



Statement of Purpose and Guiding Principles for Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church

God's purpose for our church, as disciples of Jesus Christ, is to share with all people God's word, love and saving grace.

We will pursue this purpose by:

1. Being a Christ-centered, joyful community of baptized believers who gather regularly for worship, the Lord's Supper, study and prayer.
2. Inviting, accepting, and supporting all people as we build attentive, respectful relationships.
3. Taking action and risks with bold faith, acknowledging our imperfection, while trusting in Christ.
4. Actively engaging in community outreach near and far.
5. Being faithful stewards of our time, talents, possessions and all of God's creation

Adopted January 29, 2017



THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD



—DECEMBER 24—

Order of Worship*

7:30 p.m.

PRELUDE: "God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen" Handbell Choir

PROCESSION OF LIGHTS: "Canon in D" Pachelbel
Cindy Marsh, Flute John Pizanis, Violin James Schippers, Piano

THE WELCOME AND PROCLAMATION

(The proclamation should be understood as the announcement of the incarnation within human history rather than a literal counting of years.)

☐ *Many ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth and then formed man and woman in God's own image; long after the great flood, when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant; twenty-one centuries from the time the promise was given to Abraham and Sarah; thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt and Miriam danced in freedom; eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the judges; one thousand years from the anointing of David as king, in fulfillment of the times and years and months and days discerned by the prophets; in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad; the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome; the forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus; the whole world being at peace, Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father, desiring to sanctify the world by his most merciful coming, was born of the virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judea. Today is the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh.*

Bethlehem
Lutheran Church Lansing

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church
549 E. Mount Hope Avenue
Lansing, Michigan

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* Those who are able are invited to stand.

THOSE WHO SERVE IN OUR WORSHIP

PASTORS - Rev. Matthew A. Smith, Rev. John Burow

ORGANIST - James Schippers

CHOIR DIRECTOR - Sue Nelson

HANDBELL CHOIR DIRECTOR - James Schippers

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP DIRECTOR - Laurey Wyble

DRUMS - Kim Walker

FLUTE - Cindy Marsh

VIOLIN - John Pizanis

SOLO - Chloe Smith

PRAISE TEAM - Laurey Wyble, Liisa Whitman, Laura Halbakken

ASSISTING MINISTER - Nancy Holderread

ACOLYTES - Allie Fernandez, David Fernandez

GREETERS - Jon & Jessica Martin and Family

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS - Mary Bartel, Dorothy Martin

USHERS - Jim Whitman, Ralph Sergent, Don Romain

ALTAR GUILD - All Teams

PRAYER FOR MEDITATION Almighty God, there is mystery all about us tonight. We come to the church and its worship with great expectations. We have anticipated this night with its candles and carols, like children excited for all those goodies about to be revealed. The revelation we seek, however, goes deeper. It burns within our souls. What is the meaning of all of this? Why do we common-sense and often-hardened people allow the sanctuary's glow to affect us so? May we continue to search our hearts for the clue that you alone supply all that makes our lives of sacred worth. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

PLEASE SILENCE PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

GLUTEN FREE WAFERS Wafers are available upon request from a communion server.

BEST WISHES We extend our best wishes to you for a very blessed Christmas. May our God who has revealed His love for us through Jesus Christ give you joy and peace in these days and throughout the coming year!

SUNDAYS, DECEMBER 25 & JANUARY 1

(No Sunday Church School)

10:00 a.m. Service of Worship and Holy Communion

Distribution Hymns: Away in a Manger #277, The First Noel #300,
Go Tell it on the Mountain #290, Infant Holy, Infant Lowly #276,
Good Christian Friends Rejoice #288 see wall

*(after all have communed) **P** *The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.*

A Amen.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

A *Let us pray. Gracious Lord, throughout this Advent season we have come to know you by many names. Tonight we celebrate your birth and thank you for being our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Remind us that no matter where we are, or where we've been, you are with us. We gather in the glory of this feast to welcome you as Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. We pray this in the wonderful name of Christ, our Lord and Savior.*

A Amen.

BENEDICTION: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" hymn 279 v. 4

P *Almighty God, Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever.*

A Amen.

ANTHEM POSTLUDE: "Hallelujah Chorus" Senior Choir
(Former members of the choir and members of other church choirs are invited to come forward and join the choir for the singing of the "Hallelujah" chorus.)



THE CANDLE You received a candle as you entered the sanctuary for your use during the candlelight part of worship. Please supervise children who may be using a candle. Be careful not to bend or break the candle; the candle and cup-holder are designed to be reused. After worship, deposit the candle and cup-holder in the baskets at the entrance to the sanctuary.

OVERTURE: "A Christmas Processional" Senior Choir & Cindy Marsh, Flute
(Congregation joins on) "O Come, All Ye Faithful" see wall

GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

Let us pray. Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now ...

...and forever. Amen.

READING (Luke 2:1-7)

HYMN: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" hymn 279 vv. 1-3

READING (Luke 2:8-14)

ANTHEM: "Gloria/Angels We Have Heard on High" Praise Team

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES IN THE CONGREGATION

(The pastor lights a candle from the Christ candle.)

Let this tiny flame represent our Savior's love. Receive its warmth, and let it grow bright in you.

(The acolytes will light their candles from the Pastor's candle, then the candles of the worshippers will be lighted, beginning with the person nearest the aisle. To light the candle, lower the cup about two inches below the wick. Tip only the unlit candle when lighting your candle from your neighbor's. Hold the candle upright when lit. Lighted candles should not be tipped...avoid candle drippings on the pews or floor. Parents are asked to assist their children.)

CAROL (as light spreads throughout the congregation):

"Silent Night" hymn 281 Vv.1-3

Verse 1

**Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.**

Verse 2

**Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar, Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior is born! Christ, the Savior is born!**

Verse 3

**Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from your holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace.
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.**

P Brothers and sisters, the shepherds did not stay in Bethlehem. They returned to their fields, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. You are to do the same. Share the warm love of Christ with everyone you meet!

(Candles in the congregation should be extinguished.)

READING (Luke 2:15-20)

THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE
"The Scents/Sense of Christmas" Pastor Matthew A. Smith

OFFERING OF GIFTS
Solo: "Oh, Holy Night" Chloe Smith

OFFERTORY PRAYER
A Let us pray. Almighty God, we are mindful of the supreme gift that you gave us in a manger at Bethlehem. Humbly we offer our gifts of service and possessions in joyful thanksgiving for the love you have shown us. Accept these gifts for the sake of your Son who was born to us, Jesus Christ our Lord.

G Amen.

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

G And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Lord God, Heavenly King, we give you thanks and praise upon this holy night when, in your goodness, you showed your supreme love for us by sending forth your only Son, to be born and to save us all from sin.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

P Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your word brought light into the world.

In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our darkness and to make us your daughters and sons.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; 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.

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 sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him. By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

G Amen.

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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P This is the Word made flesh, the very body and blood of him who was born for us.

G Come to us now, O Lord, in the breaking of bread. As once you were born in a manger in Bethlehem, come to us again in the manger of our hands and hearts. 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. Proceed down the center aisle 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 you 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.