

# SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS



**January 4, 2026**

**WELCOME!**

If you are a visitor, please sign the guest book in the narthex. If you are seeking a church home, we joyfully invite you to join with us; please speak to me, Pastor Jami Possinger.

Holy Communion is open to all baptized believers who trust that the Lord is present for them in His Supper.

Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices to fully enter into this time of worship.

## **Faith Lutheran Church**

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Office 570-646-0309

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**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/Faith-Lutheran-Church-Blakeslee-PA-1721550018126312>

Leader: ..... John Lyman  
Lector..... Phil Newlander  
Greeters/Ushers: ..... Ruth Newlander  
Music: ..... Molly Finkbiner

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Faith Fellowship Team:** Our mission is encouraging interaction, building relationships, and creating a sense of belonging within the congregation and with the local community. If you're interested in becoming part of the Faith Fellowship Team, please contact Sara Cornell at 570-472-5560 or at saracornell10@gmail.com.

**Faith Cookbook:** Recipes can be for appetizers, soups and salads, main courses, side dishes, casseroles and desserts. Please submit your recipe to Sara Cornell or Barbara Laughlin. Include your name with your recipe.

**Altar Service Signup:** Volunteers are needed to set-up, bake bread, and clean up after communion. Please email Jan Frantz at Boris\_fan@yahoo.com to help.

**Bulletin Sponsors and Flower Donations:** Sign-up sheets for 2026 are on the table in the foyer entrance of the church. In-house bulletin for \$10 and \$10 towards silk flowers, or you may bring your own fresh flowers. **Please complete the requisition form with your dedication note.**

## MEETINGS/EVENTS

**AA Meetings:** Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at 12 p.m.

**American Red Cross Blood Drive:** January 14, 2026, 1 p.m.-6 p.m. Please call 800-733-2767 to pre-register.

**Bible Study:** Sundays, 7:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Studying Thessalonians.

**Bible Study:** Wednesdays, 11 a.m. to Noon with Pastor Jami.

**Choir Rehearsals:** Sundays, 8:30 a.m. in the sanctuary.

**Faith Library:** Please see one of the "Little Librarians" or Sara Cornell with any donations or questions.

**Faithful Readers Book Club:** will read "The Venice Sketchbook," by Rhys Bowen. Discussion of the book will take place on January 18, 2026, at Murphy's Loft, after the service. All are welcome to join us.

**Faithful Community Quilters:** Second Monday of the month, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

**Free Community Lunch:** First Tuesday of each month. (Jan. 6) 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Five Loaf House, 133 Firehouse Road, Pocono Pines.

**Pastor Jami Possinger** has weekly office hours. Confidential email: pastor@faithlutheranblakeslee.org or private cell phone: 610-216-9951

*Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.*

*Please rise as you are able.*

**PRELUDE** "Away in the Manger;" "The First Nowell"

## **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

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.**



GATHERING HYMN

“The First Noel”

1 The first No - el the an - gel did say was to  
 2 They look - ed up and saw . . . a star shin - ing  
 3 And by the light of that . . . same star three . . .  
 4 This star drew near to the . . . north - west, o'er . . .  
 5 Then en - tered in those wise . . . men, three, full . . .

cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where  
 in . . . the east . . . be - yond . . . them far; and to the  
 wise . . . men came . . . from coun - try far; to seek for a  
 Beth - le - hem . . . it took . . . its rest; and there it  
 rev - 'rent - ly . . . up - on . . . their knee, and of - fered

they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's  
 earth it gave . . . great light, and . . . so it con -  
 king was their . . . in - tent, and to fol - low the  
 did both stop . . . and stay right . . . o - ver the  
 there in his . . . pres - ence their . . . gold, . . . and

*Refrain*

night that was so deep.  
 tin - ued both day and night.  
 star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -  
 place where Je - sus lay.  
 myrrh, and frank - in - cense.

el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

## GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

*Please be seated.*

## FIRST READING: First Reading: Jeremiah 31:7-14

*God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gift of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.*

<sup>7</sup> Thus says the LORD: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O LORD, your people, the remnant of Israel." <sup>8</sup> See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor together; a great company, they shall return here. <sup>9</sup> With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back; I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path where they shall not stumble, for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. <sup>10</sup> Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him and will keep him as a shepherd does a flock." <sup>11</sup> For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. <sup>12</sup> They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. <sup>13</sup> Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them and give them gladness for sorrow. <sup>14</sup> I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the LORD.

Word of God, Word of Life, **Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM: Psalm 147:12-20

*Worship the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion. (Ps. 147:12)*

<sup>12</sup> Worship the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion,

<sup>13</sup> **who has strengthened the bars of your gates and has blessed your children within you.**

<sup>14</sup> God has established peace on your borders and satisfies you with the finest wheat.

<sup>15</sup> **God sends out a command to the earth, a word that runs very swiftly.**

<sup>16</sup> God gives snow like wool, scattering frost like ashes.

<sup>17</sup> **God scatters hail like breadcrumbs. Who can stand against God's cold?**

<sup>18</sup> The LORD sends forth the word and melts them; the wind blows, and the waters flow.

<sup>19</sup> **God declares the word to Jacob, statutes and judgments to Israel.**

<sup>20</sup> The LORD has not done so to any other nation; they do not know God's judgments.  
Hallelujah!

## SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:3-14

*In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.*

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup> He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup> that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup> In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, <sup>12</sup> so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup> In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; <sup>14</sup> this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.



Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand as you are able.*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia! Lord and Sav - ior: o - pen now your sav - ing word.



Let it burn like fire with - in us; speak un - til our hearts are stirred.



Al - le - lu - ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

## GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to **John 1:[1-9] 10-18**

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.*



[<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.



<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'")

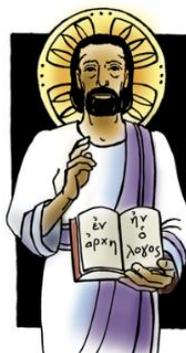
<sup>16</sup> From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Please be seated.*

**CHILDREN'S TIME**

**SERMON**



## HYMN OF THE DAY

### It Came upon the Midnight Clear

1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,  
2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come with peace - ful wings un - furled,  
3 And you, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,  
4 For lo! The days are has - t'ning on, by proph - ets seen of old,

from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:  
and still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world.  
who toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and slow:  
when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,

“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all - gra - cious king.”  
A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing,  
look now, for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing;  
when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling,

The world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.  
and ev - er o'er its ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.  
oh, rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - gels sing!  
and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

## APOSTLES CREED

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come 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 INTERCESSION**

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

O God, you reveal yourself wherever two or three are gathered in your name. Be with us now, not only in the infant Jesus and resurrected Christ, but in the beloved people of this assembly. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You reveal yourself in the waters of the womb; in brooks, ponds, and oceans; and in the waters of baptism. Grant us wisdom to tenderly care for the earth as a garden watered by your grace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You reveal yourself in blessed diversity. Help us to look for you in people near and far, in bodies of all kinds, and in kindred young and old. Let us seek you in many places, praising you in many tongues. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You reveal yourself in new life. Support those beginning a new job, a new relationship, or a new living situation, especially those displaced because of tragedy or loss. Be with all others who need your life-giving touch this day. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

### **PRAYER LIST**

*Tom M; Valerie M.; Pastor Michael Ryan; Jill A.; Nancy M.; Phyllis & Jim N.; Shirley S.; Jim H.; Jenn & Rachel; Bob & Gail C.; Martha E.; Mya; Mary D.; Nicky S.; Leon P.; Homer A.; Judi C.; James K. & Family; Kathleen A.; Tom S.; Larissa; Barbara & David L; Joyce K.; Tammy H.; Mike & Peg; Mama Jan; Eric L; Dick M.; Don C.; David S.; Phil A; Eric, Pat, & Brian R.; Christ, Stone Church.*

You promise to turn mourning into joy and to comfort those who weep. We remember those who have died and look to being united with them in your glory. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

## THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

**SPECIAL MUSIC:** “O Holy Night,” arranged by Adolphe Adam,  
*played by Christine Braun and Molly Finkbiner.*



## OFFERTORY SONG

*(First Verse)*

### 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!

## 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.**

## 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.**

## BLESSING

The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter, † bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy. **Amen.**

## SENDING HYMN      GOOD CHRISTIAN FRIENDS, REJOICE

1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice      with heart and soul      and voice;  
2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice      with heart and soul      and voice;  
3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice      with heart and soul      and voice;

give ye heed to what we say:      Je - sus Christ is born to - day;  
now ye hear of end - less bliss:      Je - sus Christ was born for this!  
now ye need not fear the grave;      Je - sus Christ was born to save!

ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man-ger now.  
He has o - pened heav-en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.  
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day!      Christ is born to - day!  
Christ was born for this!      Christ was born for this!  
Christ was born to save!      Christ was born to save!

## DISMISSAL

Glory to God in the highest! **And peace to God's people on earth!**  
Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace. **Thanks be to God.**

## January 4th, 2026 – Second Sunday of Christmas

### Prelude:

Away in a Manger, Douglas E Wagner. © 1999 Hope Publishing Company. #212599. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-726919. All rights reserved.

The First Nowell, John Carter. © 1987 Hope Publishing Company. #116452. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-726919. All rights reserved.

### Gathering Hymn:

The First Noel, Text and Tune: English carol, c. 17<sup>th</sup> cent. © Public Domain.

### Hymn of the Day:

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear, Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876, alt., Tune: Richard S. Willis, 1819-1900. © Public Domain.

### Special Music:

O Holy Night, arranged by Adolphe Adam. © 1945 Theodore Presser Co. 6. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-726919. All rights reserved.

### Sending Hymn:

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice, Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, Tune: German carol, 14<sup>th</sup> cent.; arr. Robert L. Pearsall, 1795-1856. © Public Domain.

### Postlude:

Angels We Have Heard on High, Larry Shackley. © 2006 Hope Publishing Company. #116564. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-726919. All rights reserved.

### Service Music:

Evangelical Lutheran Worship Setting 10: Alleluia. © 2011 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Augsburg Fortress.

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly, Text: Polish carol; tr. Edith M. G. Reed, 1885-1933, alt., Tune: Polish carol. © Public Domain.

### Sermon:

Andrew McGowan, Bible Archaeology Society, "How did December 25 become Christmas?"

Howard Thurman, "The Mood of Christmas & Other Celebrations," 1973.

David Gierlach, on an open Facebook page, 12/25/2025.

## FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

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