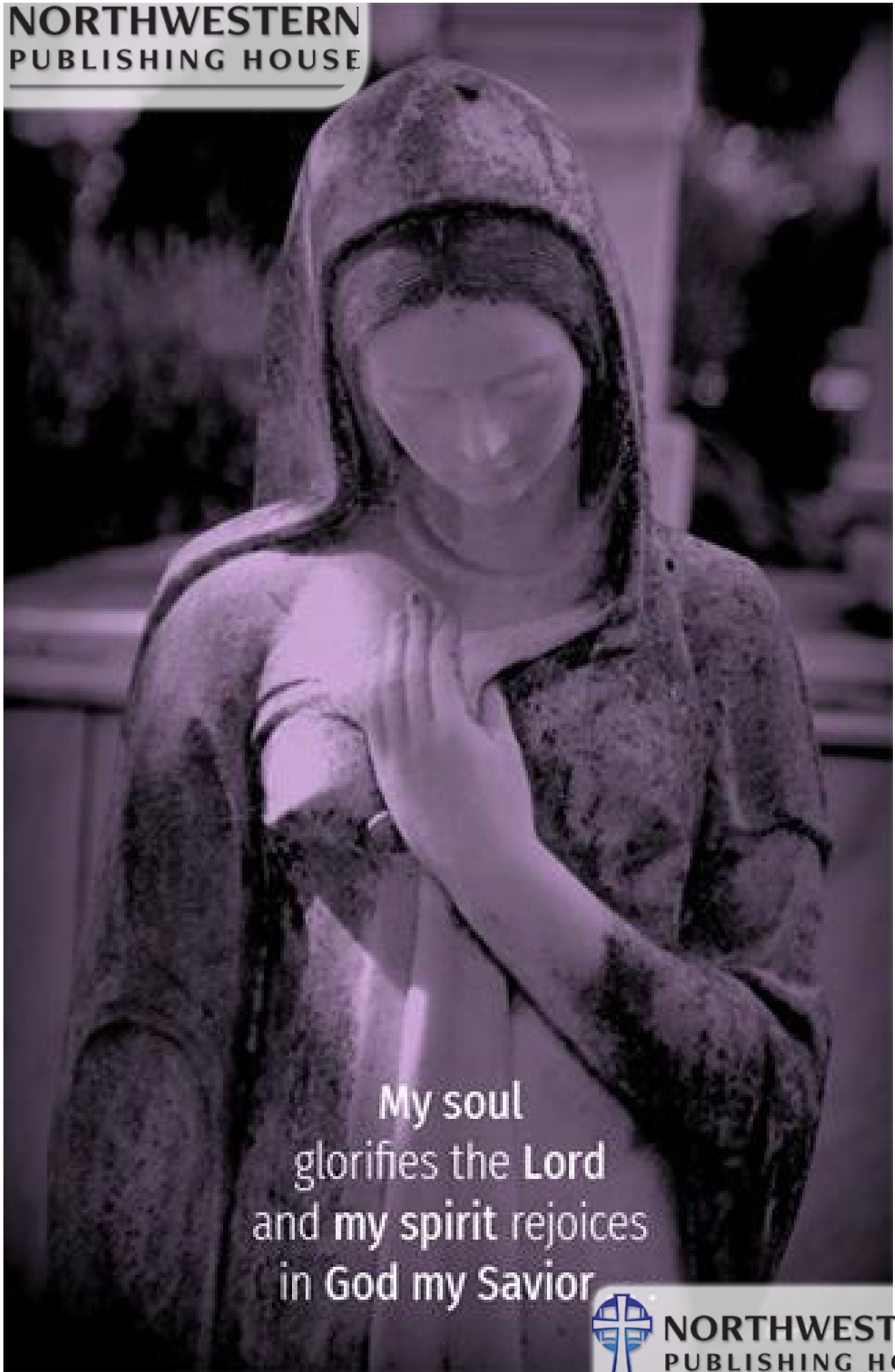




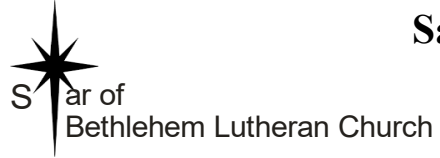
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My soul  
glorifies the Lord  
and my spirit rejoices  
in God my Savior



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Pastor Michael Foley

## Worship Service

*Sunday, December 22, 2024 10:00 a.m.*

### Fourth Sunday of ADVENT

**Theme of the day:** This last Sunday of Advent, we celebrate together the promise and fulfillment of the One born *Immanuel*, “God with us.” As we get closer and closer to Christmas, we ask God to prepare our hearts to receive the baby born in Bethlehem as his wonderful gift of salvation.

## WELCOME

A warm welcome to our friends and visitors! Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church is eager to share with you the blessings of its Christ-centered ministry. If you are a new or long-time resident of the Central Coast looking for a church home, we invite you to meet with us at the close of this worship service or at your convenience. All are welcome to stay for refreshments in the fellowship hall.

**Families** are encouraged to worship together. If you need to step out with your children, the service can be seen and heard in the fellowship hall or narthex area. Feel free to enter and return at any time.

## OUR MISSION

Our congregation exists for the purpose of “HOLDING OUT THE WORD OF LIFE.” This is accomplished by faithfully preserving and proclaiming all of God’s inerrant word, and administering the Sacraments as they were instituted by Christ.

**OPENING HYMN: # 333 “O Little Town of Bethlehem”**

♪ **O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep  
their watch of wond’ring love.  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King and peace to all the earth.**

**How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv’n!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav’n.  
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him, still  
the dear Christ enters in.**

*Please stand for last verse:*

**O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!**

Minister: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

Congregation: **And also with you.** (*spoken*)

M: God invites us to come into his presence to worship him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask him to forgive us.

**Song:** (*CW #340 “Away in a Manger”*)

♪ **Lord Jesus, I long to be cleansed and made whole;  
have pardon and mercy upon my ill soul.  
By faith, for my cleansing, I see Thy blood flow,  
now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

**Lord Jesus, have mercy, my burden is great,  
come now, and within me a new heart create;  
renew me and guide me; your mercy will show.  
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

**C: Be gracious to me, God, according to your mercy. Erase my acts of rebellion according to the greatness of your compassion. Scrub me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I admit my rebellious acts. My sin is always in front of me. Against you, you only, have I sinned, and I have done this evil in your eyes. Remove my sin with hyssop, and I will be clean. Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness. Let the bones you have crushed celebrate. Hide your face from my sins. Erase all my guilty deeds. Create in me a pure heart, O God. Renew an unwavering spirit within me.**

M: The Lord is merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. He gives us this great comfort: “As distant as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our rebellious acts from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.” “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” Therefore, as a called servant of Christ, and by his authority, I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.** *(spoken)*

*Please be seated.*

## **ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING INTROIT**

♪ **Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes,  
and see what in the manger lies.  
Who is this child, so young and fair?  
It is the Christ Child lying there.**

M: The darkness of sin and unbelief are shattered by the light of the Gospel. The **Prophecy Candle** gives us the first flicker of hope as we watch for the coming of the Lord.

**C: Watch! Be alert and pray, because you do not know when the time will come.** *(Mark 13:33)*

*The Prophecy Candle is lit.*

M: The **Bethlehem Candle** calls us to repent. See in Jesus the Light of the world. Change your hearts so that you may live as children of the light.

**C: “Prepare the way of the Lord. Make his paths straight.”**  
(Matthew 3:3)

*The Bethlehem Candle is lit.*

M: The **Shepherd Candle** points to our joy as God’s people. In Jesus we have all that matters. In joy and peace we ask God to keep us in the faith and faithful in our lives.

**C: The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.**  
(1 Thessalonians 5:24)

*The Shepherd Candle is lit.*

M: The **Angel Candle** shows us the glory of the Son of God who humbled himself to save us. With the angels, we praise our Savior who gave his all for us.

**C: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth  
peace, good will toward mankind.”**  
(Luke 2:14)

*The Angel Candle is lit.*



♪ **Welcome to earth, O noble Guest,  
through whom the sinful world is blest!  
You came to share my misery  
that you might share your joy with me.**

M: May the light of these candles call to mind the glorious light of the Gospel, shining in the birth of our Savior.  
May his grace enlighten our lives, both now and forever.

♪ **Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,  
prepare a bed, soft, undefiled  
within my heart, made clean and new,  
a quiet chamber kept for you.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

M: Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Take away the burden of our sins, and make us ready for the celebration of your birth, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## SUNDAY SCHOOL SONG: "Emmanuel, Emmanuel"

♪ **Emmanuel, Emmanuel, Who is our Emmanuel?  
God with us! God with us!  
God always keeps his promise and he promised us Emmanuel.  
Wait and see. Wait and see.**

**Wonderful and Counselor, mighty God forever.  
Prince of Peace! Prince of Peace!  
God always keeps his promise and he promised us Emmanuel.  
Wait and see. Wait and see.**

## FIRST LESSON: Micah 5:2-5

<sup>2</sup>**But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
though you are small among the clans of Judah,  
from you, will go out the one who will be the ruler for me in Israel.  
His goings forth are from the beginning, from the days of eternity.**


<sup>3</sup>**Therefore the LORD will give them up,  
until the time when the woman who is in labor bears a child.  
Then the remaining survivors from his brothers will return to the  
people of Israel.**

<sup>4</sup>**He will stand and shepherd with the strength of the LORD,  
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.  
They will dwell securely, for at that time he will be great to the  
ends of the earth.**

<sup>5</sup>**This one will be their peace.**

## PSALM OF THE DAY: Psalm 85

*Refrain*



I will hear what the Lord pro-claims: peace to his peo - ple.

*Psalm tone*



**You showed favor to your land, O LORD;\*  
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.**

**You forgave the iniquity of your people\*  
and covered all their sins.**

**Show us your unfailing love, O LORD,\*  
and grant us your salvation.**

***Refrain***

**I will listen to what God the LORD will say;\*  
he promises peace to his people, his saints.**

**Surely his salvation is near those who fear him,\*  
that his glory may dwell in our land.**

**Love and faithfulness meet together;\*  
righteousness and peace kiss each other.**

**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.**

***Refrain***

**VERSE OF THE DAY**

**M: Alleluia. “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son.  
And they will name him Immanuel,” which means, “God with us.”  
Alleluia. (Matthew 1:23)**

**C: ♪ Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!  
These words are written that we may believe  
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

## **SECOND LESSON: Hebrews 10:5-10**

**<sup>5</sup>Therefore when he entered the world, Christ said:**

**Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,  
but you prepared a body for me.**

**<sup>6</sup>You were not pleased with burnt offerings and sin offerings.**

**<sup>7</sup>Then I said, “Here I am.**

**I have come to do your will, God.**

**In the scroll of the book it is written about me.”**

**<sup>8</sup>First he said:**

**Sacrifices and offerings that were offered according to the law,  
both burnt offerings and sin offerings, you did not desire,  
and you were not pleased with them.**

**<sup>9</sup>Then he said: Here I am. I have come to do your will.**

**He does away with the first in order to establish the second.**

**<sup>10</sup>By this will, we have been sanctified once and for all, through the  
sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ.**

**HYMN: # 327 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”**

**♪ O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!**

**O come, O Root of Jesse, free your own from Satan’s tyranny;  
from depths of hell your people save,  
and give them vict’ry o’er the grave.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!**

**O come, O Dayspring from on high,  
and cheer us by your drawing nigh;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death’s dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!**

**O come, O 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.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!**



## **SERMON: Luke 1:39-55**

<sup>39</sup>In those days Mary got up and hurried to the hill country, to a town of Judah. <sup>40</sup>She entered the home of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup>Just as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup>She called out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup>But why am I so favored that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup>In fact, just now, as soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy! <sup>45</sup>Blessed is she who believed, because the promises spoken to her from the Lord will be fulfilled!"

<sup>46</sup>Then Mary said,

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

<sup>47</sup>and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup>because he has looked with favor on the humble state of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed,

<sup>49</sup>because the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup>His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup>He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

<sup>52</sup>He has brought down rulers from their thrones.

He has lifted up the lowly.

<sup>53</sup>He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he has sent away empty.

<sup>54</sup>He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, remembering his mercy,

<sup>55</sup>as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring forever.

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

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

**I believe 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 is seated at the right  
hand of God the Father almighty.  
From there 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.**

**HYMN: # 328 “The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came”**

**♪ The angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame:  
“All hail,” said he to meek and lowly Mary,  
“most highly favored maiden.” Gloria!**

**“I come from heav’n to tell the Lord’s decree:  
a blessed virgin mother you shall be.  
Your son shall be Immanuel, by seers foretold,  
most highly favored maiden.” Gloria!**

**Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;  
“To me be as it pleases God,” she said.  
“My soul shall praise and magnify his holy name.”  
Most highly favored maiden, Gloria!**

**Of her Immanuel, the Christ, was born  
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,  
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say,  
“Most highly favored maiden.” Gloria!**

**OFFERING**

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**LORD’S PRAYER**

**C: 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.**

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace.  
Live in harmony with one another.  
Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and (+) give you peace.

C: ♪ Amen. Amen. Amen.

### **CLOSING HYMN: # 315 “Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord”**

♪ **Let the earth now praise the Lord,  
who has truly kept his word  
and at last to us did send  
Christ, the sinner’s help and friend.**

**What the fathers most desired,  
what the prophets’ heart inspired,  
what they longed for many a year  
stands fulfilled in glory here.**

**Abram’s promised great reward,  
Zion’s helper, Jacob’s Lord—  
him of twofold race behold—  
truly came, as long foretold.**

**Savior, hear my welcome cry —  
loud hosannas lifted high!  
King of glory, enter in;  
cleansing my soul of ev’ry sin.**

**Crush for me the serpent’s head  
that, set free from doubt and dread,  
I may cling to you in faith,  
safely kept through life and death,**

**And, when you shall come again  
as a glorious king to reign,  
I with joy may see your face,  
freely ransomed by your grace.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**ALTAR FLOWERS** are given to the glory of God by the Evers on the occasion of Holly's birthday.

**PRAYERS:** Remember to pray for: Shawn Lozano, little Elias, Dennis Douglas, Bob Ward, George Caravana, Molly Webb & brother Jim, Helen Marten, Doug Ward, Kathy Jones, Art Amarillas, Melinda Brown, Alice Taubman, Monica, Louise Perry, Rylan Downs, Jeff Brown, Aaron Taubman, Judy Washburn, Marlene Washburn, Terry Oberg's siblings Linda and Carp, Kathryn Pereira, Helen Cummings, Phil Schaaf, Joe Wilkinson, and Phil Swan.

### THIS WEEK

<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Christmas Eve Service, 7:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Christmas Day Service, 10:00 a.m.</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>No Bible Class</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Sunday School &amp; Bible Class, 9:00 a.m.</b> <b>Worship, 10:00 a.m.</b>

