

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Teaching God's Word for our temporal and eternal benefit!

Services: Fourth Wednesday in Advent, December 21, 2016 at 11 AM & 7 PM

Series: **Perspectives on the Christ of Christmas**

Think about the FIRST Christmas, the very Son of God, the long promised Messiah, is finally born! The event was monumental, to say the least, but everyone also saw it from a different perspective. Therefore, this year, we will consider four perspectives – those of †God the Father, †Mary, †Elizabeth, and †Joseph.



Sermon: The Perspective of Joseph!

Based on Matthew 1:18-25 NET

L = Leader ♦ C = Congregation ♦ A = All

Today's service is **Vespers** (Adapted from Lutheran Service Book, 229-234).

PREPARATION:

1. **Bell:** Candle lighting. Please be seated.
2. **Visitors:** Please take a Visitor Packet (Narthex) and introduce yourself to the pastor!

3. **The Season of Advent:**

L: He is coming!

C: **Let us remain ready!**

↑ PSALM VERSES (Psalm 51:15; Psalm 70:1):

L: O Lord, open my lips,

C: **and my mouth will declare Your praise.**

L: Hurry, O God, to deliver me;

C: **hurry to help me, O Lord.**

A: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

L: Praise to You, O Christ,

C: **Our King who comes to save us.**

OPENING HYMN: **LSB 357, sts. 1, 2, 4, 6**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

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

**Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!**

- 2 O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
Who ord'rest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go. **Refrain**
- 4 O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree,
Free them from Satan's tyranny
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave. **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

ADVENT RESPONSORY:

L: Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord,

C: **When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch.**

L: In His day Judah will be saved,

C: **And Israel will dwell securely.**

A: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.**

L: This is the name by which He will be called:

C: **The Lord Is Our Righteousness.**

SALUTATION and PRAYER:

L: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

L: *Let us pray.* Father in heaven, *the Planner of our salvation*, as Joseph went against what seemed right to him in order to live-out His trust in You, so help us to do the same unto *Your glory and our benefit*; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.** ↓

SERMON HYMN – PART 1: LSB 332, sts. 1-3

Savior of the Nations, Come

- 1 Savior of the nations, come,
Virgin's Son, make here Your home!
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth.
- 2 Not by human flesh and blood,
By the Spirit of our God,
Was the Word of God made flesh—
Woman's offspring, pure and fresh.
- 3 Here a maid was found with child,
Yet remained a virgin mild.

In her womb this truth was shown:
God was there upon His throne.

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SCRIPTURE READING and SERMON: The Perspective of Joseph! Matthew 1:18-25 NET

¹⁸ This is how Jesus Christ was born. His mother Mary had been promised to Joseph to be his wife. But before they came together, she was found to be with Child by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹ Joseph, her husband, was an honorable man and did not want to disgrace her. So he decided to divorce her secretly.

²⁰ After Joseph had thought about it, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take your wife Mary home with you; for her Child is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will have a son, and you will name Him JESUS, because He will save His people from their sins."

²² All this happened so that what the Lord said through the prophet would be fulfilled: ²³ "Look! The virgin will conceive and have a son, and they will name Him Immanuel," which means "God With Us."

²⁴ When Joseph awoke, he did what the Lord's angel had commanded. He took his wife home with him ²⁵ but did not have relations [sexual relations] with her until she had a son. And he named Him JESUS.

SERMON HYMN – PART 2: LSB 332, sts. 4-6

Savior of the Nations, Come

- 4 Then stepped forth the Lord of all
From His pure and kingly hall;
God of God, yet fully man,
His heroic course began.
- 5 God the Father was His source,
Back to God He ran His course.
Into hell His road went down,
Back then to His throne and crown.
- 6 For You are the Father's Son
Who in flesh the vict'ry won.
By Your mighty pow'r make whole
All our ills of flesh and soul.

OFFERING: *Let us honor the Lord!*

Since God faithfully provides for us, let us honor Him
by giving faithfully and proportionately!

⇒ Offertory

⇒ Please complete your attendance slip!

↑ KYRIE, LORD'S PRAYER, OTHER PRAYERS:

L: Let us pray:

L: *O Lord,* **C: have mercy.**

L: *O Christ,* **C: have mercy.**

L: *O Lord,* **C: have mercy.**

L: Let us pray:

A: Our Father who art in heaven...

L: O Lord, hear our prayer.

C: And let our cry come to You.

L: Dear Father, You know of our internal
struggles about what to do in many situations
– *should we do our will or Your will?*
Whenever we ponder that question, make
Your will clear and move us to follow it!

C: Amen.

L: Dear Lord Jesus, You wanted to avoid the
cross, yet, even more, *You wanted to do the
will of Your Father.* Thank You for coming
into this sinful world, living for us, taking our
punishment, and laying down Your life; help

us to ever trust You as our Savior, honor You
as our Lord, and live with gratitude!

C: Amen.

L: Dear Holy Spirit, You live within us, work
through the Word, and strengthen us to live
as God's children; therefore, help us to gladly
respond to Your leading in all we say and do!

C: Amen.

L: Father in heaven, as we approach our
celebrations of Jesus' birth, remind us again
of how much we need Jesus; then help us to
focus on Him and share Him with others!

C: Amen.

BENEDICAMUS and BENEDICTION:

L: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the
love of God and the communion of the Holy
Spirit be with us all.

C: Amen. ↓

CLOSING HYMN and CANDLE EXTINGUISHING:

LSB 366, sts. 1, 3

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

- 1 It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, goodwill to all,
From heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.
- 3 All you, beneath your heavy load,
By care and guilt bent low,
Who toil along a dreary way
With painful steps and slow:
Look up, for golden is the hour,
Come swiftly on the wing,
The Prince was born to bring you peace;
Of Him the angels sing.

Please Join Us

Free Meals: Each Wednesday at 12 & 6; *skip your own preparation and gather with us!*

Be a Blessing

- ✦ **Reach Out with God's Word:** Share a Bethlehem sermon or brochure!
- ✦ **Leave a New Bethlehem Business Card:** Leave it with your restaurant tip, etc.; write a note on the back: "Thank YOU," "Excellent Service," "Happy New Year," etc.
- ✦ **Offer a Ride to Church:** Love your family and friends; invite them to come with you!
- ✦ **Check in on Facebook:** Be positive!

Offering Envelopes for 2017

We say "thanks" to God with our giving. Please pick-up your envelopes from a table in the Narthex; if you want some, let us know.

Let Us Serve the Lord

- ✦ **Become a BLC Leader:** We have openings for Education, Outreach, and Grounds. Contact any leader or the church office.
- ✦ **Be a Blessing to Our Children:** Become a part-time Sunday School Teacher. Talk to any of our teachers – Kathy G, Donna P, or Angie Z – for more information.
- ✦ **Be Helpful and Friendly:** Men / Women / Youth – become an usher for any of our service times (8:00; 10:45; 7 PM). Contact Matt Kussmaul or the church office.
- ✦ **Have the Honor of Preparing the Supper:** Become a member of the Altar Guild. Contact Kathy G to find out more.
- ✦ **Be a Blessing to Our Younger Adults:** Become a group leader who plans, invites, and facilitates a monthly activity. If the group wants to do a study, Pastor and Dr. Giessler are willing to teach. Contact the pastor.

Let us worship our Great God who put on flesh to take away our sins!

+ **Saturday, December 24** – Christmas Eve Service at 6 PM

+ **Sunday, December 25** – Christmas Day Service at 10:00

+ **Saturday, December 31** – New Year's Eve Service at 7 PM (attend 12/31 OR 1/1)

+ **Sunday, January 1, 2017** – New Year's Day Service at 10:00

ABOUT US

Regular Schedule: Sundays – Service 8:00; Refreshments 9:10; Classes 9:30; Service 10:45
Mondays – Service 7 PM

CONNECT WITH US

Website: BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com

Facebook: "Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma"

Church Office: Monday – Thursday, 9:30 to 3:30

Childcare Center: Monday – Friday, 6:45-6:00

Pastor Green: Pastor@blc7500.com; 440-292-5915

Pastor Assistants: Alan Carlson, Ray Dmytriw, Matt Hlavacek, Jerry Huttner, and Brian Zeleznikar

Podcast: "Benefit from the Bible"

Address: 7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134

Kathy Green: Secretary@blc7500.com; 440-845-2230

Tricia Wise: ChildcareDirector@blc7500.com; 440-884-0430

Church Body: lcms.org **District:** oh.lcms.org