



# BETHLEHEM EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND BIBLE CLASSES.....9:00 A.M.  
 SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES.....10:15 A.M.

**CHURCH:** 1515 SOUTH LOOP 256, PALESTINE, TEXAS 75801  
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“TO GIVE LIGHT TO THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS”

A Warm Welcome to

## BETHLEHEM EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

**WELCOME TO CHRISTMAS WORSHIP** at Bethlehem Lutheran Church as we gather around the Gospel Word. What a joy and blessing it is to join together with God’s people in this place to worship on Christmas Day. As we gather for worship, we recall with gratitude our Savior’s coming as one of us to save us.

We invite you to visit our website [www.belctx.org](http://www.belctx.org) where you can find out more about Bethlehem Ev. Lutheran Church: an explanation of our worship style, what membership at Bethlehem involves, and how to become a member.

### Information for WORSHIPERS

- Everyone is asked to register their **Church Attendance** in the books distributed by the Ushers before the Offering. For our Guests: if you would like to receive information about activities at Bethlehem, please give us your complete address and/or email address.
- **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.
- A **“Cry Room”** is located at the rear of the south side of the Sanctuary for parents whose children become “restless” during worship. It is important for parents to be sensitive to those in worship around them. The room is accessible from both the Sanctuary and the Narthex. It is equipped with a crib, changing table, rocking chair, viewing window and speaker so mom and dad can attend to their child’s needs and still participate in the service.
- **Holy Communion** is celebrated this morning. **Information** can be obtained on page 4 and brochures explaining our practice are available in the Narthex.
- **More information** may be found on the back cover of this worship folder.



**Organist:** Aaron Jackson      **Duty Elder:** Gil Daughtrey  
**Crucifer:** Matthew Jackson      **Altar Guild:** Lori Fortner & Dot James  
**Torch Bearers:** Kristen Harris, Christopher Harris



= Please stand as you are able



= Please be seated

**P**=Pastor; **C**=Congregation; **All**=Everyone in unison; **LSB** = Lutheran Service Book



The Nativity of our Lord - Christmas Day  
December 25, 2017 A.D. ✝ 10:15 a.m.

*In The Name of Jesus*

✝ Service of Preparation ✝

AS WE GATHER

**Thoughts for Meditation:** *The joy of Christmas is the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Through the centuries, faithful Christians have found ways to express confident joy in the blessed gift of salvation. In this service we shall discover joy in beloved carols and familiar liturgy; we will also discover joy in the traditional crèche and in the Christmas reflections of Martin Luther. Although the observance of Christmas Day on any day of the week is indeed a special blessing, the meaning of the day is magnified when it occurs on a Sunday. The manger at Bethlehem is linked to the empty tomb at Jerusalem; the story of salvation in Jesus is at the heart of this Lord's Day!*

**Color of the Day:** White - the festival color of the Church. It is reserved for celebrations that reflect themes of purity, light, innocence, holiness, and redemption, including special events in Jesus' life as His Birth, Baptism, Transfiguration, and Resurrection.

PRAYER TO AID YOUR WORSHIP PREPARATION

*Blessed Christ Child, we kneel reverently at Your manger bed as we celebrate Your birth. How great is Your love for us in becoming a child in order to redeem us from sin and eternal death! We thank You and give You praise for Your grace and mercy. We pray that You would live in our hearts, cleanse us from sin, and help us to serve You in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. Help us to take you, as the Greatest Gift, to all people. For Your name's sake we ask it. Amen.*

PRELUDE

GREETING

- P** The Lord be with you!
- C** And also with you!

ENTRANCE HYMN ..... "Joy To The World" #387 (OT)

*Please remain standing, facing the Processional Cross, turning as it passes by.<sup>①</sup> Also, tradition suggests bowing as the cross passes by as an outward act of reverence and respect for the cross and the sacrifice our Lord made on the cross.*

<sup>①</sup> Symbolically the procession, "with the cross of Jesus going on before" (from the hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers," LSB 662) is a powerful suggestion of the Christian life, following Christ wherever He leads.

✝ Service of the Word ✝

INTROIT and GLORIA PATRI<sup>②</sup>

*Psalm 98:1-4; antiphon, Isa 9:6*



- P** For to us a child is born, to us a son is | given;\*  
and the government shall be upon his | shoulder,
- C** and his name shall be called Wonderful | Counselor,\*  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, | Prince of Peace.
- P** Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done | marvelous things!\*  
His right hand and his holy arm have worked salva- | tion for him.
- C** The LORD has made known his sal- | vation;\*  
he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the | nations.
- P** He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of | Israel.\*  
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation | of our God.
- C** Make a joyful noise to the LORD, | all the earth;\*  
break forth into joyous song and sing | praises!
- 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** For to us a child is born, to us a son is | given;\*  
and the government shall be upon his | shoulder,
- C** and his name shall be called Wonderful | Counselor,\*  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, | Prince of Peace.

KYRIE<sup>③</sup> ~ Lord, have mercy ..... Pages 152

<sup>②</sup> "Introit" is pronounced "in-troh-it" & Latin for "he enters." Here the Pastor enters the Chancel with the reading/chanting of these Psalm/Scripture verses. "Gloria Patri" is Latin for "Glory be to the Father" which is acclamation of praise before the final antiphon (a refrain that begins and concludes the Introit).

<sup>③</sup> "Kyrie" is pronounced 'keer-ee-ay' - shortened from the Greek phrase *Kyrie Eleison* ("Lord, have mercy") and reminds us of pleas for mercy like the one recorded in *Matthew 15:22*

- P** [♪] Let us pray.  
Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** [♪] **Amen.**

**OLD TESTAMENT READING** ..... **Isaiah 52:7-10**  
*[The Lord comforts His people.]*

How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of him who brings good news,  
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,  
who publishes salvation,  
who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”  
The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;  
together they sing for joy;  
for eye to eye they see  
the return of the LORD to Zion.  
Break forth together into singing,  
you waste places of Jerusalem,  
for the LORD has comforted his people;  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.  
The LORD has bared his holy arm  
before the eyes of all the nations,  
and all the ends of the earth shall see  
the salvation of our God. (ESV)

- P** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**



<sup>①</sup>The “Salutation” (greeting) is reminiscent of an Old Testament greeting recorded in *Ruth 2:4*. The “Collect” is a short prayer which ‘collects’ or summarizes the thoughts of the day. The Collects for every Sunday come to us from the rich treasury of the church’s heritage.

GRADUAL and VERSE<sup>②</sup>

*Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1a; St. John 1:14*



- P** To us a Child is born, to us a Son is | given;\*  
And the government shall be upon His | shoulder.
- C** **And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, | Mighty God,\*  
Everlasting Father, | Prince of Peace.**
- P** Sing to the Lord a | new song,\*  
For He has done | marvelous things!
- C** **The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his | glory,\*  
glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of | grace and truth.**

EPISTLE ..... **Hebrews 1:1-12**  
*[The Son of God is supreme.]*

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

For to which of the angels did God ever say,

“You are my Son,  
today I have begotten you”?

Or again,

“I will be to him a father,  
and he shall be to me a son”?

And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,

“Let all God’s angels worship him.” (ESV)

- P** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**

<sup>②</sup>“Gradual” comes from the Latin “gradus” meaning ‘step’. In the ancient church these Psalm & Scripture verses were chanted from the steps of the Altar. It is a response to the First Lesson and a bridge to the Second Lesson.

GOSPEL PROCESSIONAL

During the Organ fanfare the processional cross and torches move to the center of the congregation. Please remain standing, facing the Cross as it leads the Gospel Processional into the Nave.

The Gospel is read from among the people to symbolize the Living Message among us.

[The Word becomes flesh in the birth of Jesus.]

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the first chapter.



G Glo - ry to You, O Lord.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.



G Glo - ry to You, O Lord.

① In the “Gospel” we hear a reading from the New Testament accounts of Jesus’ life and message. In Lutheran Worship we believe that in the Reading of the Gospel Christ is in our midst, and so we stand to honor His presence. We also sing or speak short verses before (to greet Christ) and after (to offer our joyful praise) the reading.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_-creation
2. \_\_\_\_\_ creation
3. \_\_\_\_\_ to the creation
4. our Creator in \_\_\_\_\_

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

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

OFFERING and ATTENDANCE REGISTRATION

A MATTER OF IMPORTANCE:

Please Note: If you are visiting and have not already done so, please read Communion Information on Page 4.

YOUR PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT

“Father, I believe that You sent Your Son, Jesus, as my Savior from sin. I repent of my sins and ask Your forgiveness. I believe the Risen Christ is really present in this Sacrament and that with the bread and wine I receive His True Body and Blood. I dedicate myself anew to You through regular worship, study of Your Word, faithful witness and loving service. With the help of Your Holy Spirit, make this my conviction and intention. Amen.”

“Lord, it is true that I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. Yet I am in need and desire Your help and grace. So I come with no other plea except that I have heard the gracious invitation to come to Your altar. I am unworthy, but You have assured me I shall have forgiveness of all sins through Your body and blood which I eat and drink in this sacrament. Amen, dear Lord; Your word is true. I do not doubt it. Let Your will be done. Amen.”

Other prayers may be found on the inside front cover of the Hymnal, “Lutheran Service Book.”

② “Luther’s Prayers,” ed. Herbert F. Brokering, Augsburg Publishing House, © 1994 Augsburg Books. All rights reserved. Used by permission.





### HOLY COMMUNION - A CLARIFYING WORD

Bethlehem congregation confesses and affirms what the Bible teaches, namely that in this sacred meal Jesus Christ is truly present with His body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine, given for the forgiveness of sins.

Our Church practices Closed Communion<sup>①</sup>, the accepted practice of the Church since the Apostolic age. Participation in the Lord's Supper at Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church, where Lutheran teaching and practice are the definitive marks of our identity, is a privilege ordinarily reserved for confirmed members, in good standing, of congregations in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and synods with whom we are in Altar Fellowship (in North America: Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti, Lutheran Church-Canada and American Association of Lutheran Churches). Such individuals have been instructed and through faith confess the teachings of these Synods as the true and correct exposition of Holy Scripture.

The most loving and honest practice, when this instruction has not been received and/or this confession cannot be made, is for an individual not to commune. The intent of this practice is not to offend but to honor and obey the Word of Christ. If an individual would find it meaningful to come forward during the distribution to receive a spoken blessing, the officiant can be signaled to that effect by keeping your hands beneath the communion rail.

Since participation in this Sacrament is based on complete agreement and unity in all doctrine, and since Christian Churches vary widely in their teachings even about the Lord's Supper, **first time visitors desiring to commune are asked to speak to the Pastor prior to participation in and reception of the Blessed Sacrament.**

Lutherans who are inactive (i.e., not currently members in good standing), who have not communed in the last three (3) months or more, and/or guests who are formerly "Missouri Synod" should also speak to the Pastor prior to coming to the Altar. Scripture teaches that pastors are shepherds and overseers, who have divine authority and "a terrible responsibility" being held "accountable for [the] flock" (Ezekiel 34:10), especially when it comes to distributing the Lord's body and blood. Our thanks to you for honoring the Scriptural teaching and practice.

**All communicants are asked to Register by signing the Registration sheet in the Narthex.** Please note that in registering you affirm that you have examined yourself (1 Cor. 11:27-28; 2 Cor. 13:5) that you acknowledge, confess, and repent of your sins (including the sins of irregular worship and cohabitation outside of marriage), and by God's grace, as the Catechism also teaches, intend to change such sinful behavior in thought, word, and deed and live a godly life in accord with God's Word. If this is not your intent and you commune, you do so untruthfully and will not receive the Lord's Supper to your spiritual benefit, but to your great harm (1 Cor. 11:29).

For those who have not espoused the doctrines of the Lutheran Church (or those Lutherans who are inactive) and wish to receive the body and blood of Jesus as He reveals Himself to us in the Sacrament of Holy Communion, the essentials of teaching, learning, and confessing can be obtained from the Pastoral Ministry at Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church. Inform the Pastor of your desire and he will assist you.

Communicants are ushered forward by row. Please receive the host upon an open palm. The Chalice (or common cup) is available at every table. The Duty Elder will offer the individual cups and is followed by the Pastor who will offer the Chalice. Please tip the base of the chalice yourself to avoid spillage. The individual cups in the center ring contain de-alcoholized wine for those who have so requested. You may direct questions to the Pastor or Duty Elder.

**That which we value highly, we administer faithfully!**

### PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Prayers for use before and after the reception of the Sacrament may be found on the inside front cover of our Hymnal, *Lutheran Service Book*.

<sup>①</sup>**Closed Communion** is the Scriptural and historic practice of limiting participation in the Lord's Supper to those who have been catechized (instructed), formally admitted to the Altar after being examined in the truths of the Christian faith, and who have promised to believe, teach and confess all that the church in which they will commune believes, teaches and confesses.



# BETHLEHEM EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

*A member congregation of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod*

The Reverend David L. Adler, Pastor



We extend a warm welcome to our Visitors and Guests. We are happy to have you attend our worship services and Bible Classes. If you are a local resident, searching for a church home, we invite you to consider membership in our congregation. Our Pastor would be happy to discuss this with you. If you would please complete the Church Attendance Register (distributed by the Ushers before the Offering), we can keep you informed about activities and events at Bethlehem. Please remember to include your email address.

### Information for WORSHIPERS

- **Large Print Bulletins** are available from the Ushers.
- **Flash Photography** is considered inappropriate in worship at all times, please stage your photos after worship.
- **Pagers, Phones & Movement** ... In consideration of others, please make certain that all pagers and cellular telephones are either turned off or are in the "silent" mode. Thank you. During the reading of Scripture, the Sermon, or any Prayers (including the Confession of Sins), we respectfully ask that movements in and out of the Sanctuary be kept to a minimum. We do understand that there are emergency situations that may arise during these times. Out of respect for God's Word, each other, and the pastoral office, if you must leave during the Sermon, before you re-enter the Sanctuary **P.L.E.A.S.E.** consider the following options: **1)** sitting in the very back pews or **2)** remaining in the Narthex (entryway) until the Sermon is finished ... **Parents**, please instruct your children and youth in this regard. Thank you for honoring God's Word.
- **Prayer Requests** - may be made using the forms in the Narthex. Requests made before the service begins will be included in that service. You may hand it to an Usher or the Pastor. Please keep us updated on your requests.
- **Flower Dedications** ... Using the signup sheet in the Narthex, please make your flower dedications at least a week in advance so that we may properly acknowledge them. Place your flower offering of \$25 per vase in any envelope marked FLOWERS.
- **The Lord's Supper (Holy Communion)** is normally celebrated on the first, third and fifth Sundays of the month, as well as on Ash Wednesday, Holy (Maundy) Thursday, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. We ask all Guests to introduce themselves to and speak with the Pastor about our doctrine and practice regarding Holy Communion before approaching the Altar. We encourage you to arrive early enough to allow time to speak with the Pastor. All Communicants are asked to register using the form in the Narthex.



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