



Christmas
MYSTERY

December 13, 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

Midweek Advent: This evening, Wednesday, December 13th, will be our last Midweek Advent service at 7:00 PM. On Wednesday, December 20th, there will not be a Midweek Advent service, in its place we will have the Little Lambs Christmas program at 6:00 PM. There will not be a typical Advent meal on the 20th. After the preschool Christmas program there will be food and refreshments provided. We hope you can join us for these special services as we prepare our hearts for the birth of our Savior. We are looking for volunteers to help provide this holiday event's appetizers, fruit, vegetable trays, and sweet treats. We will also need help with set-up and clean-up afterwards. If you are willing to help, you can sign up by entering the link below, or speak with Shawna Doblar, Kathy Hedin, Kim Kirkland, or Zach Richie. www.signupgenius.com/go/8050849ABAF28ABF94-46683470-2023#

Caroling at Duluth Heights Lodge Senior Living: If you are interested in caroling with the choir on tomorrow, December 14th, please meet at church at 5:30 PM.

The King is Born! Saturday, December 16th. Kids ages 3-11 will be celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior with music, stories, crafts, and, of course, birthday cupcakes! 9:00 - 10:30 AM. Don't hesitate to contact Ryan Bogart if you want more information or are interested in helping. If you would like to help out, go to <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050849ABAF28ABF94-46538138-theking>.

Sunday School Christmas Service: This **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! There will be Sunday School classes following the service.

A Giving Tree is in the entrance area decorated with ornaments of items the Women's Care Center needs for the Christmas holiday. 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.

Join us for our upcoming Christmas services!

Christmas Eve Service: December 24th at 9:00 AM.

Christmas Day Service: December 25th at 9:00 AM.

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-joice! Re-joice!
Em-man-u-el Shall come to you, O Is-ra-el!**

- P: But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel,
C: **Whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.**
P: He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord.
C: **And they will live securely, for he will be their 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-joice! Re-joice!
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.**

FIRST READING

Galatians 3:26-4:7

²⁶ You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. ² He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. ³ So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. ⁴ But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, ⁵ to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. ⁶ Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

SECOND READING

Luke 1:39-55

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"

⁴⁶ And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed,
⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name.
⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.
⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful
⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers."

P: The Word of the Lord.

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

1 Let the earth now praise the Lord, Who has
 2 What the fa - thers most de - sired, What the
 3 A - bram's prom - ised great re - ward, Zi - on's
 4 Wel - come, O my Sav - ior, now! Joy - ful,

tru - ly kept his word And at last to
 proph - ets' heart in - spired, What they longed for
 help - er, Ja - cob's Lord — Him of two - fold
 Lord, to you I bow. Come in - to my

us did send Christ, the sin - ner's help and friend.
 man - y a year Stands ful - filled in glo - ry here.
 race be - hold — Tru - ly came, as long fore - told.
 heart, I pray; Oh, pre - pare your - self a way.

5 Crush for me the serpent's head
 That, set free from doubt and dread,
 I may cling to you in faith,
 Safely kept through life and death,

6 And, when you shall come again
 As a glorious king to reign,
 I with joy may see your face,
 Freely ransomed by your grace.

✠ THE MESSAGE ✠

CHRISTMAS MYSTERY

“A Worldwide Blessing”

Genesis 12:1-5

The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.

² “I will make you into a great nation
and I will bless you;

I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.

³ I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.”

⁴ So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. ⁵ He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

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

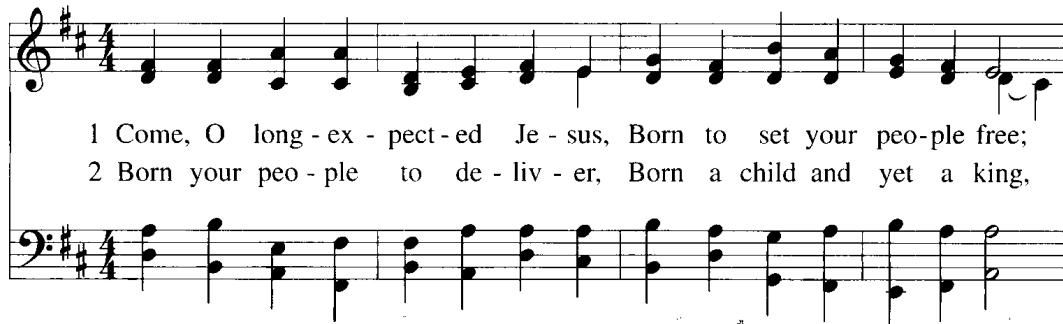
P: May the blessing of the eternal God be upon us: his light to guide us, his presence to shelter us, and his peace to unite us.

C: Amen.

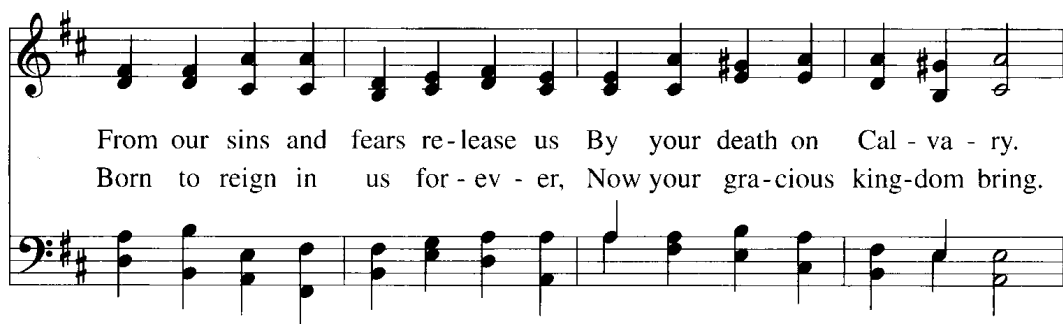
CLOSING HYMN

“Come, O Long-Expected Jesus”

CW 6



1 Come, O long - ex - pect - ed Je - sus, Born to set your peo - ple free;
2 Born your peo - ple to de - liv - er, Born a child and yet a king,



From our sins and fears re - lease us By your death on Cal - va - ry.
Born to reign in us for - ev - er, Now your gra - cious king - dom bring.



Is - rael's Strength and Con - so - la - tion, Hope to all the earth im - part,
By your own e - ter - nal Spir - it Rule in all our hearts a - lone;



Dear De - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, Joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.
By your all - suf - fi - cient mer - it Raise us to your glo - rious throne.