

# ***Bethany Lutheran Church***

## **4<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY**

***January 29, 2023***

***8:00 & 9:30 AM***

### **WELCOME TO BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

We are so glad you are here in God's house for worship. Here are some things to remember as we are gathered together today:

**Before** worship, talk to God! (see inside cover of hymnal for pre-service prayer prompts)

**During** worship, let God talk to you!

**After** worship, talk to one another; and if you're a visitor, please stop by the Connections table before you leave today and capture the QR codes for more information.

**Parents of Young Children:** *We love to have children in worship.* God put the wiggle in children; don't feel you have to completely suppress it in God's house. We know the presence of children in worship is a gift to the church! It is in the Lord's house that we learn how to listen and speak to our God with our brothers and sisters in faith. Feel free to quietly explain the parts of the service and the actions of those leading worship. Children learn how to worship by copying you. If you have a need, we have "worship bags" in the Narthex filled with items to help children and families during worship. There is a **Cry Room** across the courtyard in the office complex, where you as a parent may take your little one needing a break. You will still be able to hear the worship service; and thus be able to continue your worship of the Lord.

**Please** place cell phones and electronic devices on mute as you join us in worship this morning. Thank you.

**PRELUDE:**            *"Prelude and Fugue in F-Sharp Minor, BuxWV 146"*            Organ  
                             ~ Dietrich Buxtehude

**WELCOME**



OPENING HYMN:

*“Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty”*

LSB 901



1 O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty; Zi - on, let me  
 2 Gra - cious God, I come be - fore Thee; Come Thou al - so  
 3 Here Thy praise is glad - ly chant - ed; Here Thy seed is  
 4 Thou my faith in - crease and quick - en; Let me keep Thy  
 5 Speak, O God, and I will hear Thee; Let Thy will be

en - ter there, Where my soul in joy - ful du - ty  
 un - to me. Where we find Thee and a - dore Thee,  
 du - ly sown. Let my soul, where it is plant - ed,  
 gift di - vine, How - so - e'er temp - ta - tions thick - en;  
 done in - deed. May I un - dis - turbed draw near Thee

Waits for Him who an - swers prayer. Oh, how bless - ed  
 There a heav'n on earth must be. To my heart, O  
 Bring forth pre - cious sheaves a - lone, So that all I  
 May Thy Word still o'er me shine As my guid - ing  
 While Thou dost Thy peo - ple feed. Here of life the

is this place, Filled with sol - ace, light, and grace!  
 en - ter Thou; Let it be Thy tem - ple now!  
 hear may be Fruit - ful un - to life in me.  
 star through life, As my com - fort in all strife.  
 foun - tain flows; Here is balm for all our woes.

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Leader: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,  
 heaven and earth are full of His Glory.

People: **The Glory of the one and only,  
 full of grace and truth, the Lord Jesus Christ;**

Leader: Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit is one God,  
 whose nature is love that steadfastly endures forever.

People: **Amen.**



## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS:

Leader: Let us come before God and admit that sin is part of our make-up, part of fallen human nature.

People: **Most merciful God,  
we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean.  
We have sinned against You in thought, word and deed;  
on both occasions, when we have chosen to disobey Your will,  
and those times we have accidentally transgressed Your laws.  
Lord, we have failed to love You with our whole heart  
and with all our mind,  
and we have refused to love others  
as much we love ourselves and the stuff of this world.  
For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, the Light of Light,  
Very God of Very God, One with You in essence,  
who in humility became one with us through His incarnation,  
have mercy on us.  
Forgive us Lord and give us a heart and an attitude like that of Jesus.  
Amen.**

Leader: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for us, and for His sake, forgives us all our sins.  
Through His Holy Spirit, He empowers us to live for Him and others, to share His love and to bear witness to His mighty deeds in Christ, in whose name I forgive you all your sins.  
Go delighting in His will and walking in His ways.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Leader: Lord, while Your house is a mighty fortress and a safe harbor it is at the same time a training room and a launching pad; grant us Your Spirit that we might be sent from this place into our own circles and spheres of influence to bring Christ and to be Christ-like to the glory of His holy name and the inclusion of many people into His body.

People: **Amen.**



**FIRST SCRIPTURE READING: *Micah 6:1-8***

**N**ow listen to what the LORD is saying,  
“Stand up! Plead your case in front of the mountains,  
and let the hills listen to your request.  
Listen to the LORD’s lawsuit, you mountains.  
Listen, you strong foundations of the earth.  
The LORD has filed a lawsuit against His people.  
He is arguing His case against Israel.

“My people, what have I done to you?  
How have I tried your patience? Answer me!  
I brought you out of Egypt and freed you from slavery.  
I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to lead you.  
My people, remember what King Balak of Moab planned to do to you  
and how Balaam, son of Beor, responded to him.  
Remember your journey from Shittim to Gilgal  
so that you may know the victories of the LORD.”

What should I bring when I come into the LORD’s presence,  
when I bow in front of the God of heaven?  
Should I bring Him year-old calves as burnt offerings?  
Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams  
or with endless streams of olive oil?  
Should I give Him my firstborn child because of my rebellious acts?  
Should I give Him my young child for my sin?  
You mortals, the LORD has told you what is good.  
This is what the LORD requires from you:  
to do what is right,  
to love mercy,  
and to live humbly with your God. — GW ®

**SECOND SCRIPTURE READING: *I John 5:1-9***

**E**veryone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah has been born from God. Everyone who loves the Father also loves His children. We know that we love God’s children when we love God by obeying His commandments. To love God means that we obey



His commandments. Obeying His commandments isn't difficult because everyone who has been born from God has won the victory over the world. Our faith is what wins the victory over the world. Who wins the victory over the world? Isn't it the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This Son of God is Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood. He didn't come with water only, but with water and with blood. The Spirit is the one who verifies this, because the Spirit is the truth. There are three witnesses: the Spirit, the water, and the blood. These three witnesses agree.

We accept human testimony. God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony that He has given about His Son. – GW ®

**MINISTRY OF MUSIC:**      ***“This Is My Father’s World”***      The Bethany Choir  
   ~ John Leavitt

## **CHILDREN’S SERMON**

### **THE HOLY GOSPEL:    *John 14:1-6***

**“D**on’t be troubled. Believe in God, and believe in me. My Father’s house has many rooms. If that were not true, would I have told you that I’m going to prepare a place for you? If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again. Then I will bring you into my presence so that you will be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we don’t know where you’re going. So how can we know the way?”

Jesus answered him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one goes to the Father except through me.” – GW ®



SERMON HYMN: *“Faith and Truth and Life Bestowing”*

LSB 584



1 Faith and truth and life be - stow - ing, O - pen now the  
2 May the Spir - it's pow'r un - ceas - ing Bring to life the

Scrip - tures, Lord, Seed to life e - ter - nal sow - ing,  
hid - den grain, Dai - ly in our hearts in - creas - ing,

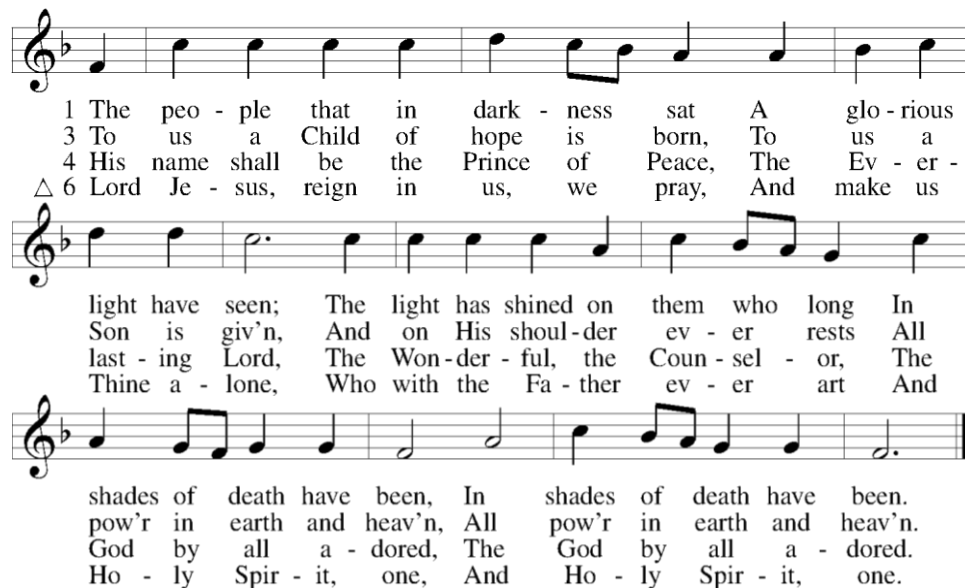
Scat - tered on the wind a - broad. Let not hearts, Your  
Bear - ing fruit that shall re - main. So in Scrip - ture,

Word re - ceiv - ing, Like a bar - ren field be found, Choked with  
song, and sto - ry, Sav - ior, may Your voice be heard. Till our

thorns and un - be - liev - ing, Shal - low earth or ston - y ground.  
eyes be - hold Your glo - ry Give us ears to hear Your Word.

SERMON: *“Gospel DNA: Truth”*  
Text: *John 14:1-6*





1 The peo - ple that in dark - ness sat A glo - rious  
 3 To us a Child of hope is born, To us a  
 4 His name shall be the Prince of Peace, The Ev - er -  
 △ 6 Lord Je - sus, reign in us, we pray, And make us  
 light have seen; The light has shined on them who long In  
 Son is giv'n, And on His shoul - der ev - er rests All  
 last - ing Lord, The Won - der - ful, the Coun - sel - or, The  
 Thine a - lone, Who with the Fa - ther ev - er art And  
 shades of death have been, In shades of death have been.  
 pow'r in earth and heav'n, All pow'r in earth and heav'n.  
 God by all a - dored, The God by all a - dored.  
 Ho - ly Spir - it, one, And Ho - ly Spir - it, one.

**OFFERING:** *The Offering Box is located in the center aisle. If you so desire, Text Giving is now available by texting GIVE to 562-210-0463. For On-line Giving information, contact Maraley at [mshaeffer@bethanylutheran.org](mailto:mshaeffer@bethanylutheran.org) or call 562-421-4711, ext. 21. Thank you!*

**APOSTLES' CREED:** (*\* catholic means the universal Christian Church*)

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit**

**and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended into hell. On the third day He rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven,**

**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy \*catholic Church,**

**the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,**

**the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**



## PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

### 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.

\*\*\* *For our 8:00 a.m. worshippers, the service continues on page 10 with Special Announcements.*

\*\*\* *For our 9:30 a.m. worshippers, the service continues with the Celebration of Holy Communion:*

### + *Holy Communion* +

*The Lord's Supper is celebrated at Bethany in the joyful confession that our Lord gives us His very Body and Blood for the forgiveness of sins in this sacrament. God intends this gift for His children who recognize their sin, trust in Christ as their Savior, desire to live for Him alone and join in this joyful confession.*

To help you prepare for communion we invite you to take a few moments of quiet prayer. For aid there are prayers on the front page of the hymnal for both before and after the reception of communion. Or simply pray, *Dear Lord Jesus, at Your gracious invitation You invite me to come to You, to eat and drink Your holy body and blood as You Yourself have promised to give in this sacrament of Your altar. Forgive me of my sin, through this Your meal of Forgiveness. Let me experience the fullness of Your love, through this Your meal of love. Strengthen my faith, through this meal of Yours that calls for and bestows faith. Empower me to live for You, through this Your meal that promises life everlasting and equips me for daily living as one who has received You and Your gifts.*

### WORDS OF INSTITUTION



*For those communing, who so desire, the center cups in each tray are alcohol free.*

*The wafers next to the Christ candle side are gluten free;*

*for those with dietary restrictions, please take a gluten free wafer.*

*For those wishing to use a self-contained communion chalice, let an usher know.*

*In our 9:30 a.m. service we will practice the Easter tradition of continuous communion. We will not kneel at the altar, rather we will join the procession of saints and come forward and remain standing as we receive the bread and wine. After receiving the elements, you are invited to return to your seat and continue in meditation, prayer and song.*

## POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

## THE BLESSING

### CLOSING HYMN: "Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise" LSB 917

1 Sav - ior, a - gain to Thy dear name we raise  
2 Grant us Thy peace up - on our home - ward way;  
3 Grant us Thy peace, Lord, through the com - ing night;  
4 Grant us Thy peace through - out our earth - ly life,

With one ac - cord our part - ing hymn of praise;  
With Thee be - gan, with Thee shall end, the day.  
Turn Thou for us its dark - ness in - to light.  
Our balm in sor - row and our stay in strife;

Once more we bless Thee ere our wor - ship cease,  
Guard Thou the lips from sin, the hearts from shame,  
From harm and dan - ger keep Thy chil - dren free;  
Then, when Thy voice shall bid our con - flict cease,

Then, low - ly bend - ing, wait Thy word of peace.  
That in this house have called up - on Thy name.  
For dark and light are both a - like to Thee.  
Call us, O Lord, to Thine e - ter - nal peace.



**POSTLUDE:**      *“Fugue” (from Prelude & Fugue in G, Opus 37 No. 2)*      Organ  
                         ~ Felix Mendelssohn

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“Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty” LSB 901  
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“Faith and Truth and Life Bestowing” LSB 584  
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“The People That in Darkness Sat” LSB 412  
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“Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise” LSB 917  
Text: John Ellerton, 1826-93. Tune: Edward J. Hopkins, 1818-1901;  
setting: *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 1941. Text and music: Public domain.

**FROM PASTOR KRITZER:**

“For some time now you’ve been praying for me, Connie and our family as we’ve been considering our calls to Bethany and Peace Camarillo.

Admittedly this process has taken awhile and we truly thank you for those prayers, words of affirmation and encouragement! They are part of the means through which the Lord has convinced us that our time at Bethany (and our sister sites of The Gathering and Holy Cross) is not yet finished; so we've returned the call to Peace and will be remaining here.

I want to assure you that the vitality, import and future direction of this ministry was never in question! Bethany is a blessed place through which He blesses as we Gather, Connect and are Sent.

Peace Lutheran and Camarillo however hold special places in our hearts too. Connie graduated HS in Camarillo, her parents still live there and we've often wondered if it might be a retirement location for us. Furthermore, Peace is a ministry through which family members have confirmed their faith and we ourselves began our lives as husband and wife. So we naturally wrestled with the question of what was God arranging?



We've become convinced that He was doing an Epiphany work of revealing to us that our ministry here at Bethany, The Gathering and Holy Cross, is not over!

I realize that with two calls in short order some of you might wonder if another call might be around the corner. While any congregation can extend a call to any rostered worker at any time, I call tell you that 99.5% of the time it begins with an inquiry which asks, "if you were to receive a call could you prayerfully consider it?" Most of the time if you ask a church worker to pray they will say, "of course." I can assure you that from here on out should such an inquiry come I will be saying "No!"

I've made a 5 year commitment to the leadership and staff of Bethany, to see us through the merger process, our multi-site ministry realities, our governance and structure changes that we as a congregation identified as necessary quite some time ago, that are now obligated to do as three constituted congregations become one, to guide the process of the addition of staff to serve this ministry and finally to formulate the plan for transition of pastoral leadership as a long term Senior pastorate, mine, (over next 5 years) draws to a close. Bethany's leaders have, in turn, made this same 5 year commitment.

We've not yet completed our journey together and as a multisite congregation and community of faith that seeks to Gather, Connect and Send for generations to come from our downtown Long Beach ministry (The Gathering), to our Cypress site (Holy Cross) and our main campus at Clark and Arbor, we've got a future into which we head convinced that He blesses at Bethany."