

**PRAYERS:** *Speaking to God in words and thoughts!*

L: O Lord, hear my prayer.

C: **And let my cry come to You.**

After each petition:

L: Lord, in Your mercy.

C: **Hear our prayer.**

- 1. For the LORD's protection and guidance during the time of the OT.

- 2. For the Son of God, whose finished work removed all we have done wrong.

- 3. For a mild winter.

- 4. For a Christ-centered Advent Season.

L: We trust O Lord, in Your great mercy to hear and answer us through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

**BENEDICAMUS and BENEDICTION** (Psalm 103:1; 2 Corinthians 13:14):

L: Let us bless the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the

love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

C: **Amen.**



**HYMN and CANDLE EXTINGUISHING:** "Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel"

**TLH 62**

**Thanks to all who served today:**

- Preacher: Dr. Phillip Giessler
- Organist: Mr. James Alfieri
- Service Leader: Pastor Robert Green
- All Ushers

**Our November and December 2013 DS (Divine Service) Schedule – Please Join Us**

**SUNDAYS** → DS 8:00; → Refreshments 9:10; → Bible Classes, Sunday School, and Staffed Nursery 9:30; → DS 10:45

**Midweek Advent – Wednesdays** → Divine Services 11 AM & 7 PM: 12/4, 12/11, 12/18

**Christmas Eve – Tuesday** → Divine Service 6 PM: 12/24

**Christmas Day – Wednesday** → Divine Service 10 AM: 12/25

**Sunday, 12/29/13 – SPECIAL SCHEDULE** → One Divine Service 10 AM (No Refreshments, Bible Classes, or Sunday School)

**New Year's Eve – Tuesday** → Divine Service 7 PM: 12/31

**Contact Information → Synod, District, Pastor, Secretary, Childcare**

**Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod** → www.lcms.org • **Ohio District** → www.oh.lcms.org

**Bethlehem Website** → www.blc7500.com • **Bethlehem Address** → 7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134

**Pastor** – Robert Green → Church: 440-845-2230 • Cell: 440-292-5915 • Home: 440-842-0694 • Pastor@blc7500.com

**Secretary** – Kathy Green → Monday – Thursday, 9:00 to 3:00 • 440-845-2230 • Secretary@blc7500.com

**Childcare Director** – Tricia Wise → Monday – Friday, 6:45-6:00, 440-884-0430 • ChildcareDirector@blc7500.com

**Advent—Christmas Symbols at Bethlehem** (may our decorating point others to the Christ of Christmas):

- **Wreaths:** Shaped like the crown of thorns worn by Jesus; eternal life, since a circle has no ending!
- **Tree:** It points toward heaven; its evergreen color symbolizes eternal life!
- **Lights:** In the midst of the darkness of sin, Jesus is the True Light of the world!

**Please help us put up our BLC Christmas Tree this Saturday, December 7 at 10 AM**

**Welcome to Bethlehem Lutheran Church**

By God's grace we believe the Bible is God's Word and trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior!

Before the Service—speak to God. During the Service—let God speak to you. After the Service—speak to others!

**Series: "BALAAM: The Prophet Who Tried to Stop Christmas"**

Numbers 22—24

**Episode 1: The First "Donkey" of Christmas**

Numbers 22:1-35

**First Wednesday in Advent, December 4, 2013 at 11:00 & 7:00**

**What is the Season of Advent?** It includes the four Sundays before Christmas. The key word is "coming" and the color is blue for sky. As the Son of God came down from heaven to save us from our sins, so He will come again from the sky to forever bless those who receive Him as Savior!

Join us for our Advent Wednesday Meals at 12 and 6

**WELCOME:** During the bell the candles are lit; please be seated and turn to the opening hymn.

**Advent** – P: He is coming! C: **God will keep us ready!**

Today's Service: Vespers – Adapted from the Lutheran Service Book, 229-234.

Please Participate: L = Leader • C = Congregation • A = All

Hymnals: **TLH = The Lutheran Hymnal (RED)** • **LSB = Lutheran Service Book (MAROON)**

**(↑arise) VERSICLES** (Psalm 51:15; Psalm 70:1):

L: O Lord, open my lips,

C: **and my mouth will declare Your praise.**

L: Hurry, O God, to deliver me;

C: **hurry to help me, O Lord.**

A: **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.**

L: Praise to You, O Christ,

C: **Our King who comes to save us.**

**HYMN:** "Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come"

**TLH 55**

**COLLECT OF THE DAY:**

L: Almighty God, heavenly Father, in Your great mercy You sent Your Son in the Person of the Angel of the LORD to protect Your people and ensure that Your promise of salvation would be fulfilled. Now, in our day, mercifully fill us

with the Spirit to keep us ♦trusting in Jesus, ♦growing in Your Word, and ♦living unto Your glory.

C: **Amen.**



**SERMON and SCRIPTURE READING: Numbers 22:1-35 AAT**

<sup>1</sup> Then the Israelites moved and camped on the plains of Moab, east of the Jordan, opposite Jericho.

<sup>2</sup> Balak, Zippor’s son, saw everything Israel did to the Amorites, <sup>3</sup> and Moab was very much afraid of the people because there were so many of them. Moab dreaded the Israelites. <sup>4</sup> And Moab told the elders of Midian, “Now this mass of people will lick up everything around us like an ox licking up the grass in the field.”

At that time Balak, Zippor’s son, was king of Moab. <sup>5</sup> He sent messengers to Balaam, Beor’s son, at Pethor, in his people’s country near the Euphrates, to call him, saying: “There is a people that came out of Egypt. They have spread out all over the country and are settling right in front of me. <sup>6</sup> Please come now and curse this people for me, because they are too strong for me. Then perhaps I can defeat them and drive them out of the country, because I know he whom you bless is blessed and he whom you curse is cursed.”

<sup>7</sup> The elders of Moab and the elders of Midian left, and with money for his magic in their hands they came to Balaam and told him what Balak said.

<sup>8</sup> “Stay here tonight,” he told them, “and I will report to you what the LORD tells me.” So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam.

<sup>9</sup> Coming to Balaam, God asked, “Who are these men with you?”

<sup>10</sup> Balaam answered God, “Balak, Zippor’s son, king of Moab, sent them to tell me: <sup>11</sup> ‘Look, this people came from Egypt, and they are spreading out all over the country. Come now and curse them for me. Perhaps I can fight them and drive them away.’”

<sup>12</sup> “Don’t go with them,” God told Balaam, “and don’t curse the people, because they are blessed.”

<sup>13</sup> When Balaam got up in the morning, he told Balak’s princes, “Go home to your country,

because the LORD has refused to let me go with you.”

<sup>14</sup> The princes of Moab left and came to Balak. “Balaam refuses to come with us,” they said.

<sup>15</sup> Balak again sent men, this time more in number and of higher rank than the others.

<sup>16</sup> When they came to Balaam, they told him, “Balak, Zippor’s son, says, ‘Don’t let anything keep you from coming to me, <sup>17</sup> because I will very richly reward you and do anything you ask me, but please come and curse these people for me.’”

<sup>18</sup> “If Balak gives me his palace full of silver and gold,” Balaam answered Balak’s servants, “I couldn’t go against the directions of the LORD my God to do anything, little or great. <sup>19</sup> But now you too stay here tonight, and I’ll find out what else the LORD may tell me.”

<sup>20</sup> That night God came to Balaam and told them, “If the men came to call for you, leave and go with them, but do only what I tell you.”

<sup>21</sup> When Balaam got up in the morning, he saddled his donkey and left with the princes of Moab.

<sup>22</sup> But God became very angry with him for going, and the LORD’s angel stood on the road to oppose him as he rode his donkey, and his two servants were with him. <sup>23</sup> When the donkey saw the LORD’s angel standing on the road with his drawn sword in his hand, the donkey turned off the road and went into the field, but Balaam hit the donkey to get her back on the road. <sup>24</sup> Then the LORD’s angel stood on a narrow path between vineyards where there was a wall on each side. <sup>25</sup> Seeing the LORD’s angel, the donkey pressed against the wall and squeezed Balaam’s foot against the wall, and he hit her again. <sup>26</sup>

Then the LORD’s angel moved on and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn right or left. <sup>27</sup> When the donkey saw the LORD’s

angel, she lay down under Balaam, and Balaam became very angry and hit the donkey with his stick.

<sup>28</sup> Then the LORD gave the donkey the ability to speak, and she asked Balaam, “What did I do to you that you should hit me three times?”

<sup>29</sup> “You made a fool of me!” Balaam told the donkey. “If I only had a sword in my hand, I’d kill you now.”

<sup>30</sup> “Am I not your donkey,” the donkey asked Balaam, “that you’ve always ridden till today? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?”

“No,” he answered.

<sup>31</sup> Then the LORD opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the LORD’s angel standing on the road

with his drawn sword in his hand. He bowed down with his face on the ground and worshiped.

<sup>32</sup> “Why did you strike your donkey these three times?” the LORD’s angel asked him. “You see, I came out to oppose you because you’re going headlong against me. <sup>33</sup> The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away from me, I would have killed you by now and kept her alive.”

<sup>34</sup> “I have sinned,” Balaam told the LORD’s angel. “I didn’t know you were standing on the road opposing me. And now, if you don’t like this, I’ll go back.”

<sup>35</sup> “Go with the men,” the LORD’s angel told Balaam, “but say only what I tell you.” So Balaam went with Balak’s princes.

**Sermon Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**HYMN:** “We Have a Sure Prophetic Word” **TLH 290**

**HONORING THE LORD WITH OUR FIRSTFRUITS:**  
▶ **Everyone – please sign a Record of Fellowship pad** (located near the center aisle of each pew).  
▶ **Offertory**

**(↑arise) KYRIE** (Greek for “Lord”) (Mark 10:47): *We ask the Savior to mercifully provide our physical needs!*

L: Let us pray:	L: O Christ,	C: have mercy.	
L: O Lord,	C: have mercy.	L: O Lord,	C: have mercy.

**LORD’S PRAYER** (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4):

L: Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:  
A: (See the **back inside cover of either hymnal for the words.**)