

St. Paul's Lutheran Church – Crossroads (ELCA)

PO Box 394, Batesville, IN 47006 Office Phone: 812.934.3970 Pastor Creighton's Cell:
812.655.4616

E-mail: stpauls.crossroads@gmail.com

Pastor Creighton's e-mail: creighton.leptakjr@gmail.com



**Sunday, December 23, 2018
Fourth Sunday in Advent
Holy Communion**

Cradle and cross are inextricably connected on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Between a lovely tribute to the little town of Bethlehem and the blessed virgin Mary's magnificent song of praise, the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in no uncertain terms that Christ's advent is for "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." It is the kind of tension in which the church always lives as when in the holy communion—with high delight—"we proclaim the Lord's death."



LET YOUR GUARD DOWN,
LET GOD IN,
BE AMONG FRIENDS

WELCOME . . .

We are privileged to have you as our guest in the Lord's house this morning. We pray that the time you share with us will be meaningful for you and that God will bless you through it. If you have a question that is not answered here, please don't hesitate to ask someone around you.

Registry: Please take time to complete the registry/attendance sheet found in the pew in the black folder at the center aisle. It is important to us that we know who is worshipping with us today. Thank you.

Worship: This booklet is our order of worship for today. Hymns are found in the "Evangelical Lutheran Worship" hymnals located in the racks on the back of the pew in front of you. Everything else is printed in this booklet.

Our worship includes **Holy Communion**. As Christians in the Lutheran heritage, we believe that our Lord Jesus is physically present "in, with, and under" the bread and wine we receive. However, if you believe that Jesus' body and blood were given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins, you are welcome to commune with us, regardless of your faith background. A white grape juice is available at the center of the tray for those who do not wish to receive wine. Gluten-free wafers are available for those with gluten sensitivity.

If you desire to receive communion but are unable to come forward to the communion rail, inform the usher of such and communion will be brought to you.

. . . WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE!

Ministers:	The people of St. Paul's Lutheran Church - Crossroads
Pastor:	Pastor Creighton
Greeters:	Matthew and Julie Krieger
Accompanist:	Kathy Westerfeld
Acolytes:	Ethan and Carter Wehr
Assisting Minister:	Mary Lou Krieger
Reader:	Alvin Harmeyer
Communion Assistant:	Bob Krieger
Sound System:	Adam Mack
Offering Counters:	Gary Westerfeld & Arnie Wehr
Altar Committee:	Larry and Ellen Siebert

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH (*Assisting Minister*)

- The fourth candle of Advent is the Candle of Love.
It's light is meant to remind us of the love that God has for us.
- Love is patient, love is kind and envies no one.
Love is never boastful or conceited, rude or selfish.
Love is not quick to take offense, it keeps no records of wrongs, it does not gloat over other people's troubles, but rejoices in the right, the good, and the true. There is nothing that love cannot face, there is no limit to its faith, to its hope, to its endurance.
Love never ends. We light this candle today to remind us of how God's perfect love is found in Jesus

Light the Fourth Candle

- LET US PRAY: Loving God, we thank you for your gift of love - shown to us perfectly in Jesus Christ our Lord. Help us prepare our hearts to receive Him. Bless our worship. Help us to hear and do your word. We ask it in the name of the one born in Bethlehem. **Amen.**

7 O come, O King of nations, come,
O Cornerstone that binds in one:
refresh the hearts that long for you;
restore the broken, make us new. *Refrain*

Refrain

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

8 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the Lord of Israel who comes to set us free,
the mighty Savior who comes to show mercy,
the Dawn from on high who guides us into peace.

Amen.

Let us come before God in confession.

Silence is kept for reflection.

To you, O God,

**we lift up our souls. You know us through and through; we confess our sins to you.
Remember not our sins; remember us with your steadfast love.
Show us your ways; teach us your paths; and lead us in justice and truth,
for the sake of your goodness in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Children of God, come with joy and draw water from the well of salvation.
Remember the gift of baptism:

your sin is washed away in the name of † Jesus;

you belong to Christ; you are anointed to serve.

Stand up and raise your heads! The reign of God is near. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG:

My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness

ELW 251

GREETING

The presiding minister and assembly greet one another.

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.

DIALOGUE

The assisting minister leads the assembly in dialogue.

Jesus, the bright Morning Star, shines light in the world.

By day and night he shines for all to see.

Jesus was born in the midst of injustice and poverty
that the world may see the justice and richness of God.

God so loved the world that God sent Jesus,

So that all who believe in him may not perish but have eternal life.

Jesus is the light of the world.

Jesus is the light of our lives.

Sing to God a new song!

A song of hope, joy, and peace around the world.

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

The presiding minister leads the prayer of the day.

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, 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.

Amen.

The assembly is seated.

FIRST READING: Micah 5:2-5a

The prophet Micah, having pronounced judgment upon Judah, speaks of a future shepherd-king who, like David, will come from the small town of Bethlehem. (Ephrathah refers to the area around Bethlehem.) This king will restore Israel and bring peace. New Testament writers understood this passage to be referring to Jesus.

A reading from the fifth chapter of Micah.

²But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
 who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
 one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
 from ancient days.

³Therefore he shall give them up until the time
 when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
 to the people of Israel.

⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
 in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
 to the ends of the earth;

^{5a}and he shall be the one of peace.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Luke 1:46b-55

The psalm is read responsively by verse.

^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
 ⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
^{48c}**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.**
 From this day all generations will call me blessed:
⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great things for me
 and holy is your name.
⁵⁰**You have mercy on those who fear you,**

from generation to generation.

- ⁵¹You have shown strength with your arm
and scattered the proud in their conceit,
⁵²**casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.**
⁵³You have filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴**You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,
to remember the promise of mercy,**
⁵⁵the promise made to our forbears,
to Abraham and his children forever.

SECOND READING: Hebrews 10:5-10

The author of Hebrews uses the image of religious sacrifice to convey the significance of Christ's coming. Through obedient acceptance of God's will, Christ allows his own body to become the greatest sacrifice of all, one through which we are made a holy people.

A reading from the tenth chapter of Hebrews.

- ⁵Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,
“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body you have prepared for me;
⁶in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.
⁷Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me).”
⁸When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law),
⁹then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHOIR ANTHEM: *We Bring His Light*

The assembly stands to acclaim the gospel.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW p. 142

♪Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: Luke 1:39-55

We are presented with Elizabeth, John's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. In Elizabeth's inspired greeting and Mary's song of praise we hear of a saving God who remembers, scatters, lifts up, and fulfills all things.

The holy gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country,
⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

⁴⁶And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

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

⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.

HYMN OF THE DAY:

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

ELW 241

NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The assisting minister leads the assembly in prayer.

As we await the coming of Christ, we pray in hope for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence

Faithful Lord, you keep your promises. Move your church to sing like Mary and rejoice like Elizabeth. Teach us to sing of your faithfulness all our days. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Ancient of Days, with joy you danced over the waters and birthed creation. Give us joy in caring for the soil beneath us, the water around us, and the sky above us. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Prince of peace, your sacrifice gives abundant life to all. Raise up leaders in every nation whose goals are health and well-being for all people and creation. Grant them wisdom and compassion to serve as you would have them serve. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Good Shepherd, you feed your flock. Fill the hungry with good things. Lift up the lowly. Accompany the refugee. Comfort the lonely. Heal the sick especially those listed in the bulletin and prayer book, and those we name aloud or in our hearts at this time. Send us in haste to surround them with your love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Love Incarnate, you are with us at the manger, on the cross, and on the resurrection road. Walk with all who live with depression, grief, or heartache in this season. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Ever-living God, you are Alpha and Omega. We thank you for all who sing now in the heavenly choir, especially those dear to us. Join our voices with theirs in praise of the Christ child. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray and all for whom we have forgotten or neglected to pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

PEACE

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say, "Peace be with you," or similar words.

The assembly is seated.

OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need. After the offering is gathered, the assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

OFFERING SONG:

Come Now, O Prince of Peace

ELW 247



O - so - sŏ o - so - sŏ, pyong - hwa - ũi - im - gŭm

- 1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.
- 2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.
- 3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.
- 4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.



u - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - sŏ.

- Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

Text: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope
Music: OSOSŎ, Geonyong Lee, b. 1947
Text and music © Geonyong Lee

OFFERING PRAYER

After the table is set, the assisting minister leads a prayer.

Let us pray together.

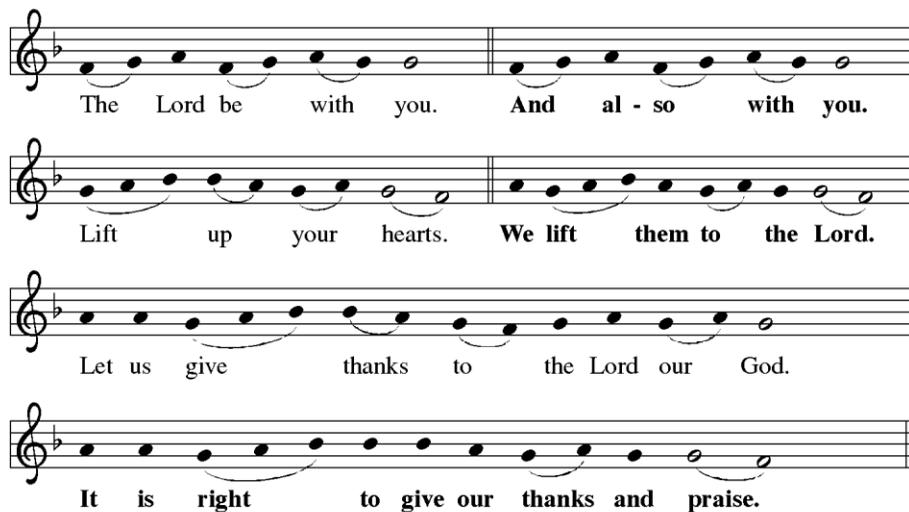
God of abundance,

we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

DIALOGUE

ELW p. 144

The presiding minister greets the assembly and invites all present to give thanks.



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, ...
... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW p. 144

**♪ Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Our Fa-ther in heav - en, hal - lowed be your name,
 your king-dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heav - en.
 Give us to - day our dai - ly bread. For - give us our sins as we
 for-give those who sin a-gainst us. Save us from the time of tri - al
 and de - liv - er us from e - vil. For the king - dom, the pow'r,
 and the glo - ry are yours, now and for - ev - er. A - men.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The presiding minister addresses the assembly in invitation.

The assembly is seated.

All are welcome at Christ's table! If you are a visitor and receive communion at your home church, you are invited to do so here. Everyone is invited to receive communion or a blessing.

COMMUNION SONG

ELW p. 146

**♪Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.**

COMMUNION

When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

and each person may respond

Amen.

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

After Holy Communion has been distributed, the assembly stands and the presiding minister may say:

The body and blood of our risen Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

SONG AFTER COMMUNION:

Wait for the Lord

ELW 262

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Wait for the Lord'. It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 8/8. The first system has the lyrics 'Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.' The second system has the lyrics 'Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!'. The piano accompaniment features chords and single notes in both hands.

Text: Taizé Community

Music: WAIT FOR THE LORD, Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994

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PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:

The assisting minister leads the assembly in prayer after communion.

Let us pray.

Holy One, we give you thanks that in this bread and cup we have feasted again on your endless love. Let that love overflow more and more in our lives, that we may be messengers to prepare your way, harvesters of justice and righteousness, and bearers of your eternal Word, our Savior Jesus Christ.

Amen.

BLESSING

The presiding minister proclaims God's blessings.

Go out into the world in peace;
have courage; hold on to what is good;
return no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted;
support the weak, and help the suffering;
honor all people; love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.
Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING SONG:

Joy to the World

ELW 267

DISMISSAL

The assisting minister sends the assembly into mission.

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

We remember in Prayer:

Carol Bergman

Chris Meyer

Leon Siebert

Aaron Nicholson

Todd Siebert

Art and Karen Salvitti

Marlin and Julia Siebert

Nicole Christie (Receptionist BMS)

Cheryl Strouse (BMS Principal's wife)

Ryan Westerfeld (Dennis and Andrea's nephew)
Patsy Holdsworth (Friend of Dennis and Andrea)
Michael Gibson (Marilyn Gausman's son)
Melody Briner (Marilyn Gausman's daughter)
Kasey Hester (friend of Marilyn Gausman's son Michael)
Nick and Ivy Gunter and their unborn twins
Ruth Booster (wife of former pastor)
Lois Bastien Brown (Tim Salvitti's grandmother-in-law)
Marie Dierckman (Ginny Low's mother)
Steve Gookins (Friend of Les & Martha Kessens and Dennis & Andrea Westerfeld)
Leonard (husband of Lisa Gausman's friend)
George Lerosé (Art Salvitti's brother-in-law)
Stella Long (Marilyn Gausman's sister-in-law)
Tessa Mayer (wife of Wanda Siebert's principal)
Nate McClintic (Spouse of Debbie Mack's co-worker)
Bekah Netherton (daughter of Debbie Mack's friend)
Erin Newcomb (Hauser HS student)
Ronnie Nicholson (Darrell's brother)
Barry Norman (Lisa Gausman's former principal)
Carol Rayve (Karen Salvitti's mother)
Ted Rayve (Karen Salvitti's brother)
Beverly Richardson (Laura Nicholson's mother)
Kristina Salvitti (Art's daughter)
Gary Schopmeyer (friend of Anita and Bob Krieger)
Charlie Seibert (friend of Anita and Bob Krieger)
John Ward (Eunice Sisson's brother-in-law)
Jasmine Westerfeld (Sharon Brown's great-granddaughter)
Melinda Wilson (wife of Ben Wilson)
anyone affected by natural disasters, warfare and violence
all who serve in the military

Honored Members:

Allen and Mary Lou Narwold Bill Westerfeld

Our members at St. Andrew's: Julia Siebert Ruth Thackery

Our Partner Churches: Evangelical Lutheran Church of France and St. Paul Lutheran Church, Olean

Today:

Just as the longest night of the year is here, we light all four candles on our Advent wreath. Indeed, Christ’s light shines in our darkness, and the darkness cannot banish it (see John 1:5). **Welcome to worship.**

Devotionals for the winter quarter are available in the narthex. There are large print and youth/family ones as well as regular print.

The **January newsletter** is available in the narthex. Please take yours – and any for your family – as you leave this morning.

Pastor Creighton will be on vacation from December 26th – January 5th. Pastor Jill Kepler Campbell of St. Mark will be available for any pastoral need. You may contact her at the church office (812-934-4246) or on her phone: (859-391-3712).

This Week:

Office Hours – Monday	10:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Monday – Christmas Eve worship	7:30 PM
Tuesday – Happy Birthday, Jesus!	
Sunday - NO Sunday School Worship Service – NO communion	10:00 AM

Upcoming Events / Announcements:

Thank you to everyone who donated canned fruits and vegetables for the Food Pantry holiday baskets. Your generosity is greatly appreciated by our neighbors in need.

Service of Lessons and Carols – December 30th – NO COMMUNION

It's time to think about signing up for both **Altar Committee and Flowers** for the new year.

Any member interested in filling the soon to be vacant **secretarial position**, pick up a job description in the office. Also give your name and contact information to Pastor Creighton or any member of Council by Sunday, Jan. 13th.



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THE WORSHIP AREA IS ADORNED WITH POINSETTIAS GIVEN TO THE GLORY
OF GOD THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON:

In Memory of ...

- ... Harvey and Leona Davis by Bob and Carolyn Cornett
- ... Paul Gausman by Marilyn Gausman
- ... Paul and Janet Gausman by Tony, Lisa, Noah, Kelsey, Emma and Seth
- ... Kate Krieger by Bob and Anita Krieger
- ... Wanita Linkel by Kim Linkel
- ... Paul and Janet Gausman by Tom and Pauletta Meyer
- ... Nathaniel Meyer by Tom and Pauletta Meyer
- ... Angela Marie Houston and Leonard and Opal Narwold by Pamela K Narwold and Family
- ... Wanita Linkel and Loved Ones by Pamela K Narwold and Family
- ... Richard "Dick" Nicholson by Darrell and Laura Nicholson
- ... Loved ones by Carol Siebert
- ... Lloyd Siebert by Donna Siebert
- ... Monroe and Eleanor Westerfeld by Gary and Jan Westerfeld

... Our Parents and Grandparents by Dennis and Andrea Westerfeld

... John and Helen Westerfeld and Fred and Dolories Krieger by John and Kathy Westerfeld

In Honor of ...

... Sharon Brown by Chris, Jennifer, Jordan and Luke Meyer

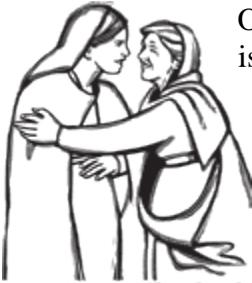
... Beverly Richardson by Darrell and Laura Nicholson

... Our Children, Grandchildren, and Great-Grandchildren by Dennis and Andrea Westerfeld

... Our Daughters and their Families by John and Kathy Westerfeld



Being Recognized, Encountering Christ



Mary Visits Elizabeth

Often called the visitation, the encounter between Mary and Elizabeth is full of joy, recognition, gratitude, and blessing. Luke immediately follows the annunciation with Mary's journey to visit Elizabeth, who gives this unmarried pregnant girl not only a safe haven but also the first glimpse of what it means to be the mother of the Savior. The encounter is full of mystery and grace: the mystery of new life forming but still invisible, and the grace of recognizing each other as the Spirit-filled mothers they are becoming.

The story is also full of theological gravity: as the women encounter each other, so do Jesus and John the Baptist. Yet the theological meaning is almost overshadowed by the sheer physicality of the encounter. Imagine the hasty travel, demonstrative greeting, joyful exclamation, the unborn John leaping for joy, and robust singing. As the celebration of Christ's birth approaches, the four active and responsive bodies in this text remind us that this is, after all, the incarnation itself unfolding.

God becomes a body in Jesus, and that body will be offered up for the sake of the world. This body, recognized already by John in the womb, will eventually undergo the suffering and shame of death on a cross. Without losing sight of that big picture, today we enter into the up-close picture of Mary and Elizabeth's encounter and share in the joy and gratitude they have in common with all who recognize Christ in their neighbor.