

✠ CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION ✠

Greeting

P The Lord be with you. **C** And also with you.

Hymn of Invocation “A Great and Mighty Wonder” #383 (E)

Invocation, Confession of Sins and Absolution Page 151

✠ SERVICE OF THE WORD ✠

Introit *Psalm 19:1,4c,5-6; antiphon: v. Isaiah 45:8a, b*



P Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down | righteousness,*
let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may | bear fruit.´

C The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his | handiwork.*
In them he has set a tent | for the sun,

P which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his | chamber,*
and, like a strong man, runs its | course with joy.

C Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the | end of them,*
and there is nothing hidden | from its heat.

All Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

P Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down | righteousness,*
let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may | bear fruit.

Kyrie ~ Lord, have mercyPages 152-153

Hymn of Praise ~ Glory to God in the Highestomitted during Advent

Salutation and Collect of the Day Page 156

P [♪] Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us
down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the
Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

All [♪] Amen.

Lighting of The Advent Wreath^① The Fourth Candle: The Angels’ Candle

The angel said to [the shepherds], “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.” (St. Luke 2:10-14 NIV)

P The fourth candle on our Advent wreath reminds us of the angels who announced the Savior’s birth. Their song of joy rings across the centuries to fill the darkness of every heart with the light of glory and of love. Let us pray:

All Lord of hosts, for the ministry of the angels we give You thanks. Fill the dark night of a fallen world with the angels’ good news of great joy. Bless us to pierce the silence of our routine with songs of resounding praise. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

P Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him.” *Psalm 98:1*

C “He has remembered His love and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.” *Psalm 98:3*

P “You will be with child and give birth to a Son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus.

C “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.” *St. Luke 1:31-32*

P Four candles are ignited into flame, as the mystery of Jesus unfolds.

C To the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn “It Came Upon The Midnight Clear” #366

Old Testament Reading 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 Pew Bible, page 259

["Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever."]

Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.”

But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, “Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?’” Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house.

And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”

^①The Advent wreath contains a number of symbols. The evergreen wreath symbolizes eternal life in Christ. The candles are symbolic of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. The act of lighting more candles each week anticipates the imminent coming of Christ. The **Prophecy Candle** announces a period of waiting for our Lord. The **Bethlehem Candle** symbolizes preparing to receive the Christ Child. The **Shepherds’ Candle** symbolizes sharing of the news of Christ’s birth. The **Angels’ Candle** symbolizes Christ’s final coming on Judgment Day when He will appear in glory with all His angels. The **Christ Candle** is lighted on Christmas Eve. This central candle signifies that the Light of the World, Jesus, has come.

Psalmody **Psalm 89:1–5**



P I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, for- | ever;*
with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all gener- | ations.

C For I said, “Steadfast love will be built up for- | ever;*
in the heavens you will establish your | faithfulness.”

P You have said, “I have made a covenant with my | chosen one;*
I have sworn to David my | servant:

C ‘I will establish your offspring for- | ever,*
and build your throne for all gener- | ations.’”

P Let the heavens praise your wonders, | O Lord,*
your faithfulness in the assembly of the | holy ones!

All **Glory be to the Father and | to the Son***
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

Epistle Reading **Romans 16:25-27** Pew Bible, page 951

["To the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ!"]

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Alleluia and Verse ~ Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?..... Page 156

Gospel Acclamations Page 157

Holy ✝ Gospel..... **St. Luke 1:26-38** Pew Bible, page 855

[The angel appears to Mary.]

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Children’s Message

Hymn of the Day **“Oh, Come, O, Come, Emmanuel” #357**

Sermon..... **“Soli Deo Gloria” Romans 16:25-27**

1. a Glory _____

2. a Glory _____

3. a Glory _____

Nicene Creed Page 158

Prayer of the Church

P Let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mercy. or **P** Lord, in Your mercy, **C** Hear our prayer.

Offering and Attendance Registration

Offertory ~ What Shall I Render to the Lord.....Pages 159-160

Lord’s Prayer and Closing Collect



Benediction..... Page 166



Hymn of Departure **“Jesus Came, the Heavens Adoring” #353 (E)**

Silent Prayer

Announcements and Sending:

P Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **C** Thanks be to God!



OUR MISSION STATEMENT: *Steadfast in the Word, Bethlehem Lutheran Church shares Christ and serves people with friendship in His love in all of God’s world.*

WELCOME TO BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH! We extend a most joyous welcome to all who are worshipping today. We are confident the Lord will reveal Himself to you through this Divine Service so that you may know the joy of His presence in your life. To our guests: If you have any questions about the Christian faith or about Lutheran worship and practice, please ask the Pastor, one of our Elders, or any of our members. God bless you in Christ Jesus!

AS WE GATHER: King David is the best known of all of Israel’s kings. Under David’s reign, the kingdom grew and flourished. Even generations later would look back and view the days of King David as the “Golden Age” of Israel. In today’s Old Testament Reading, a promise is made to David: “And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before Me. Your throne shall be established forever” (2 Samuel 7:16). But in this greater kingdom, this eternal kingdom, it’s not King David who will reign on the everlasting throne—it’s King Jesus. Jesus, the descendant of David, is greater than David and will have a never-ending reign. It’s the coming of this King of kings that we prepare to celebrate.

AS WE COME INTO THE SANCTUARY - let us be sensitive to the needs of those who use the quiet and reverence of the Prelude as a time to prepare their hearts and minds for the Divine Service. **ALSO:** Out of respect for God’s House and courtesy for other worshippers, please turn off all cell phones. Please also encourage one another to show respect to *God, His Word, our fellow-worshippers,* and *our Pastor* by limiting movement during Scripture Readings, Sermon & prayers. Thank you.

THE CHANCEL FLOWERS this Sunday are given to the Glory of God by George and Betty Nelson in celebration of their son Eddie and granddaughter Danielle’s birthdays !

IN TODAY’S SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON the children learned that as Jesus came to the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26–40). He comes to us in our weakness, for we cannot by our own reason or strength come to Him. In your family faith talks, discuss how the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies us, keeping us with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

SUNDAY MORNING ADULT BIBLE: “Leviticus: Life in the Blood” -- Holiness. What is it? Leviticus shows how God goes to great lengths not only in defining true holiness, but also in sharing His holiness with his redeemed and ransomed people.

THE COLOR FOR ADVENT is blue, the color of hope and anticipation. Royal blue is a reminder that Jesus Christ is the King whose coming fulfilled God’s promises of rescue from sin and death. The Advent Wreath is one way we mark this time of waiting, with an additional candle lit each week.

THANK YOU to all who helped with the Advent meals, Christmas dinner and Children’s Service!

OUR CHRISTMAS SERVICES SCHEDULE: Tonight, our Festival of Lessons, Carols and Candlelight is at 7 p.m., and our Christmas Day Divine Service (with Holy Communion) is tomorrow at 10:15 a.m.

FLOWER CHART FOR 2018: The cost of the Chancel flowers are \$25 PER VASE. Members have the option to purchase one or two arrangements.

A REMINDER CONCERNING THE CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING: It is the tradition here at Bethlehem that this offering is divided by the Board of Elders as Christmas gifts to the Pastor, Organists, Pianist, and Church Secretary.

THANK YOU to everyone who helped to decorate our chancel with the lovely poinsettias. You may take your poinsettia home following the Divine Service.

DEATH OF A PASTOR: Rev. Harold F. Wageman received the crown of everlasting life on Saturday, Dec. 16. His memorial service will be held at Trinity, Tyler (2001 Hunter St.) on Friday, Dec. 29 at 11:00 am.

CHILI FRIDAY: It’s not too early to start thinking about our annual Chili Friday! We are looking for helpers and silent auction donations. Please see Megan Taylor or Donna Hughes if you would like to help.

NEW PORTALS OF PRAYER devotion booklets for January through March are on the shelf in the narthex. Make sure you have one and pick up an extra copy for a friend!

STEWARDSHIP VIEWPOINT: (2 Samuel 7:4) “But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan ...” Nathan thought David’s idea was great, so he blessed it with the Lord’s name. But later that night, the Word of the Lord set him straight. The Word of the Lord must be the basis for what we think, say, and do in God’s Kingdom: not our own desires or whims.

LIFE QUOTES: “So celebrate that divine-human Gift who has so changed your life by His Spirit. Praise Him for His gracious forgiveness and righteousness. Praise Him as the One who will one day transform the mortal into immortality. Indeed, He who was once a baby has changed and is changing lives and will one day change His whole creation.” *Rev. David Fuerstenau, Holy Truth Lutheran Church, Ketchikan, Alaska • www.lutheransforlife.org*

ABOUT THE COVER: We often fret over God’s ways. We seek to understand God’s actions, even though we believe “that for those who love God all things work together for good” (Romans 8:28). Mary is to have a Son. He “will be called holy-the Son of God” (St. Luke 1:35). Mary asks “How will this be?” and hears, “Nothing will be impossible with God” (vv. 34,37). God’s love for us is beyond our understanding. Thanks be to God for His love!

OUR STEWARDSHIP LAST WEEK			
OFFERINGS		ATTENDANCE	
General Offering	\$2849.00	Sunday School	36
[Needed per week:	\$2,668.00]	Divine Service	87
Building Fund	\$.00		
[Needed per week:	\$350.00]	Advent III (12/20)	42
Advent II	\$513.00		

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY THIS WEEK

Sunday (12/24)	<p>Advent 4</p> <p>Christmas Eve</p> <p>9:00 AM Sunday School & Bible Classes</p> <p>10:15 AM Divine Service (Setting 1)</p> <p>Acolyte: Christopher Harris</p> <p>Organist: Aaron Jackson</p> <p>Altar Guild: Lori Fortner & Dot James</p> <p>Duty Elder: Gil Daughtrey</p> <p>7:00 PM Festival of Lessons, Carols and Candlelight</p> <p>Acolyte: Kristen Harris</p> <p>Organist: Mary Bowden</p> <p>Duty Elder: Gil Daughtrey</p>
Monday (12/25)	<p>Christmas Day</p> <p>10:15 AM Divine Service (Setting 1) / Holy Communion</p> <p>Acolyte/Crucifer: Sara Kimbrough</p> <p>Torch Bearers: Christopher Harris, Kristen Harris</p> <p>Organist: Aaron Jackson</p> <p>Duty Elder: Gil Daughtrey</p>
Sunday (12/31)	<p>Christmas 1</p> <p>9:00 AM Sunday School & Bible Classes</p> <p>10:15 AM Divine Service / Holy Communion</p> <p>Acolyte/Crucifer: Matthew Jackson</p> <p>Organist: Mary Bowden</p> <p>Altar Guild: Lori Fortner & Dot James</p> <p>Duty Elder: Gil Daughtrey</p>

IN THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH:

National Leadership and Military: including members Kyle Lawson and Kyle Shepherd, as well as Robert Garcia [Juanita's son], and Jeremy Stafford [Marcy Hogan's nephew]

Health needs - Members: Danny Howard (12/17), George Nelson, Marjorie Smith (now at TruCare); **Friends: Disciples of the Way** (12/24), Dalton Durbin (12/17), Eva Ludwig (12/17), Marie Sala (12/17) [Sandy Teets step-mom]

Homebound - Members: Dorothy Jackson, Martha Kaudelka, Ardelle Samford, Johnnie Weaver ... **Friends:** Benjamin Garcia

Celebrating this week: Birthdays: Sandy Teets ... **Wedding Anniversaries:** Randy & Sandy Teets

NOTE: New prayers requests are in **BOLD**. Prayers submitted will stay on the prayer list for two weeks unless updated. Please inform the Pastor and the Church Office regarding the status of submitted prayers so we may be timely and up-to-date in petitions to our gracious God.

TO ADD PETITIONS TO OUR PRAYER CHAIN CALL LEA ROSIER AT (903) 729-1879 or (903) 391-5678

Note: The Letters in parentheses after the Hymn number indicate hymns selected because of direct connection to the Propers (i.e., Scripture Readings) for the day ... OT=Old Testament, FR=First Reading, SR= Second Reading, Ps=Psalm; V=Verse; E=Epistle, G=Gospel. Hymns with no such indication are hymns that, while having no direct connection to the Propers, still support the theme of the day.

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Sunday School: 9:00 AM
Adult Bible Class: 9:00 AM
Divine Service: 10:15 AM

“To Give Light to Those who Sit in Darkness”

