



Nativity of Our Lord

Christmas Eve

Holy Communion

December 24th, 2025

3:30 pm

*In winter's deepest night, we gather with our fears and our hopes,
waiting for light. The story we hear tonight does not begin in calm or certainty. It begins in the
dark. Angels appear to shepherds who are awake
because fear and watchfulness are part of their lives.*

*And into that night comes good news. Not whispered. Spoken clearly.
Joy meant for everyone. The angels announce that God has come close.
That fear does not get the final word. That peace is being born into the world.
Tonight, we receive that light again. And as we leave, we carry it with us.
The good news still speaks. Still shines. Still sounds louder than fear.*

✝ GATHERING ✝

~ The Holy Spirit calls us together as people of God. ~

~ The gathering responds together with texts in bold print ~

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

On this holy night, we come, dazzled and awe-struck, ready to sing alongside the angels.

**On this holy night, we come, eager and hopeful,
ready to journey alongside the shepherds.**

On this holy night, we come, quietly and tenderly, ready to worship alongside Mary.

**On this holy night, we come, singing, trusting, believing,
proclaiming: good news is louder than fear.**

Let us worship our good news, with-us God.

CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY

In a fearful world, where do you see the presence of God?

We see God's fingerprints all around us.

We see God in the beauty of the stars.

We see God in the love of this community.

We see God in the dreams we hold for a better world.

You are right. Even in a fearful world, God is here. God is all around us.

On this holy night, we light the Christ Candle as a reminder of this good news.

May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world,
God's love is all around us.

Thanks be to God for a love like that! 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.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

The presiding minister leads the call to confession

The gathering responds: Let us pray.

**God of angel choruses, you hang the stars in the sky,
but we do not see them. You fill the night with angelic song,
but we do not hear it. You send shepherds to tell the good news,
but we do not believe them. You bring love into the world,
but we do not seek it.**

Quiet the fear in us that works to rationalize, minimize, and distract from the good news you put forth into the world. Tune our hearts back to your song. With hope we pray, amen.

Family of faith, when the angels arrived in the field that night, the shepherds were afraid. But the angels said:

“Do not be afraid.

I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people.”

This good news is: love freely given, grace radically extended, welcome always offered, belonging never restricted.

Friends, we are seen, loved, welcomed, forgiven, called, and sent to serve.

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

Glory to God in the highest heaven! Glory to God here and now. Alleluia! Amen.

GREETING

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

✠ WORD ✠

~ God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song. ~

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

God of yesterday, today and tomorrow, **we long to catch a glimpse of your Spirit. We listen for the angels’ song. We look for your light. We lean toward your presence among us. On this quiet and holy night, reveal yourself to us once more. Speak through music and voices, through starlight and candlelight, through these ancient words once again. We long to catch a glimpse of you. Amen.**

POETRY READING

“Honeysuckle”

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

There is an abandoned house on my block.

Maybe someone owns it and is just waiting to fix it up,
or maybe it belongs to a family that simply cannot let it go.

Either way, the yard is an overgrown tangle of weeds—
crabgrass and yellow nutsedge, horsetail and clover—
unforgiving and entrenched.

Over the summer, a honeysuckle bush crept
from that forgotten house over the fence and through the yard.

It spilled out in broad patches on the sidewalk. As a result,
you could not pass that mess of a house without the taste of honey in your mouth.
You could not pass that mess of a house without being engulfed in the sweet scent
of something good. It was almost as if the earth was saying, sure,
things are chaotic here,

but pause for a moment. Pull a flower bud off in your fingers. Break the stem.

Slurp the tiny bead of honey at the base.

Remember that even when bad news is unforgiving
and entrenched, good news grows out of its cage, across the sidewalk,
just to get to you.

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 2:1-20

God’s greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the “good news of great joy” and proclaim God’s blessing of peace.

The gospel is presented: 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.**

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

⁸ Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, ¹⁹ and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

The gospel is proclaimed, concluding:

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

MESSAGE

Reverend Christina Kadelbach



Hark! The Herald Angels Sing



1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king;
2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
3 Hail the heav'n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ - teous - ness!



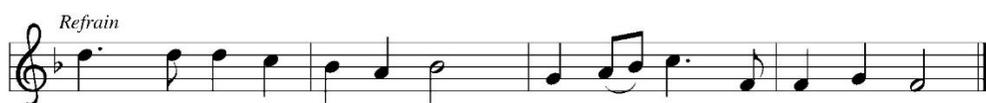
peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."
late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.



Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God - head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.



Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king!"

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, alt.

Music: MENDELSSOHN, Felix Mendelssohn, 1809–1847; arr. William H. Cummings, 1831–1915

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

On this holy night, we join our voices with the shepherds and angels,
Proclaiming the good news of God's love through the affirmation of faith.

We believe that on a night like this one, a baby was born and placed in a manger. We believe that baby was God's love in the flesh, who grew up to love the outcast and change the world. We believe that Jesus' love was so big and so personal that the world will never be the same. So despite the mystery of this holy night, we believe that a star shone, that the shepherds ran, that the angels sang, and that love was born. Yes, we believe it when the prophets say that unto you, unto us, a savior is born. Glory to God in the highest heaven! We believe. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Following the prayer, the gathering responds: 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.*

✠ MEAL ✠

~ God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ. ~

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.

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.

OFFERING 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 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!

O Little Town of Bethlehem



O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

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

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.**

SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

*As the lights dim, Pastor Christina will take the light from the Christ candle and pass it to the ushers, who will bring the flame to those seated along the center aisle. Please **tip only the unlit candle** when receiving the flame.*

Each person will then share the light with their neighbor.

*To prevent wax from dripping, keep the lighted candle upright at all times.
Together, let us share this light as a sign of Christ's love among us.*

Silent Night, Holy Night!
Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht!



Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,
 1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,



ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.
 all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
 at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,



Hold - er Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher
 Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
 heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your



Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.
 peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792–1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820–1885
 Music: STILLE NACHT, Franz Gruber, 1787–1863

BLESSING

Following the blessing, the gathering responds: Amen.

*~ The candles are extinguished. Please hold them upright until the wax has cooled and hardened.
 Place them in the basket in the narthex as you leave. ~*

✠ SENDING ✠

~ God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world. ~

INVITATION



Go Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain

Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;

go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!

1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born;

Refrain

be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872–1925, stanzas, alt.
Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

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.**

Acknowledgements: Texts and hymn #from sundaysandseasons.com copyright © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License # SASo28183. Hymn Numbers in order of service placement ELW288, 270, 296, 279, 282, 281, 280. 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!

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.

CHILDREN INVITED 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.

CHRISTMAS EVE DINNER Join pastor Christina and her family for a festive dinner at Bethesda Lutheran following worship. Come just as you are. No need to bring anything but yourselves.

CHRISTMAS DAY DINNER CHURCH Christmas morning worship with Holy Communion and a meal begins at 10 am on Thursday, December 25th. All are welcome.

WORSHIP AT BETHESDA Sundays at 9:00 am with Holy Communion.

PRAYER & CARE As a community of faith, we are committed to holding one another in prayer and care. To request prayers for yourself or someone else please contact the church office.

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.



POINSETTIAS

Name	Given in Memory/Honor of
Char Berg	Roy Berg
Judie Birk	Family
Chuck & Elsa Carlson	Family
Karen & Rich Carron	Family
Barb & Lee Forrester	Family & Friends
Linda Gommer	Hamman Family & Gommer Family
Anne Hennessey	Family
Dianne & Del Jones	Jack Spetz
Merrily Jones	Husband & Parents
Pr. Christina & Jason Kadelbach	Loved Ones
Darrell Kelly	Family & Friends
Darlene Ryan	Joe Ryan
Jenny Schuett	Dennis & Loved Ones
Penny Sjoquist	Family
Sue & Dick Stebbins	Loved Ones & Others
Joanne & Dave Stueven	Family
Sylvia Tapelt	Joe Tapelt
Bev Wedig	Al, Jen, Travis
Winnie Zahradka	Randy & Family

*Our sincere thanks to those who donated poinsettias in honor or memory of loved ones.
Your gifts have enhanced our worship space, surrounding us with signs of life, beauty, and hope.
Each plant tells a story of love and remembrance,
and together they proclaim the good news of Christ's presence among us.
We are deeply thankful.*

**Welcome to Bethesda Lutheran Church
We're glad you're here this Christmas Eve.**

If you're visiting and would like to learn more about Bethesda or stay connected beyond tonight, we'd love to be in touch. You're invited to fill out this card and leave it in your seat or place it in the offering basket. You may also hand it to Pastor Christina.

*Sharing your information is completely optional.
We're grateful you're here, however you found your way here.*

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

EMAIL



Bethesda Lutheran Church

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

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

Ministers: All People of Bethesda Lutheran Church

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

Ushers: Darrell Kelly & Dick Stebbins

Greeters: Gary and Brenda Sjerven

Hospitality: The Kadelbach Family

Lector: Mary Vukelich