



Sunday, December 27, 2020

Welcome

A special welcome to those new to worshipping with us—we're glad the spirit has called you here! **Bethesda Lutheran Church** is live streaming church services on our website and Facebook during this time of the COVID-19 Pandemic. If you don't already have a church home and would like to join ours, please call the office at 515-232-6256 and we'll connect you to one of the Pastors, and make it easy.

OUR MISSION IN SUCH A TIME AS THIS

GATHER in due time
GROW in the meantime
GO with God ALL the time

LIVESTREAMING WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Our Sunday service at 9:30 am is livestreamed weekly.



You can view our livestream worship service right on our website homepage!

Just go to www.bethesdaames.org, and click on the banner that says "Livestream - Click here."

Our Facebook page will also host the Livestreams—facebook.com/BethesdaAmes/—

just "Like" our Facebook page and you will receive notification that the stream is starting.

And the video will be hosted on our YouTube channel after the livestream—tinyurl.com/y22d7om2.

We're still in touch. Call our church office with any needs, prayer requests, or to talk to a familiar voice. We're still sending out our Friday *Living Current* email blast; let us know if you'd like to be added to the list! You can keep up with us on our website and Facebook page too.

Finally, and most importantly, for today and all days, God is still with us. Do not be frightened. Or dismayed. Be strong. Be courageous. For the Lord your God is with you, wherever you go.

GATHERING

PRELUDE: Noël X “Grand Jeu et Duo” (L.-C. Daquin)

WELCOME

BELOVED IN CHRIST this Christmastide it is our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels: in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this Holy Child.

CAROL: *Once in Royal David's City*

WORD

THE FIRST LESSON: Genesis 3:12-19

God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise and that his seed will bruise the serpents heel. Hence the first promise of a savior in scripture. Humanity will not only struggle with nature for sustenance, it will also bear the fight against evil.

¹²The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." ¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this
cursed are you among all animals
and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel."

¹⁶To the woman he said,
"I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children,
yet your desire shall be for your husband,
and he shall rule over you."

¹⁷And to the man he said,
"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
and have eaten of the tree
about which I commanded you,
'You shall not eat of it,'
cursed is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
¹⁸thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;

and you shall eat the plants of the field.
¹⁹By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread
until you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
you are dust,
and to dust you shall return."

CAROL: *This Is the Truth Sent from Above*

THE SECOND LESSON: Genesis 22:15-18

God promises to faithful Abraham that through his offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.

¹⁵The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, ¹⁶and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, ¹⁸and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice."

CAROL: *Blessed be the God of Israel*

THE THIRD LESSON: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness —
on them light has shined.
⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

CAROL: *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

THE FOURTH LESSON: Isaiah 11:1-9

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
²The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
³His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
⁶The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.
⁷The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
⁹They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

CAROL: *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

THE FIFTH LESSON: Luke 1:26-35; 38

The angel Gabriel salutes the Virgin Mary.

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He 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 ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to 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 holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

CAROL: *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came*

THE SIXTH LESSON: Luke 2:1-7

Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

CAROL: "In dulci jubilo" (J. M. Bach) – (*Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*)

THE SEVENTH LESSON: Luke 2:8-16

The shepherds go to the manger.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

CAROL: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

THE EIGHTH LESSON: Matthew 2:1-12

The Wise Men are led by the star to find and adore the infant Jesus.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They 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."

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared.

⁸Then 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."

⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.

¹¹On 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. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

CAROL: *As with Gladness Men of Old*

THE NINTH LESSON: Revelation 21:1-6, 22:1-7

The vision of salvation through the Lamb of God culminates the story in scripture.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

"See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

⁴he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away."

⁵And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

¹Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him;⁴they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

⁶And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true, for the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place."

⁷See, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

PEACE & OFFERING

OFFERTORY: "In dulci jubilo" (P. Manz)

OFFERING PRAYER

Gracious God, you came to us as one unknown, bringing joy and salvation to the earth.

Nourish us at your banquet table, that with all who welcome your birth we may proclaim your peace, revealed in Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.



SENDING

BLESSING

Almighty God, who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary, proclaimed joy through the angels, sent the shepherds with good news, and led the magi by a star, bless you this day ✝ through the Word made flesh.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

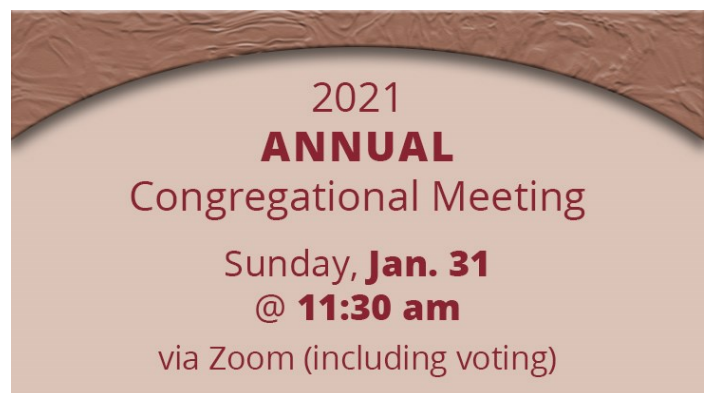
Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: "In dulci jubilo" (J. S. Bach)

Notes concerning our order of worship today:

This liturgy bears a similarity to the great Vigil of Easter. In both worship formats, a series of lessons which paint the broad brushstrokes of the history of salvation is selected for reading and the assembly ponders this mystery. However, in a Service of Lessons and Carols, the gift of music to amplify our reflection and inspiration is utilized. In the season of Christmas, our lessons emphasize the love of God made known through the incarnation.

The format for “Nine Lessons and Carols” originated in England in 1918, planned by the new Dean, Eric Milner-White, for the Christmas Eve service held in King’s College Chapel. It has been held every year since, even during the Second World War, when the ancient glass (and also all heat) had been removed from the Chapel. It was first broadcast in 1928, and is still broadcast by the BBC to millions of people around the world. The opening carol is always ‘Once in Royal David’s City.’ The original service was, in fact, adapted from an Order drawn up by E.W. Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury, for use in the wooden shed, which then served as his cathedral in Truro, at 10 pm on Christmas Eve 1880. AC Benson recalled: ‘My father arranged from ancient sources a little service for Christmas Eve – nine carols and nine tiny lessons, which were read by various officers of the Church...’ most immediately other churches adapted the service for their own use. Wherever the service is heard and however it is adapted, whether the music is provided by choir or congregation, the pattern and strength of the service, as Milner-White pointed out, derive from the lessons and not the music. ‘The main theme is the development of the loving purposes of God ...’ seen ‘through the windows and words of the Bible’. The center of the service is still found by those who ‘go in heart and mind’ and who consent to follow where the story leads.



PRAYER AT BETHESDA

HEALING: Gloria Egertson; April Lawson; Bill Marion; Sabine Troster Pierick; Sherald Sydnese

SERVING OUR NATION: Colonel Mark Kappelmann, (D.C.), son of Glenn & Mary Kappelmann
Kristin Murray, Diplomat (US Embassy, Rabat, Morocco), daughter of Russ & Jan Melby

WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Ministers..... Pastor Bryan Simmons, Pastor Ryan Arnold
 Musician..... Mark Kretsinger-Harries

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Bethesda Lutheran Church
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 GATHER...GROW...GO

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Monday-Thursday
 9:00 am-4:00 pm

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Livestream

Worship Schedule

Sunday . . . 9:30 am