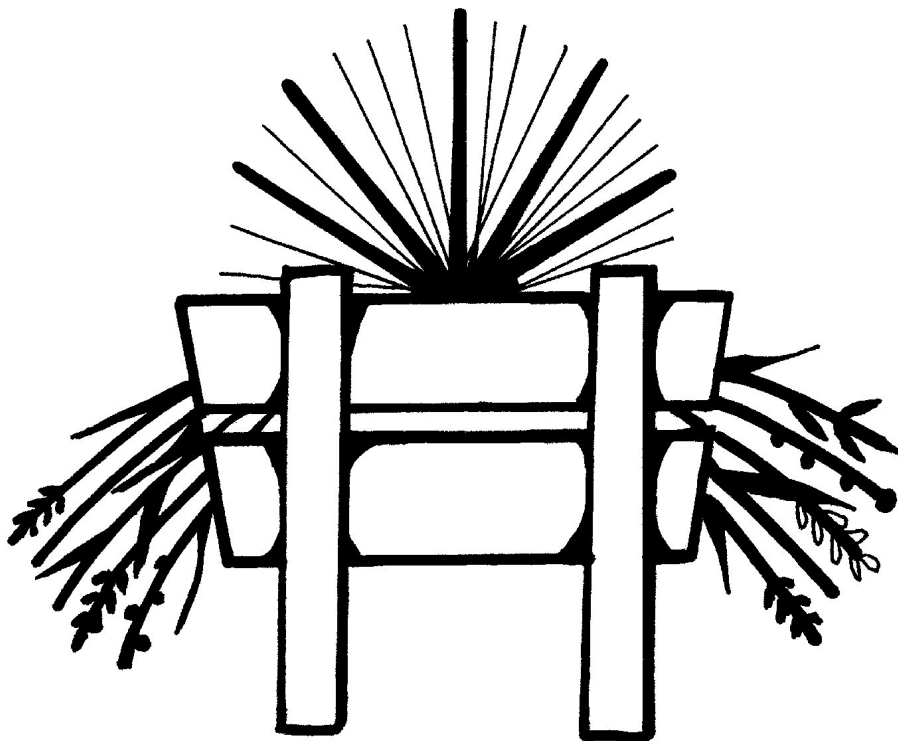




**Christ
Lutheran**
CHURCH

2610 Campbell Street
Valparaiso, Indiana 46385
(219) 462-6660 • clcvalpo.org



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP
2025
10:00 p.m.

We welcome you to Christ Lutheran Church! We are a community of people sharing God's love through Christ and growing together in faith.

We celebrate all the ways we are made in the image of God, seeking to see God in everyone. We honor and respect each person's age, ethnicity, family composition, gender identity, gender expression, life history, mental well-being, physical ability, relationship status, sexual orientation, skin color, and socioeconomic standing. Together, we strive to love and serve our neighbor and all creation, including working toward racial and social justice. We would love to walk with you on this creative adventure* of faith, grace, and love.

** The first sermon ever preached at Christ Lutheran was titled "A Call to Creative Adventure."*

ABOUT WORSHIP

We gather to worship weekly to hear and remember our shared hope: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ makes all things new, even us.

You will find everything that happens in worship printed in this bulletin, with hymns found in the red hymnals ("ELW") in the seats in front of you.

If you have a prayer request, note it on a yellow card from the seatback holder and pass it to an usher; the other side is for any information you would like about Christ Lutheran. Please feel welcome to remain seated as necessary during the service.

CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN CHURCH!

God's people come in all shapes and sizes – it is a gift to the whole community when the smallest of us are present! Sitting with parents and learning to treasure times of worship is the foundation for helping build a growing faith in a child's life. There's some noise and movement that we expect from little ones - feel free to make use of the **activity bags, doodle pads, bookshelf in the overflow area and cry room at the back of the sanctuary** as needed. Whatever sacrifice of energy and effort you make to include your children in worship is multiplied as the good news of God's love takes root in their lives!

RESTROOMS

Men's and women's restrooms off the Gathering Area and Church Hall have changing tables, as does the all-gender restroom near the nursery. A second all-gender restroom is through the Vestry off the East hallway, past the Welcome Center.

HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

Our services are on video, and occasional photographs are taken for our website and e-mail news. If you have concerns, please speak to a church staff member.

Hearing assistance devices are available to those who need help with listening to the service and are located at the entrance to the sanctuary, or please see an Usher for assistance.

A Reminder: Please turn off all cell phones during worship services.

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty Savior,
Prince of Peace.
Amen.

Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God,
**we yearn for your presence to transform
our grief, pain, and despair.**
**We confess that we have not always prepared
room in our hearts for your love;
we have not always recognized
your presence among us;
we have not always embraced your message of peace.**
**We cry out, weary with the burden of violence,
oppression, and fear.**
**We confess our failure to make room
for those seeking refuge;
our participation in violent systems
that harm your innocent ones;
our reluctance to embody your good news.**
**Be born in us today
and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation.**
Amen.

God's grace upon grace flows over you.

✝ Christ's presence redeems the whole creation.

Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!

Amen.

CANDLE LIGHTING

As the light is shared, remember: the lit candle is never tilted. The unlit candle is lifted up for lighting.

CHRISTMAS PROLOGUE

This, tonight, is the meeting place of heaven and earth.

For this, tonight, is the stable

in which God keeps the appointment to meet his people.

Not many high are here, not many holy,

not many innocent children, not many worldly wise,

not all familiar faces, not all frequent visitors.

But if tonight only strangers met, that would be enough.

For Bethlehem was not the hub of the universe,

nor was the stable a platform for famous people.

In an out-of-the-way place which people never thought to visit –

there God kept and keeps the promise:

there God sends his Son.

CAROL: *Of the Father's Love Begotten*



1 Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten ere the worlds be -
 2 Oh, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed, when the vir - gin,
 3 This is he whom seers in old time chant - ed of with
 4 Let the heights of heav'n a - dore him; an - gel hosts, his
 5 Christ, to thee, with God the Fa - ther, and, O Ho - ly



gan to be, he is Al - pha and O - me - ga,
 full of grace, by the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing,
 one ac - cord, whom the voic - es of the proph - ets
 prais - es sing; pow'rs, do - min - ions, bow be - fore him
 Ghost, to thee, hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing



he the source, the end - ing he, of the things that are, that
 bore the Sav - ior of our race, and the babe, the world's re -
 prom - ised in their faith - ful word; now he shines, the long - ex -
 and ex - tol our God and King; let no tongue on earth be
 and un - wea - ried prais - es be: hon - or, glo - ry, and do -



have been, and that fu - ture years shall see,
 deem - er, first re - vealed his sa - cred face,
 pect - ed; let cre - a - tion praise its Lord
 si - lent, ev - 'ry voice in con - cert ring
 min - ion, and e - ter - nal vic - to - ry



ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 ev - er - more and ev - er - more! A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

CAROL: *Away in a Manger (st. 1, 3)*



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed,
2 The cat - tle are low - ing; the ba - by a - wakes,
3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay



the lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down his sweet head;
but lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes.
close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.



the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
I love you, Lord Je - sus; look down from the sky
Bless all the dear chil - dren in your ten - der care



the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
and stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
and fit us for heav - en, to live with you there.

PRAYER

When the world was dark and the city was quiet, you came.

You crept in beside us.

And no one knew, only the few who dared to believe
that God might do something different.

Will you do the same this Christmas, Lord?

Will you come into the darkness of tonight's world;
not the friendly darkness as when sleep rescues us from tiredness,
but the fearful darkness, in which people have stopped believing
that war will end,
or that food will come,
or that we can work together in government,
or that the Church cares?

**Will you come into that darkness and do something different
to save your people from death and despair?**

Will you come into the quietness of this city,
not the friendly quietness as when lovers hold hands,
but the fearful silence when
the phone has not rung,
the letter has not come,
the friendly voice no longer speaks,
the doctor's face says it all?

Will you come into that darkness and do something different,
not to distract, but to embrace your people?

Will you come into the dark corners and the quiet places of our lives?

We ask this not because we are guilt-ridden, or want to be,
but because the fullness that our lives long for
depends on us being as open and vulnerable to you as you were to us,
when you came, wearing no more than diapers,
and trusting human hands to hold their maker.

**Will you come into our lives, if we open them to you,
and do something different?**

When the world was dark and the city was quiet,
you came.

You crept in beside us.

Do the same this Christmas, Lord.

Do the same this Christmas. Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song

READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

CAROL: *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming (st. 1, 2)*

1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath
2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in
3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the
4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man

sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as
mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the
air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the
woe; O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who

seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -
vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she
dark-ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from
dost our weak - ness know: bring us at length, we pray, to

mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.
bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.
sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.
the bright courts of heav - en and in - to end - less day.

READING: Luke 2:1-14

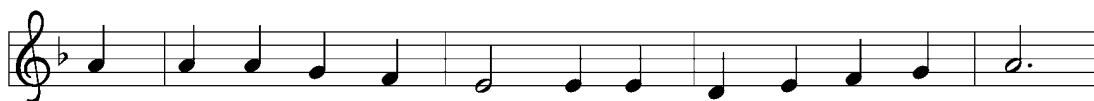
CAROL: *O Little Town of Bethlehem* (st. 1, 3)



O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
while mor-tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won-d'ring love.
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
O morn-ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ-mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

READING: Luke 2:15-20

CAROL: *What Child is This*



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Time for reflection follows the message.

CAROL: *In the Bleak Midwinter*



1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,
 2 Heav - en can - not hold him, nor . . . earth sus - tain;
 3 What . . . can I give him, poor . . . as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
 heav'n and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign;
 If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed
 if I were a wise . . . man I would do my part;



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
 the Lord . . . God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.
 yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

PRAYERS

Trusting that the love of God is in us and the Spirit of joy is with us, we bring our need, our longing, and our hope to the manger – to Jesus, God With Us.

(silence)

We come before you, Christmas child, in silent amazement.

May we welcome you among us. *(silence)* Child of Bethlehem,

hear our prayers.

As Mary welcomed you and rejoiced in God's holiness and mercy, we pray for the church as Christmas approaches. *(silence)* Child of Bethlehem,

hear our prayers.

As shepherds welcomed you, disturbing their work and lives, we pray for your disturbing presence in our world. *(silence)* Child of Bethlehem,

hear our prayers.

As Joseph welcomed you, giving you a home and a name, we pray for all who seek shelter in our community tonight. *(silence)* Child of Bethlehem,

hear our prayers.

As angels welcomed you, singing of glory and peace, we pray for all who seek healing and hope. *(silence)* Child of Bethlehem,

hear our prayers.

As Simeon welcomed you, recognizing his journey's fulfillment, we give thanks for those who have died and pray for all those who love and miss them. *(silence)* Child of Bethlehem,

hear our prayers.

As wise men welcomed you, risking a journey and following a star, we pray that we may take risks in following you. *(silence)* Child of Bethlehem,

hear our prayers.

As you opened your arms wide on the cross to receive the fullness of our world's sin, sorrow, and suffering, Child of Bethlehem, receive all our prayers in compassion and fill us with hope.

Amen

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We invite those worshipping by livestream to share a sign of peace in the chat, and for those in person we turn to offer them our greeting of peace before sharing a sign of peace with one another: **Peace be with you!***

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

OFFERING

*This congregation serves our neighbors, community, and the world through the participation and support of its members and guests. Because offerings are never just about us, this month we are sharing a portion of your gifts with the **Bethel Lutheran Church**, a diverse, urban ELCA congregation in the Miller neighborhood of Gary, Indiana (part of NW Indiana Conference of I-K Synod) bethelmiller.org and facebook.com/bethelmillerbeach*



If you wish to give electronically, use the QR code, browse to our secure on-line portal at clcvalpo.org/give or use [our CLC app](#) (download at clcvalpo.org/app)

OFFERING PRAYER

God of glory,
**great are your wonders among us
and many are the blessings you bestow.**
**Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world,
that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace,
through Christ our Savior.**
Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The pastor continues the Table Prayer, concluding...Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

God is now in flesh appearing.
Come to the feast of joy!
Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION

COMMUNION HYMNS *Once in Royal David's City*



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,
 2 He came down to earth from heav-en who is God and Lord of all,
 3 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re - deem-ing love;
 4 Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the ox - en stand-ing by,



where a moth-er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for his bed:
 and his shel-ter was a sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall;
 for that child so dear and gen - tle is our Lord in heav'n a - bove;
 we shall see him; but in heav - en, set at God's right hand on high;



Mar - y was that moth-er mild, Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.
 with the poor and meek and low-ly, lived on earth our Sav-ior ho-ly.
 and he leads his chil - dren on to the place where he is gone.
 there his chil - dren gath - er round, bright like stars, with glo - ry crowned.



Infant Holy, Infant Lowly



1 In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;
2 Flocks were sleep - ing, shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing new



ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ the child is Lord of all.
saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel true.



Swift - ly wing - ing, an - gels sing - ing, bells are ring - ing, tid - ings bring - ing:
Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing, greet the mor - row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table.
May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts
the mystery of your presence.
Move us to discover the wonders of your love
in the everyday moments of our lives,
through Christ born in us.
Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

READING: John 1: 1-14

CAROL: *Silent Night, Holy Night! (v. 1 is sung in English or German)*



Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,
1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,



ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.
all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,



Hold - er Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher
Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your



Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.
peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

SENDING

Where is the care in this world?
Where is the faith we were promised?
Where is the hope we desired,
when peace moves into our homes,
and joy is a constant presence,
and justice is for everyone?

**God, this world waits to know
that your love is more than words.**

People of God,
you have already shared the advent
of God's goodness.

You carry the blessing of God,
God, who spoke creation into being,
Jesus, the Word made flesh,
Spirit, who speaks to our hearts.

Now go into this world
expecting God's justice
and nurturing God's peace.

God, we will magnify your love.

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO ALL!!

THANKS to all who have given the beautiful poinsettias to the Glory of our Lord on
this Christmas Eve:

Wes and Karina Barlow ~ In Honor of Carol Barlow
In Memory of Jon R. Barlow

Vickie and Gregg Copeland ~ In Honor of our Family
In Memory of Mary Jirik

Lucas and Sally Ecklund-Baker ~ In Memory of Jake Baker

Becky Fry ~ In Memory of John and Bea Beyer

Phil Hahn ~ In Memory of Laurel Hahn

Darla Hernandez ~ In Honor of the Hernandez Children
In Memory of Doris Peterson

Candace Jacques ~ In Honor of Janet Powell
In Memory of Margaret Rounds

Linda Mapes ~ In Honor of my Family

Tom Muchesko ~ In Honor of Betty Walkura
In Memory of Karen and John Muchesko

Robin Nelson ~ In Honor of Maddox and McKenna

Kathy Page ~ In Memory of Tom Page and Jody Steward

David and Charlene Smith ~ In Memory of Louise Huber and Christina Back

Ellen Swayne ~ In Honor of Family
In Memory of Gladys and Charles Swayne

Cheryl Watson ~ In Memory of Ken Watson

Vickie White ~ In Memory of Tom

Bethany White ~ In Memory of Nicholas

Plants may be picked up after the 10:00 p.m. service.

Worship Leaders

Acolyte

Shawn Longacre

Lector:

Dave Nelson

Communion Assistant:

Ushers:

Tim Sutherland

Pastors:

Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr.
Rev. Erica Gibson-Even

Director of Music Ministries:

Brian Bartusch



What Really Matters

“All the world should be registered” (Luke 2:1). This announcement from the emperor was an order for all people to stand up and be counted, to prove their worth by stating their name, their lineage, and the details of their existence, like the stats on the back of a trading card.

But an angel made a different sort of announcement: “This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:12). The shepherds would need to look for a baby just lying there, doing nothing but existing in all his God-given glory.

This baby is such good news in a world that tells us every day, in every possible way, that we need to prove our worth, that we need to convince the world and everyone around us that we matter. In what ways do you repeatedly try to prove your worth to the world? To your friends and family and colleagues? To yourself? To God?

What would it feel like—in your body, in your heart, in your gut—to just exist in all your God-given glory? To remember that the Savior of the world came to us as a baby who couldn’t do a single thing besides lie in the straw? And what would it be like for you—for all of us—to live each day in response to this wild grace?

Each of us matters to God, who sent Jesus into the world for us and all creation. God loves us, claims us in baptism, and continues to sustain us in holy communion. This indeed is good news of great joy for all people. Glory to God!



From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2025 Augsburg Fortress.

All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #26201.

New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Portions printed under OneLicense.net License #A-711129.