was so deep.
tin - ued both day and night.
star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -

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.

BLESSING

Following the blessing, the gathering responds: **Amen.**

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice



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.

SENDING

Glory to God in the highest! **And peace to God's people on earth!**

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace. **Thanks be to God.**

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 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 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 Jim Christensen, 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 get in touch with the church office.

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.

WELCOME NOTEBOOK 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.

CHILDREN WELCOME 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.

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.

COFFEE SERVERS NEEDED Thank you for signing up! If you're unable to serve, consider bringing treats to help stock the freezer. Every contribution helps create a warm and welcoming space for conversation and connection.

LECTORS NEEDED The scripture lessons for each week are available on the table in the Narthex. Thank you for sharing your voice.

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD LAST WEEK

Sunday, December 21st, 2025, In Person:62 Online:23

THIS WEEK AT BETHESDA

Monday, December 29th

10:00 am Strategic Planning Meeting

11:30 am Pinochle

7:00 pm AA/Alanon

Tuesday, December 30th

9:00 am Chair Yoga

Wednesday, December 31st

New Year's Eve

Thursday, January 1st, 2026

New Year's Day – Office Closed

Friday, January 2nd

Saturday, January 3rd

Sunday, January 4th Epiphany of Our Lord

9:00 am Worship with Holy Communion

Bethesda Lutheran Church blcmalmo.org

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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 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

December Altar Care: Kat Carlson and Dianne Jones

January Altar Care Karen Elias and Linda Southworth

Ushers: Larry & Carol Pantsari

Greeters: Gary & Brenda Sjerven

Lector: Karen Elias

Hospitality:

Serving on January 4th, 2026 Epiphany of Our Lord

Ushers: Mark & Mary Vukelich

Greeters: Gary & Brenda Sjerven

Lector: Carron Grandchildren

Hospitality: