

Christmas at Bethany

Words for the Beginning



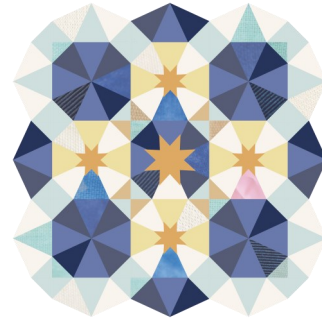
Thursday,
December 19, 2024
7:00 pm

Longest Night Worship

❄️ December 22 — *Hope is Worth the Risk*

Sunday morning worship at 10:00 am—
We light the final candle on the Advent Wreath as we wait in hopeful anticipation.

Christmas Caroling — Christmas carolers of all ages are invited to spread cheer through the neighborhood. We will meet at the church to practice at 3:00 pm, journey through the neighborhood, and return to the church for hot soup before going home at 5:00 pm.



❄️ December 24 — *Love Knows Your Name* 4:30 & 7:00pm - Candlelight Service

Christmas Eve — Christ's birth makes the vastness of God personal. The God who made the seas and the stars is also the God who created each of us. On this night, God is born, and this God of love knows your name. Both services will celebrate the birth of Christ through choirs, songs, scripture, prayers and a special time for children.

❄️ December 29 — *Don't Forget to Laugh*

Sunday morning worship at 10:00 am— This service of lessons and laughter interweaves joy and playfulness with scripture readings as we celebrate the holy joy of this season. This service will invite worshipers to connect, sing, laugh, and relish in the angel's promise that Christ brings joy to the world.



Welcome & Opening Poem

Pastor Julie

We believe all people are recipients of God's love and grace, and that God intends the church to be a community that embodies love, grace, and justice for all people. We celebrate God's gift of diversity and value the wholeness made possible in community equally shared and shepherded by all. We welcome and affirm people of every gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, who are also of every age, race, ethnicity, physical and mental ability, level of education, family structure, and of every economic, immigration, marital, social status, and so much more. Everyone is welcome!

Call to Worship *

Pastor Brad

Leader: In a world that is lonely,

People: we will save a seat for you.

Leader: In a world that is anxious,

People: we will light candles against the gloom.

Leader: In a world that is weary,

People: we will sing songs of joy and truth.

Leader: I am not alone.

People: We are not alone.

Leader: For here in this place,

People: God is weaving us together.

Song #211 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (vs 1-4) Red Hymnal
Erin McConnel, Piano

Prayer of Hope and Healing * *Pastor Julie & Pastor Brad*

Right Side: I have tried to make my own way.

**I have tried to lace my own shoes, to build my own house,
to kindle my own faith.**

**I have said a thousand times, “turn back,”
as if I am fine on my own.**

**But the days are long and I am forgetful.
I need your help. Can you remind me?**

Left Side: We will remind you of this everlasting truth:

**You are not alone.
Where you go, God goes.
You are held in grace.
Trust in this good news.**

Right Side: Thanks be to God! I remember. I believe.

Left Side: Now I need your help.

**I, too, have tried to make my own way.
I have tried to lace my own shoes, to build my own houses,
to kindle my own faith.
I have said a thousand times, “turn back,”
as if I am fine on my own.
But the days are long and I am forgetful.
I need your help. Can you remind me?**

Right Side: We will remind you of this everlasting truth:

**You are not alone.
Where you go, God goes.
You are held in grace.
Trust in this good news.**

Left Side: Thanks be to God! I remember. I believe.

All: Alleluia! Amen.

Anthem “Plowshare Prayer” *Erin McConnell*
By Spencer LaJoyer

Scripture (Ruth 1:14-19) *Pastor Brad*

¹⁴ Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth stayed with her. ¹⁵ Naomi said, “Look, your sister-in-law is returning to her people and to her gods. Turn back after your sister-in-law.”

¹⁶ But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to abandon you, to turn back from following after you. Wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. ¹⁷ Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD do this to me and more so if even death separates me from you.” ¹⁸ When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her about it.

¹⁹ So both of them went along until they arrived at Bethlehem. When they arrived at Bethlehem, the whole town was excited on account of them, and the women of the town asked, “Can this be Naomi?”

Reflection * “We Can’t Go Alone” *Pastor Julie*

Song #218 “It Came Upon A Midnight Clear” Red Hymnal
Erin McConnel, Piano

Time of Prayer *Pastor Julie & Pastor Brad*

Candle Lighting

Song #239 “Silent Night” (verses 1 & 4) Red Hymnal
Erin McConnel, Piano

Final Blessing *Pastor Brad*

Closing Music

*Sanctified Art