

## *Come, Let Us Adore Him!*

*Join us for Christmas Services  
Christmas Eve Candle Light 10:00 pm  
Christmas Day 10:00 am*



Bethany Free Lutheran Church  
451 34th St.  
Astoria, OR 97103

Do we grasp the depth of this event?

I used to always wonder why John explained the coming of the Messiah so differently than the other Gospel accounts. For sure John must have struggled at how to begin his account of what he saw and witnessed. While the Holy Spirit guided John in the writing of the account, John's personality heavily influenced his choice of words, and what he would focus on. John doesn't begin by talking about Mary or Joseph. Nor do we hear a word about shepherds, a manger, or even the evil King Herod.

John begins by calling Jesus "the Word." He emphasizes the Messiah as eternal, and as having always been around. He writes of life coming from Jesus, and that Jesus is light. Wow, meditate on that for a few minutes. Do you get the picture of the entire human race fumbling around in the dark groping for direction? And then all of a sudden, a great light appears, pointing humanity to the one right path.

John writes of things that could fill volumes explaining, and it only took him a couple paragraphs! Then he writes of another massive concept, Jesus as the Word, becoming flesh, to dwell among us. This taking on flesh to be one of His creations is also something that could be explained with multiple volumes of written works. Jesus as the creator God, lowered Himself to become confined to a human body in all of it's fragility and weaknesses. As a human, Jesus would know hunger, thirst, temptations to sin, acne as a teenager, ridicule and scorn as an outcast, laughter with close companions, and intense grief with the death of friends and family. Jesus would develop friendships that He would cherish, as well as know the crushing burden of being betrayed by multiple people he considered as a friend.

Perhaps most important, Jesus would model to us what love truly looks like. While most of us may love the experience of eating

a double scoop of pralines and cream on a waffle cone; this is but a shallow experience of true love. The love shared by a newly wed couple may seem closest to the deepest level of love we can know, but that falls short. The love a mother has to risk her life to not receive needed medical treatment in order to provide her unborn baby a chance at life strikes closer to the love of Jesus, but even that doesn't fully encompass the love of God. Jesus loved those who didn't love Him, and died a horrific death in order to make that love really count for something. But before the cross on Good Friday, Jesus endured the manger on Christmas morning, along with more than 30 years of living in a frail human body to a family that had to squeak out an existence under the oppression of the Roman government.

John ends his introduction of the Messiah with verse 18 of his first chapter, "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known." While Moses, or perhaps Adam and Eve probably came the closest to seeing God, no human had ever truly seen God yet. But Jesus was about to change that. And one of Jesus' missions was to make the mystery of God known to humankind. We serve a God who desires to be known by us. And Christmas time marks the fulfillment of God's desire to be know.

This Christmas season spend some quite time reflecting on the mystery of the first 18 verses of John chapter 1. The other Gospel accounts are important to provide the historical background of how the birth of Jesus happened. But John calls the reader to ponder the vast depth of God, and mystery of how we as humans would connect with our maker.

Pastor Rich Carr

## Worship With Us

8:45 A.M. Glad Tidings Radio 1370 A.M.

9:30 A.M. Sunday School

11:00 A.M. Worship Services

## Live Stream

We live stream our 11:00 A.M. Sunday worship services on Subsplash. If you prefer Facebook we are still there. Sunday sermons are also posted the same day on our YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/@bethanyfreelutheranastoria3012/featured>. You can find links to all of these on our website at [www.bethanyfree.com](http://www.bethanyfree.com)



**SUNDAY SCHOOL**

**9:30am - 10:30am**

**Kindergarten- Adults**

**Learning God's Word**



## Men's Prayer Breakfast

The men's prayer breakfast is December 7th, 8:00 A.M. Cooking starts at around 7:15 A.M., if you would like to help. We would love to have more men join us.

## Deacons & Trustees Meeting

They will meet here at church, Tuesday, December 3rd, 5:00 P.M.

## Bethany Sewing Ministry

The ladies of Bethany will meet December 5th & 19th this month. Thursday mornings at 10 A.M., downstairs at Bethany. All sewing skills are welcome. A lunch is provided. We work on quilts that are mostly sent to AFLC Alaska Missions in Naknek, AK

## Brown Bag Ministry

Every Tuesday, 1:00 P.M. We have our weekly Brown Bag Ministry which prepares brown bag lunches that are distributed in the community, we are always grateful for volunteers.

## Confirmation Class

Confirmation class will meet December 5, 12 & 19. They meet at 2:40pm after school at the Astoria Middle School, on Thursdays. If you know someone interested please contact Pastor Rich.

## WMF Meeting

Women's Missionary Federation will be having a potluck Christmas Gathering, Thursday, December 12th 11am at church. All Ladies are Welcome, bring a dish, and share your Christmas memories.

## Youth Christmas Program

The youth are doing a Christmas program during Sunday service on December 22nd.

## Congregational Meeting

Sunday, December 8th, at 12:30pm. We will be discussing the new Constitution and Bylaws being proposed. Draft copies of the proposed changes are available.

## Women's Evening Bible Study

This month our Christmas Gathering will be a Laura Browns home, Tuesday December 10th, 6pm. Bring an ornament to exchange with an index card of your favorite scripture passage. Bring a finger food to share, beverages will be provided. All women are welcome.



## Church Decorating

We will be decorating the church for the Christmas Season, Saturday December 7th at 9 A.M.. Come and enjoy a festive morning of decorating.

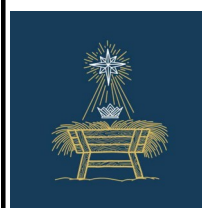


## Advent Services

Wednesday evenings at 7:00 P.M., December 4, 11 & 18.

## Christmas Caroling

Sunday December 22nd at 4 P.M. Join us for Christmas caroling and share in singing the good news of Christ's coming. We will meet at Eric Paulson's home (195 W. Kensington, Astoria) Following caroling, we will be going back to Eric's home for pizza and swimming. You're welcome to bring veggies or treats to share.



## Christmas Services

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Christmas Day service at 10:00 A.M.

## Memorial Tree

As Christmas approaches it can be a time of joy and sadness as we miss our loved ones that are no longer with us. The memory tree is for all those missing a loved one during this season. The tree will be place with picture ornaments of our church family that have passed this past year. Please use the paper ornaments to write your loved ones name, sweet memory, a photo, or a little note on the back and then hang on the tree. You will have to opportunity to take these home after Christmas.