



The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

- Hebrews 1:3 -

*December 17, 2025*

**Welcome in the name of Jesus!**

We're so glad to have you join us to worship our Lord!

If you are a guest with us today, please introduce yourself to our pastor and stop by the registration book in the Narthex.

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church**

**Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod**

**14531 Old Olga Road**

**Fort Myers, FL**

# *Bethlehem Lutheran Church*

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

14531 Old Olga Road S.E.

Ft Myers, FL 33905

Sunday Worship: 10:30 AM

Sunday School & Bible Class: 11:30 AM

Church Office: **(239) 694-3878**

[bethlehemlutheranfortmyers.org](http://bethlehemlutheranfortmyers.org)

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**Rev. Karl P. Glander, Pastor**

Pastor's Cell Phone: **(239) 293-1489**

Pastor's E-Mail Address:

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Linda Kirsch, Church Secretary

The third candle in the Advent wreath stands for JOY.

Joy means: inner gladness or rejoicing despite tough circumstances

Joy is much more than just feeling happy.

Happiness usually depends on how the day is

going. If the math test was super hard, you might not feel happy about it. Joy, however, does not depend on your circumstances. Our joy comes from God and knowing He loves us and cares for us. When Jesus was born, the angels told the shepherds, “I bring you good news of great joy...”. Jesus’ birth, his ministry, and even his death give us the joy of heaven. When we remember that, we can be joyful in any situation!

## **AS WE GATHER**

The weeks leading up to Christmas are filled with special memories as previous holiday seasons come to mind. The Church Year time of Advent helps us to prepare for the coming of our Lord once again. As we make those preparations, not only do we look back to the first Christmas as recorded by the Gospel writers, but we also look even further back in Scripture to when the Son of God came among His people in other times and places before His wondrous birth at Bethlehem. In the Old Testament, we find the details of earlier divine visits that are part of our sacred memory, and we recall them in these holy days.

Here at Bethlehem Lutheran, we believe in the teachings of the Bible as taught by Jesus and the apostles and strive to live our lives in accord with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are all fellow sinners who live together in the mercy and grace of Jesus. Jesus is the heart and center of all that we say and do as we serve Him and live in Christian love with one another.

If you would like to learn more about this church, or are looking for a church family, please talk to one of the elders. They would be happy to talk with you! Regardless of whether you join or not, we welcome you and your family to worship with us any time!

### **Advent 3**

**Theme of the Day:** It's time to get off the **guilt** trip and get on the **grace** trip. This happens when we claim the truth in Hebrews 1:3, "After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."

### **ADVENT MIDWEEK**

**December 17, 2025**

*(Please rise)*

**INVOCATION** *(From selected verses in Hebrews 10:19–23)*

**[P]** In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**[C]** Amen.

**[P]** Since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus

**[C]** By a new and living way opened up for us.

**[P]** Let us draw near to God with sincere hearts and in full assurance of faith

**[C]** Having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience.

**[P]** Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess

**ALL:** He who promised is faithful and he will do it!

*(Please be seated)*

# OPENING HYMN

## **343 PREPARE THE ROYAL HIGHWAY**

*(Stanzas 1, ref, 2–3)*

**1** Prepare the royal highway;  
The King of kings is near!  
Let ev'ry hill and valley  
A level road appear!  
Then greet the King of Glory  
Foretold in sacred story: **Refrain**

**ref Hosanna to the Lord,  
For He fulfills God's Word!**

**2** God's people, see Him coming:  
Your own eternal king!  
Palm branches strew before Him!  
Spread garments! Shout and sing!  
God's promise will not fail you!  
No more shall doubt assail you! **Refrain**

**3** Then fling the gates wide open  
To greet your promised king!  
Your king, yet ev'ry nation  
Its tribute too should bring.

All lands, bow down before Him!  
All nations, now adore Him! **Refrain**

**ref Hosanna to the Lord,  
For He fulfills God's Word!**

*(Please rise)*

## **+ CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION +**

**P** In our first lesson, through Jeremiah, God says,  
“I will forgive their wickedness and will  
remember their sins no more.” (Jeremiah  
31:34) Forgive us, Father, for we are prone to bury  
our guilt in our hearts.

**C** But then it comes back to hurt us and haunt  
us.

**P** Forgive us, Father, for we are prone to blame  
our guilt on someone else.

**C** But this burdens other people and often  
destroys relationships.

**P** Forgive us, Father, for we are prone to beat ourselves up with guilt.

**C** But this leaves us down, depressed and despondent.

**P** And stuck in a pit of despair.

**ALL: Lord, have mercy! Christ, have mercy!  
Lord, have mercy!**

**P** Hear the best news you will ever hear! Christ Jesus provided purification for all your sin. In his name, you are forgiven. You are absolved. And you are free!

**ALL: He who promised is faithful and he will do it!**

*(Please be seated)*

### **343 PREPARE THE ROYAL HIGHWAY**

*(Stanza ref, 4)*

**ref Hosanna to the Lord,  
For He fulfills God's Word!**



**4** His is no earthly kingdom;  
It comes from heav'n above.  
His rule is peace and freedom  
And justice, truth, and love.  
So let your praise be sounding  
For kindness so abounding: **Refrain**

**ref Hosanna to the Lord,  
For He fulfills God's Word!**

## **+ SERVICE OF THE WORD +**

### **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And also with you.

**P** Let us pray. Lord God, heavenly Father, you have provided a magnificent solution to all of our guilt through Christ's shed his blood on the cross, once and for all, for us; we believe it, receive it and celebrate it; in Jesus 'name.

**ALL: Amen.**

*(Please be seated)*

## **OLD TESTAMENT READING**

*Jeremiah 31:31–34*

### **The New Covenant**

<sup>31</sup>“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup>not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. <sup>33</sup>But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup>And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

**L** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## **EPISTLE**

*Hebrews 1:1–4*

### **The Supremacy of God's Son**

<sup>1</sup>Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>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, <sup>4</sup>having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

**L** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

*(Please rise)*

### **♪ ALLELUIA AND VERSE ♪**

*LSB 156*

**C** Alleluia.

Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia, alleluia.

## **HOLY GOSPEL**

*Luke 1:67–79*

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

**C** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

### **Zechariah's Prophecy**

<sup>67</sup>And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,

<sup>68</sup>“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has visited and redeemed his people

<sup>69</sup>and has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
in the house of his servant David,

<sup>70</sup>as he spoke by the mouth of his holy  
prophets from of old,

<sup>71</sup>that we should be saved from our enemies  
and from the hand of all who hate us;

<sup>72</sup>to show the mercy promised to our fathers  
and to remember his holy covenant,

<sup>73</sup>the oath that he swore to our father  
Abraham, to grant us

<sup>74</sup>that we, being delivered from the hand of  
our enemies,

might serve him without fear,

<sup>75</sup>in holiness and righteousness before him

all our days.

<sup>76</sup>And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

<sup>77</sup>to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins,

<sup>78</sup>because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high

<sup>79</sup>to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C** Praise to You, O Christ.

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

**C**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,**

suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.  
He descended into hell.

The third day He rose again from the  
dead.

He ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of God the  
Father Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the  
living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life ✝ everlasting. Amen.

*(Please be seated)*

## **SERMON**

### **"A Better Absolution"**

(Hebrews 1:3b)

*. . . Pastor Karl*

## **FOR NEXT WEEK**

The sermon is based on Hebrews 1:4, “So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.”

1. Only two angels in the Bible are given names. Do you remember them?
2. What name has Jesus inherited that is better than the names of these two angels?
3. What name of Jesus in Hebrews 1:4–14 (e.g., “Son,” “Lord,” “God,” “Firstborn”) speaks most to you?

## **HYMN OF THE DAY**

### **570 JUST AS I AM, WITHOUT ONE PLEA**

- 1 Just as I am, without one plea  
But that Thy blood was shed for me  
And that Thou bidd’st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 2 Just as I am and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,

To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

3 Just as I am, though tossed about  
With many\_a conflict, many\_a doubt,  
Fightings and fears within, without,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

4 Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;  
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,  
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

5 Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;  
Because Thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

6 Just as I am; Thy love unknown  
Has broken ev'ry barrier down;  
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

## **OFFERING**



## **♪OFFERTORY RESPONSE♪**

### **805 PRAISE GOD, FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW**

*(Please rise)*

△ **1 Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host:  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
Amen.**

## **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.**

**CLOSING PRAYER** *(based upon Jeremiah 31:34)*

**[P]** Lord, you promise to forgive our wickedness

**[C]** And remember our sins no more.

**BENEDICTION** *(From Hebrews 13:20–21)*

**[P]** May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever.

**ALL: He who promised is faithful and he will do it!**

*(Please be seated)*

**CLOSING HYMN**

## **357 O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL**

*(Stanzas 1, ref, 5–6)*

**1** O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear. **Refrain**

**ref Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!**

**5** O come, Thou Key of David, come,  
And open wide our heav'nly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
And close the path to misery. **Refrain**

**6** O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,  
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadows put to flight.  
**Refrain**

**Together we ask:** Jesus, bring an end to my guilt trip and place me on the grace trip, now and forevermore! Amen.



# *SERVING IN THE LORD'S HOUSE TODAY*

Preacher: Rev. Karl P. Glander

Organist: Holly Bell

Flutist: Nancy Rybak

Bells: Debbie Jackow

The Sound System: Jeff Kirsch

Elder: Klaus Naumann

Altar Guild: Emmy Larson, Betty Willis

Ushers: Tim and Mary Tobeck

Reader: Mickie Naumann

## **HAPPENING AT BETHLEHEM**

### **HOLIDAY WORSHIP SERVICES**

Wednesday Christmas Eve: 7:00pm (Communion)

Thursday Christmas Day: 10:30am (Communion)

Wednesday New Year's Eve Service: 7:00pm