



Christmas
MYSTERY

December 6, 2023

SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Tim Denney | Office Phone (218) 722-4364 | Cell (517) 392-8494 | www.dulutheran.org

WELCOME

We are glad that you have chosen to spend time with us in worship. In our worship, we gather, before Jesus, our Good Shepherd, to offer him our love and praise. Our Lord builds us up in faith through his Word and equips us for living now and in eternity. Our prayer is that the good news of Christ's love touches your heart and transforms your life. Whether you're worshipping with us here this evening or watching online, we are happy you have joined us today.

WORSHIP SERVICE

The goal of our worship is to praise God and enrich your faith through his Word. To make your experience this morning easier, the worship folder you're holding has the entire order of service. The pieces marked [P] are spoken by the pastor, and the parts marked [C] are to be spoken or sung by the congregation.

FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Our congregation enjoys the "worshiping family." Each service includes a children's message which teaches God's truth to your kids. Parents with small children are an essential part of God's kingdom. That's why children are never considered an inconvenience to our worship. We also want your family to be comfortable. There is a cry room outside the main doors to the right if you need a moment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christmas at SOTH and LLC: For everything coming up in December, please go to www.dulutheran.org/christmas23

Next Wednesday, Dec. 13th for the Advent meal the youth group will be making and serving a spaghetti dinner. There will be a free will offering box at the serving line with the offerings going toward youth group events. Youth group students: Please show up at church at 5:30pm on Wednesday the 13th. Alison Moeri will be leading the group in preparing the meal. If you are willing, please make a dessert in advance to contribute to the meal.

Please let Alison Moeri or Jesse Dunsmoor know if you have any questions.

Caroling at Duluth Heights Lodge Senior Living: If you are interested in caroling with the choir on December 14th, please get in touch with Becky Miller for details.

The King is Born! Saturday, December 16th. Kids ages 3-11 are welcome to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior with music, stories, crafts, and, of course, birthday cupcakes! Don't hesitate to contact Ryan Bogart if you want more information or are interested in helping. You can register your kids by going to this link: <https://form.jotform.com/233285692755165>. If you would like to help out, go to <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050849ABAF28ABF94-46538138-theking>.

Sunday School Christmas Service: On **Sunday, December 17th** we will be having our Sunday School Christmas Service at 9 AM. In this service, the students will be sharing the good news of Jesus' birth to us in word and song. We hope that you can join us on the 17th for this special service!

A Giving Tree is in the entrance area decorated with ornaments of items the Women's Care Center needs for the Christmas holiday. Items include a toy or winter activity item for various age groups, SuperOne, Walmart, or Target gift cards, stocking stuffers, craft items, board games, and candy, to name a few. Please tape the ornament to the unwrapped gift and place it in the box by the tree. If you have questions or want someone to shop for you, contact Kim Kirkland. We will be collecting now through **December 17**.

Women's Fellowship: You are invited to a fellowship event on **Tuesday, December 19, at 6:00 pm**. We will be painting holiday signs, eating snacks, and enjoying each other's company. The cost for the event is \$30. The fee covers the work kits, paint, and supplies. Select your project here. <https://forms.gle/iS8DqL1y5pXWfD9S7> Dawn must place **orders by December 12** to allow time for cutting and preparing the kits. If you have any questions, please get in touch with one of the deaconesses, Becky Foster or Dawn Ray.

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OPENING ADVENT RESPONSE

- P: Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world.
C: **The light no darkness can overcome.**
P: Stay with us for it is evening.
C: **And the day is almost over.**
P: Let your light scatter the darkness.
C: **Let it shine in our hearts and lives. Amen.**

HYMN

“Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel”
CW 23 vs. 1

After a brief introduction, please sing...

**Sing: Oh, come, oh, come, Em-man-u-el,
And ran-som cap-tive Is-ra-el
That mourns in lone-ly exi-le here
Un-til the Son of God ap-pear.
Re-joyce! Re-joyce!
Em-man-u-el Shall come to you, O Is-ra-el!**

- P: The people walking darkness have seen a great light;
C: **On those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.**
P: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.
C: **And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

HYMN

“Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel”
CW 23 vs. 2

After a brief introduction, please sing...

**Sing: Oh, come, O Root of Jes-se, free
Your own from Sa-tan’s tyr-an-ny;
From depths of hell your pe-ople save,
And bring them vic-t’ry o’er the grave.
Re-joyce! Re-joyce!
Em-man-u-el Shall come to you, O Is-ra-el!**

CONFESSION OF SIN & GOD'S PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS

- P: Dear friends, we are waiting expectantly for the day when Christ will come.
- C: **My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning.**
- P: As people waiting and watching for our Savior's coming, we confess our sins.
- C: **Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**
- P: What God promised long ago through his prophets he has fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The long-expected Savior came. By his perfect life, innocent death, and victorious resurrection, he provided eternal salvation. God's answer is grace and mercy. Through faith this is your reality now and forever. Our Savior promises you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- C: **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

HYMN

"Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel"

CW 23 vs. 4

After a brief introduction, please sing...

**Sing: Oh, come, O Key of Da-vid, come,
And o-pen wide our heav'n-ly home.
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to mi-ser-y.
Re-joice! Re-joice!
Em-man-u-el Shall come to you, O Is-ra-el!**

PRAYER

- P: Lord God, you have brought us safely to this hour of worship. We thank you for providing all that we need for body and life. Bless us who have gathered in your name. Forgive our sins. Speak to our hearts. Dispel our sorrows with the comfort of your Word, and receive our hymns of thanks and praise, through Jesus Christ, our living Savior, who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C: **Amen.**

CHOIR

“A Star Will Soon Shine”

Sung by Adult Choir

Watch and wait, O people of God;
This is no time for doubt and fear.
Let your faith be steadfast and strong.
Soon a sign will appear.

A star will soon shine o'er Bethlehem town.
The prophets have said a child will come down
from heaven above to bring God's love.
Let us prepare for the King.

A star will soon shine alone in the night.
The sky will be filled with glorious light,
And a song will be heard through all the world.
Let us prepare for the King.

Watch and wait, O people of hope;
Love will come down from heav'n on high.
Trust your faith. Be patient and know
God will send you a sign.

A star will soon shine to show us the way.
The darkness we've known will soon be replaced
By the light of God's Son, the Promised One.
Let us prepare for the King.

✠ READINGS FROM GOD'S WORD ✠

FIRST READING

Philippians 4:4-9

- ⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- ⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

SECOND READING

John 14:23-31

- ²³ Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴ He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.
- ²⁵ “All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. ²⁸ “You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.

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³⁰ I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, ³¹ but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: The Lord will come again in glory. The Spirit and church cry out: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

HYMN

“Jesus Came, the Heavens Adoring”

CW 26

1 Je - sus came, the heav'ns a - dor - ing, Came with peace from
2 Je - sus comes a - gain in mer - cy When our hearts are
3 Je - sus comes to hearts re - joic - ing, Bring - ing news of
4 Je - sus comes on clouds tri - um - phant When the heav'ns shall

realms on high; Je - sus came to win re - demp - tion,
worn with care; Je - sus comes a - gain in an - swer
sins for - giv'n; Je - sus comes with words of glad - ness,
pass a - way. Je - sus comes a - gain in glo - ry;

Low - ly came on earth to die, Al - le - lu - ia!
To an ear - nest, heart - felt prayer, Al - le - lu - ia!
Lead - ing souls re - deemed to heav'n. Al - le - lu - ia!
Let us, then, our hom - age pay, Al - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia! Came in deep hu - mil - i - ty.
Al - le - lu - ia! Comes to save us from de - spair.
Al - le - lu - ia! Hope to all the world is giv'n.
ev - er sing - ing Till the dawn of end - less day.

† THE MESSAGE †

CHRISTMAS MYSTERY

“Finding Peace”

Genesis 3:8-15

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” ¹¹ And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” ¹² The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” ¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

WORSHIPING THE LORD WITH OUR OFFERINGS

Members of Shepherd of the Hills respond to their Savior’s love with offerings that are given joyfully and freely according to how the Lord has blessed them. If you are a guest today, please know that there are no expectations for you to make a donation. If you wish to support us by making an online offering, visit our website: www.dulutheran.org and click on the “Give” tab.

† PRAYERS †

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Prayer and petitions offered on behalf of the Church

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

P: May the blessing of the eternal God be upon us; his light to guide us, his presence to shelter us, and his peace to unite us.

C: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

“Hosanna to the Coming Lord”

CW 21

1 Ho - san - na to the com - ing Lord! Ho - san - na
2 O Sav - ior, with pro - tect - ing care A - bide in
3 O Ad - vent King, our sins for - give; Come in our
4 Then in the last and dread - ful day, When earth and

to the in - car - nate Word! To Christ, Cre - a - tor, Sav -
this your house of prayer, Where we your part - ing prom -
lives and hearts to live, And let our hum - ble souls
heav'n shall melt a - way, Your flock, re - deemed from sin -

ior, King Let earth, let heav'n ho - san - na sing.
ise claim, As - sem - bled in your sa - cred name.
be - come A tem - ple wor - thy of your name.
ful stain, Shall swell the sound of praise a - gain.