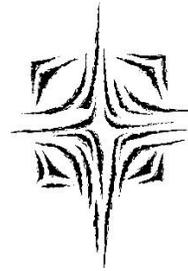

BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH OF MALMO

21590 State Highway 47, Isle, MN 56342

January 4th, 2026

9:00 a.m.



Epiphany of Our Lord

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

LIFE TOGETHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

In the dark of morning, **the stars still shine.**

In the depth of winter, **the birds still climb.**

At the start of the year, tender and new, **God is here. God is near.**

Do not rest in your fear. **God is here.**

So like the stars and the birds, Let us worship holy God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

Friends, on this Epiphany Sunday we stand at the start of a new year, and there is nothing better about a new year than the chance to begin again. That is exactly what we do in the Prayer of Confession.

We speak honestly with God and God surrounds us with grace.

We are able to begin again. So may we start this new year, this new season, this new week with God's grace. Let us pray. Let us begin again.

**Ever-loving God,
we long for Christmas to usher in a season of peace and joy.
However, we know that is not how the world works.**

**Even just days after Christmas,
we find ourselves face to face with fear once again. So today we pray—
forgive us when we allow fear to stop us in our tracks.
Forgive us when our own fear prevents us from following your call.
Forgive us when fear is louder than love.
Show us how to turn our fear into action.
Show us how to live like the magi who searched for you in a fearful world.
With hope we pray, amen.**

Family of Faith, whether you are brave and courageous or fearful and timid,
God's love for you knows no end. So join me in these words of forgiveness:

**Whether fear inspires us to action, or stops us dead in our tracks,
God's love for us is boundless. We are seen. We are surrounded with grace.
We are sent to serve. Thanks be to God! Amen.**

OPENING HYMN: "Arise, Your Light Has Come"

ELW 314



1 A - rise, your light has come! The Spir - it's call o - bey;
2 A - rise, your light has come! Fling wide the pris - on door;
3 A - rise, your light has come! All you in sor - row born,
4 A - rise, your light has come! The moun - tains burst in song!



show forth the glo - ry of your God which shines on you to - day.
pro - claim the cap - tive's lib - er - ty, good tid - ings to the poor.
bind up the bro - ken - heart - ed ones and com - fort those who mourn.
Rise up like ea - gles on the wing, God's pow'r will make us strong.

Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947

Music: FESTAL SONG, William H. Walter, 1825–1893

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GREETING

God who sent the light into our world, God who shone in the Bethlehem manger,
God who spreads the Spirit's rays, be with you all. **And also with you.**

PRAYER

God of the Stars, **like the magi, we come to this place searching for you.
So today, just like every day, we ask that you would remove any barricades
that keep us from your Spirit. Clear out the distractions. Wipe away the**

doubt. Open up our hearts, and speak to us through these ancient words. And as you do, we will keep walking. As you do, we will move toward you. With hope we pray, amen.

✠ HEARING GOD'S WORD ✠

POETRY READING

"A Step Toward Home"

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

I will not tell you to buck up,
to tough it out, to ignore the fear
rattling around in your chest.
I will not tell you that *all shall be well*
or that morning will come quickly.
I will not ask you to march into danger
without first repeating your name in my prayers.
But if fear stops you in your tracks,
if fear makes it hard to breathe,
hard to move,
hard to think,
then I will remind you
that even one step with shaking knees
is a step toward home.

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 60:1-6

Jerusalem is assured that nations will make a pilgrimage to her because the light of God's presence is in her midst. The bountiful food of the sea and the profits of international trade will come streaming to Jerusalem and thereby declare God's praise.

A reading from Isaiah chapter 60 beginning at verse 1

¹ Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

² For darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the peoples, but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.

³ Nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴ Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together; they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms.

⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you; the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶ A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

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

¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, ² asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage." ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.' "

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

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

SERMON

Reverend Christina Kadelbach

SERMON HYMN: "Jesus, the Light of the World"

ACS 914



1 Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing,	Je-sus, the Light of the world;
2 Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise;	Je-sus, the Light of the world;
3 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored,	Je-sus, the Light of the world;
4 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace!	Je-sus, the Light of the world;



"Glo - ry to the new-born king,"	Je-sus, the Light of the world.
join the tri - umph of the skies;	Je-sus, the Light of the world.
Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord!	Je-sus, the Light of the world.
Hail the Sun of righ-teous-ness!	Je-sus, the Light of the world.

Refrain

We'll walk in the light, beau-ti-ful light, come where the dew-drops of mer-cy are bright.

Shine all a-round us by day and by night, Je-sus, the Light of the world.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, stanzas; George D. Elderkin, 1845–1928, refrain
 Music: WE'LL WALK IN THE LIGHT, Traditional; arr. George D. Elderkin

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

On this Epiphany Sunday, we affirm our faith,
 joining the journey of the Magi who followed the light of a star to the Christ child.
 Together, we proclaim the hope, love,
 and grace revealed to us in Jesus, the light of the world.

**We believe in a with-us God,
 a God who is beside us in the mountains and valleys,
 holding our hand through every bump and turn.
 And in the chaos of our journey,
 we believe that God sees what we cannot always see:
 a path home by another way.
 Therefore, trusting in this ever-present and guiding God,
 we lace up our shoes. We look for God's fingerprints in the world.
 We trust that there are paths still unexplored,
 paths that God has only begun to invite us down.
 And like the Magi, we dare to follow. May it be so, Amen.**

EPIPHANY BLESSING AND STAR WORDS

This inscription 20 † C M B † 26 is made with chalk above the sanctuary doors and all entry doors.

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

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

We are changed by Christ's peace and now we have the holy opportunity to extend that peace to 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

With hearts full of gratitude and a spirit of generosity, let us pray together, Generous God, **Just as the Magi brought their gifts to the Christ child, we offer these gifts to you with hearts full of gratitude. Use them to shine your light in the world, bringing hope to the weary, peace to the broken and love to all who seek you. Guide us, like the star, to live as faithful stewards of your blessings. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

The presiding minister leads the communion liturgy.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Walking in the light of Christ, 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!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, you always show up. Even in our fear, even in times of uncertainty, even when we can't seem to take the next step, you are with us.

You are behind us, before us, and beside us, hemming us in with your love.

As we sit with these star words, open our hearts to the wisdom they hold.

Keep our minds nimble and flexible, awake to the constellation of meanings we may find in a single word. May they challenge us, comfort us, and call us forward.

Let these words be a reminder of your presence with us. May they give us courage and guidance for the year ahead. Let them shine in the dark, pointing us toward you. And at the end of this year, may we look back at the paths we took and see how in every moment, you journeyed with us. Gratefully we pray, amen.

BLESSING

The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter, ✚ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN: " This Little Light of Mine:

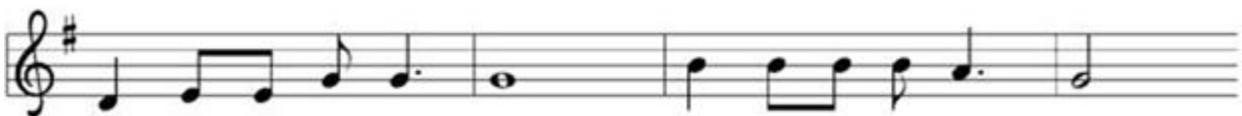
ELW 677



1 This lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
2 Ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
3 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;



this lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;



this lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine,
ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine,
Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine,



Text: African American spiritual
 Music: THIS JOY, African American spiritual

SENDING

Glory to God in the highest! **And peace to God's people on earth!**
 Go in peace and 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 Sherry Whipple & Jim Christensen

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.

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

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 in the Narthex.

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.

BLESSING BOX The first Sunday of every month we pass the "Blessing Box". If you feel blessed, please contribute to the Blessing Box today to help others. All donations will go to local food shelves.

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.

SEASONS OF LIFE January 14 | 11:00 a.m.–Noon Declutter: Creating Space for What Matters. Over time, memories and belongings can become overwhelming, making it hard to know where or how to begin. Mark and Mary Vukelich will share gentle, practical guidance for simplifying, downsizing, and creating spaces that support peace, clarity, and well-being. If you would like to attend virtually, email blcmalmo@gmail.com. Sessions will be livestreamed.

Save the dates:

- February 11 – Health Care Directives
- March 11 – Hospice
- April 15 – Funeral Planning

GIVING STATEMENTS for 2025 are available in the Narthex.

WINTER FUN DAY Saturday, January 25th, (*weather permitting*). Bundle up and join us for winter fun and fellowship! 1:00 p.m. Outdoor activity on the nature trail—boots, snowshoes, or skis welcome. 2:00 p.m. Head indoors for a movie, games, and hot beverages. Come for one or both activities!

TREE TAKE DOWN Taking down Christmas decorations will take place January 8th at 10 am

WITH GRATITUDE Thank you to all who made donations in honor or memory of loved ones to provide the poinsettias that decorated our sanctuary for Christmas. We are grateful for your generosity and the love reflected in these offerings. Please take your poinsettia home after worship and continue to enjoy it in the weeks ahead.

ONOMIA SUMMER CAMP registration is now open. Early bird savings end March 15th. Learn more about Onamia's camp and retreat ministries and enroll online through their webpage www.camponomia.org/summer-camp or pick up a flyer in the narthex.

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD LAST WEEK

Wednesday, December 24th In person: 92 Online:26

Christmas Day Breakfast Church: 50

Sunday, December 28th In person:34 Online: 32

THIS WEEK AT BETHESDA

Monday, January 5th

11:30 am Pinochle

7:00 pm AA/Alanon

Tuesday, January 6th

9:00 am Chair Yoga

Wednesday, January 7th

9:00 am Women's Bible Study

Thursday, January 8th

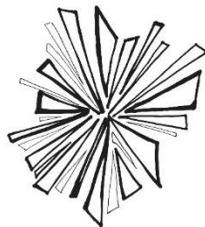
8:00 am ROMEOs (Men's fellowship & study)

9:15 am Chair Yoga

10:00 am Tree Take Down

Sunday, January 11th Baptism of Our Lord

9:00 am Worship with Holy Communion



Bethesda Lutheran Church blcmalmo.org

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

Fax: 320-684-2836

E-mail address: 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 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

January Altar Care Karen Elias & Linda Southworth

Ushers: Mark & Mary Vukelich

Greeters: Bev & Wally Swensen

Lector: Carron Grandchildren

Hospitality: Carron Family

Serving on January 11th

Ushers: Barry and Donna Ansell

Greeters: Mary Braun & Linda Gommer

Lector: Dennis Hennessy

Hospitality: Mary Braun & Jenny Schuett