

First Sunday After Christmas



Order of Worship*

January 1, 2012

10:30 a.m.

THE GATHERING HYMN: "The Bells of Christmas" hymn 298, vv. 1,3,4

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

I. GOD GATHERS US IN HIS PRESENCE

**THE ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

2012. A brand new year. A brand new start. What are you hoping for? Or are you looking back at 2011, and living in the darkness of failure and regret? When we gather here, we gather in the confidence of God's promise to forgive. This promise is centered in Jesus Christ, the One who came among us to forgive sin.

Thanks be to God.

Today we look back at the year past, the years past, and admit our sin in all we have said, thought, and done. Lord, your Word holds a mirror up to our face, and we not only don't like what we see, but we recognize that we are dead in sin and cannot save ourselves. Let us pray.

God, we need you wash away the guilt and shame of what we carry from our past, and open our eyes to see all that you have done, and will do, for us in our future. Forgive us.

God, at times it's hard for us to believe that you are already in our future, but we're going to trust your promises and live in the hope that comes from you.

Our hope is in you. Our hope is in your promises to move us from death to life. Our hope comes from the empty cross and an open tomb that leads to resurrection life. Amen.

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** those who are able are invited to stand

OPENING HYMN: "O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

hymn 632

THE GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

THE HYMN OF PRAISE: "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" hymn 270, vv. 1,3

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. God, be near and close to us in the coming year. Help us to be those who live in hope for our future, and for the future of all people everywhere. Show us how we can step into the work of your Kingdom and proclaim your good news in what we say and how we live. This we pray in the name of Jesus, who lives and reigns with you, and the Holy Spirit, now...

...and forever. Amen.

II. GOD ENCOUNTERS HIS PEOPLE THROUGH HIS WORD

THE FIRST LESSON Isaiah 61:10–62:3 (page 692 in Old Testament)

Here is a picture of salvation. It can turn you into a bride, a groom, a garden, a king, a royal beauty.

(after the reading) *The Word of the Lord.*

Thanks be to God.

THE SECOND READING Galatians 4:4-7 (page 189 in New Testament)

We are all adopted. We who were slaves are now children and inheritors.

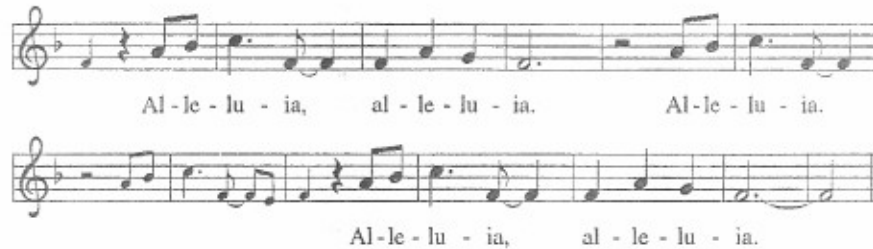
(after the reading) *The Word of the Lord.*

Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL VERSE (sung)

p 8 (HS)

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.



THE GOSPEL

Luke 2:22-40 (page 59 in New Testament)

When the Christ child was brought to the Temple, two elderly people gave thanks to God.

(after the reading) *This is the Gospel of the Lord.*

Thanks be to God.

SERMON: "Hope in Our Future"

Pastor James R. Lichtenberger

SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

- In what areas of your life do you need to live in hope?

HYMN OF THE DAY: "Love Has Come"

hymn 292

CONFESSION OF FAITH: The Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven**

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

HYMN VERSE: "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying"

hymn 752

Lord, listen to Your children praying.
Lord, send Your Spirit in this place.
Lord, listen to Your children praying.
Send us love, send us power, send us grace.

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THE PRAYERS

(after each petition) *Lord, in your mercy,*
hear our prayer.

(the prayers conclude) *...through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*
Amen.

**PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

(Greet one another in joy and love: "The Lord be with you!")

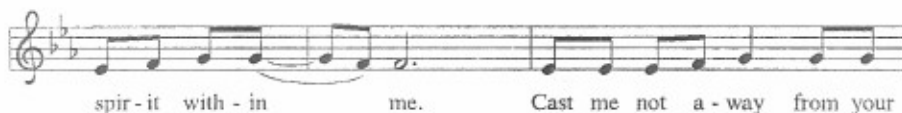
GATHERING OF OFFERINGS

Solo: "Jesus, What a Wonderful Child"

Nancy Holderread

**OFFERTORY RESPONSE (as the gifts are brought forward)

hymn 185



pres-ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me.

Re - store to me the joy of your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me

with your free Spir - it. Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God,

and re - new a right spir - it with - in me.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. We come to you as Simeon came, O Father, guided by the Spirit. Accept these gifts and with them our lives. This we pray through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

III. GOD BLESSES HIS PEOPLE IN HOLY COMMUNION

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

It is our duty and delight that we should everywhere and always offer thanks and praise you, O God, through Jesus Christ who is your word made flesh among us. And so, with the church on earth, all creation and the host of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**You are holy, you are whole.
 You are always evermore
 than we ever understand.
 You are always at hand.
 Blessed are you coming near.
 Blessed are you coming here**

To your church in wine and bread,
Raised from soil, raised from dead.
You are holy, you are wholeness.
You are present, let the cosmos praise you, Lord!
Sing hosanna in the highest!
Sing hosanna! Sing hosanna to our God!

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You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God. You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory. You so loved the world that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.

COMMUNION HYMN

"Hungry, I Come"

**Hungry I come, thirsty I come.
Hungry I come to You.
Hungry I come, thirsty I come
And I feast with wine and bread.
By Your mercy I am fed.
For the bread of Your body
For the wine of Your blood
For You, Word incarnate, I come, I come.**

In the night that he was betrayed our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

**For the bread of Your body
For the wine of Your blood
For You, Word incarnate, I come, I come.**

Again, after supper he took the cup, gave thanks and gave it for all to drink saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins. Do this for the remembrance of me."

**For the bread of Your body
For the wine of Your blood
For You, Word incarnate, I come, I come.
Hungry I come, thirsty I come.
Hungry I come to You.
Hungry I come, thirsty I come
And I feast with wine and bread.
By Your mercy I am fed.**

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THE LORD'S PRAYER: **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.**

DISTRIBUTION OF THE SACRAMENT

(Come, receive the gifts of God's grace in Holy Communion! All baptized Christians are invited to the Lord's table. As Lutherans we believe that the Body and Blood of Christ is truly present in the bread and cup for the forgiveness of our sins. Please fill out a communion registration card found in the pew rack, and hand it to the usher as you come forward **down the center aisle**. Proceed to the altar rail, as directed by the ushers. If you desire grape juice instead of wine, do not pick up a glass as you come to the communion table.

All are welcome to come to the Lord's Table even if they do not commune. Gluten-free wafers are available; ask for one from a communion server. Children may receive Holy Communion if they have completed a course of instruction about the meaning of the sacrament. Until that time, children are invited to come with their parents and receive a fish cracker which symbolizes the inclusion of the child in God's love and grace.)

Hymns during the distribution: 295 (vv. 1,3,5), 288, 283

*** (after all have communed) May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the gifts of his body and blood strengthen, keep and unite us, now and forever.
Amen.*

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

*Let us pray. Lord Jesus, Simeon looked at a baby,
with eyes of faith,
Looked at a baby,
and saw so much more.*

Give us such vision as we view this table, O Lord.

For this is a foretasted of the feast to come.
You are the Lord forevermore.

Amen.

IV. GOD SENDS HIS PEOPLE FORTH TO SERVE

SENDING OF THE EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.

*The Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you.*

*The Lord look upon you with favor
and give you peace.*

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

THE SENDING HYMN: "Go Tell It on the Mountain"

hymn 290

DISMISSAL

Go in peace and serve the Lord!

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: "Ancient of Days"

Paul Taylor

Mission Statement

for Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church

As children of God and disciples of Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are called to share God's Word, His love and saving grace by:

worshipping together

inviting and welcoming everyone

studying the Scriptures

praying

servicing the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of each other, our community and the world.

Adopted May 7, 2000