

Bethel Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

~ a community of faith coming together,
for fellowship, study and service . . .
seeking God's peace, justice and love ~



A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS:

We extend a warm welcome from Bethel Presbyterian Church!
We invite you to participate in signing the Friendship Folders adding your name
and address and if you desire a church newsletter or a pastoral call.

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we say "sins...sin against us"
rather than "debts..." or "trespasses..."

Prayer requests can be noted on the cards provided in the pew racks
and placed in the offering plate.

The Service for the Lord's Day
Bethel Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Second Sunday of Advent/Hanging of the Greens
December 5, 2021 - 11:00 AM

* *Indicates congregation standing if able.*
Congregational responses indicated in bold.

GATHERING AND GREETING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements

Please sign the Friendship Pad found in your pew, passing it down the pew then back.

Prelude

Lighting of the Advent Candle (*L = Leader, P = People*)

(Matt. 3:3, 2 Pet. 3:13, Lk. 1:68-69)

L: A voice cries out in the wilderness:

P: Prepare the way of the Lord!

L: God has promised us a new creation.

P: where righteousness will be at home.

L: Blessed is the Holy One our God,

P: who has sent a mighty Savior to redeem us.

We light this candle in hope. (*Light candle #1*)

We light this candle for peace. (*Light candle #2*)

* Wreath Lighting Song (*Sung to tune Hymn No. 146 "Gentle Mary Laid Her Child"*)

Shine, two can-dles! Clos-er now comes the Lord un-to us;

All, re-vent, be-fore Christ bow. God of pow'r, re-new us.

John Bap-tiz-er paved the way in the des-ert speak-ing:

"Build a high-way, I now say for your Lord. Come seek-ing!"

* Prayer

Merciful God, you sent messengers through the prophets to preach repentance and to prepare the way for our salvation. Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our redeemer, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

HANGING OF THE GREENS

Advent

Advent is a time of waiting and preparing for the Christ Child who is to be born. Not unlike preparing for a new baby today, there is much that needs to be done. We will decorate the sanctuary today like people decorate a new baby's room. We will imagine who this baby will be and what he will do in his life. And we will ponder just as his mother Mary did. We will ponder what God has done for us throughout this journey of faith. We will remember our story even as we wait expectantly for the Christ child to come again this year.

Hymn No. 93 “LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, YE MIGHTY GATES”

TRURO

(Verses 1 & 3)

*Lift up your heads, ye might-y gates;
be-hold the King of glo-ry waits;
the King of kings is draw-ing near;
the Sav-ior of the world is here.*

*Re-deem-er, come! I o-pen wide
my heart to thee; here, Lord, a-bide.
Let me thy in-ner pres-ence feel;
Thy grace and love in me re-veal.*

Lighting the Window Candles

The Gospel of John does not have a story about Jesus birth like Matthew and Luke do. Instead the Gospel of John talks about the light that came into the world – the light that the darkness could not

overcome. During Advent we remember the Light who came into the world as we light candles. Each Sunday we light one more candle ending with the Christ Candle on Christmas Eve. Each Sunday as more candles are lit the room becomes a bit brighter. If indeed it were dark, by the end of Advent the entire room would be lit up and there would be no darkness. As we move through Advent, expectantly waiting, we see the Light that shines in the darkness.

L: We light the candles

**P: remembering the light that shines in the darkness
so that the darkness could not overcome it.
We find hope in the light.**

Hymn No. 88

“O COME O COME EMMANUEL”

(Verse 2)

*O come, thou Wis-dom from on high,
who or-derest all things might-i-ly:
to us the path of knowl-edge show;
and teach us in her ways to go.
Re-joice! Re-joice! Em-man-u-el
shall come to thee, O Is-ra-el.*

Placing the Flowers

In the prophet Isaiah we read about the shoot that will come from the stump of Jesse. Jesse was David’s father. God had promised a king would come from David’s lineage – one who would save the people. David was king yet his sons and grandsons didn’t always follow God and God’s way and eventually his family lost the throne. Yet when it was least expected God sent Jesus. And we learn in the Gospel of Matthew that Jesus is indeed a descendant of David. Through Jesus, God fulfilled God’s promise that there would be a shoot from the stump of Jesse who would be the messiah – the Christ.

L: We place the poinsettias

**P: remembering that God fulfills God’s promises.
We find peace and joy in the promises of God.**

Hymn No. 105

“PEOPLE LOOK EAST”

(Verse 2)

*Fur-rows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
one more seed is plant-ed there.
Give up your strength the seed to nour-ish,
that in course the flower may flour-ish.*

Hanging the Wreaths

The wreath has been around for a very long time nearly as long as Jesus. It is in the shape of a circle which reminds us of forever because there is no beginning or end. Just like God’s love for us – it has always been and will always be. Long ago people thought there was something powerful and maybe even magical in the holly and evergreen plants used to make the wreaths, because they stayed green even through the winter.

Because they thought the wreaths were so special, they began to give holly wreaths as gifts. After Jesus, when the church began to grow, the holly wreaths began to be called Christmas wreaths that stand for the everlasting love of God as well as peace, joy and contentment. As we wait during Advent, may we reflect on God’s love for us.

L: We hang the wreaths

**P: remembering God’s everlasting love for us
that we share with one another.**

Hymn No. 104

“O LORD, HOW SHALL I MEET YOU?”

(Verse 2)

*Love caused your in-car-na-tion; love brought you down to me;
your thirst for my sal-va-tion pro-cured my lib-er-ty.
O love be-yond all tell-ing, that led you to em-brace
in love, all loves ex-cel-ling, our lost and fal-len race.*

THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Let us pray:

Holy One, through your Holy Spirit
instruct us by the light of your prophets.

Illumine our hearts, that we may hear your call
to become your path into the world.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Reading from Holy Scripture

Gospel	Luke 1:68-79	<i>(Zechariah's Prophecy)</i>	Pg. 54
Prophet	Malachi 3:1-4	<i>(The Coming Messenger)</i>	Pg. 838

A Reflection of Advent: selected poems by Ann Weems

Angels Still Appear

Toward the Light

To Listen, To Look

* Hymn No. 378 **“WE WAIT THE PEACEFUL KINGDOM”** MERLE'S TUNE
(Verses 1 & 4)

*We wait the peace-ful king-dom, when wolf and lamb shall lie
in gen-tle-ness and friend-ship with-out a fear or sigh,
when li-on shall be graz-ing, when snake shall nev-er strike;
a lit-tle child shall lead us both strong and weak a-like.*

*That lit-tle child shall lead us to walk the cho-sen way,
to share the peace-ful king-dom, to greet God's new-born day.*

*The child born in a sta-ble is sent to break our chains,
to bring through word and ta-ble the day when jus-tice reigns.*

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Prayers of the People

God of time and space, we are glad to be here on this Advent day.

For in your company we belong, and this is a great mystery.

King of kings, we dimly understand your power.

Light of life, we cannot hide from you.
Savior of the poor, we bear witness to your compassion.
Word of truth, we submit to your wisdom.
Flesh of our flesh, we know we are understood by you.
We, who so carelessly forget your will in our daily lives.
We, whose hearts are so often filled with the wrong things.
We, who so typically squeeze every minute out of these days
to get the last present bought, the last call made,
the preparations finalized.
But this time is for you and so let us stop.
Let us still our buzzing heads, relax our weary bodies
and breathe deeply with your breath.
In this moment, in this welcoming stillness,
we acknowledge our need of your waiting time.
And we ask your forgiveness on all our lack of care –
for you, for ourselves, and for others –
in the midst of the festive madness.
God, who speaks to us in angel's words and a baby's cries,
speak to us this day as we await your good word for our souls.
And as forgiven people, we will be still and wait,
and we will praise you. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (*sin / sin against us*)

And now, with the confidence of the children of God, let us pray:

**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 sins,
as we forgive those who sin 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. Amen.**

Invitation to the Offering

Let us give generously from that which has been given to us,
that through our offerings the good news of Jesus Christ may be fulfilled.

Offertory

* Hymn No. 606 **“PRAISE GOD, FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW”**

*Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow;
praise him, all crea-tures here be-low;
praise him a-bove, ye heav-en-ly host;
praise Fa-ther, Son, and Ho-ly Ghost. A-men.*

* Prayer of Dedication

Let us pray:

God of life and of new life, bless these gifts that we have given
that they may further your reign in this world. Amen.

* Hymn No. 137 **“He Came Down That We Might Have Love”**

*He came down that we might have *hope (3x)
Hallelujah forever more!*

**Hope, Peace, Joy, Love*

*(We move into the Gathering Area to decorate the Gathering Area tree with
our ornaments, exiting the church from front to back)*

Prayer

L: Into our world as into Mary's womb ...

P: Come, Lord Jesus.

L: Into the forgotten places, as into the stable ...

P: Come, Lord Jesus.

L: Into the lives of the poor, bringing hope;
into the lives of the powerful, bringing caution;
into the lives of the weary, bring rest;
into the lives of the wise, bringing restlessness;
and into our lives and longings,
whatever our estate ...

P: Come, Lord Jesus.

L: This is the good news:

Christ is coming,

and blessed are those who wait on the Lord.

P: Therefore come quickly, Lord. Amen.

Benediction

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding,
guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus,
for whom we watch and wait.

MUSIC ATTRIBUTIONS

“Wreath-Lighting Song”

Text: Dwyn M. Mounger, 2021

Music: Piae Cantiones, 1582; arr. Ernest C. MacMillan, 1930

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“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Text: Latin prose, pre-9th cent.

Music: Plainsong; arr John Weaver, 1988

Music Arr. © 1990 John Weaver

“People, Look East”

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1928, alt.

Music: French folk melody; harm. Martin Shaw, 1928

Text © 1960 David Higham Associates, Ltd.

Music Harm. © 1928 Oxford University Press

“We Wait the Peaceful Kingdom”

Text: Kathleen R. Moore, 2010

Music: Hal H. Hopson, 1983

Text: © 2010 The Hymn Society (admin. Hope Publishing Company)

Music © 1983 Hope Publishing Company

“He Came Down”

Text: Cameroon song

Music: Cameroon melody; transcr. And arr. John L. Bell, 1986

Music Arr. © 1986 WGRG, Iona Community (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

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Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

“O Lord, How Shall I Meet You”

“Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow”

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