

See  
What  
Great *Love*



A Children's Christmas Service  
On the Lavish Love of God

## SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Tim Denney | Office Phone (218) 722-4364 | Cell (517) 392-8494 | [www.dulutheran.org](http://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 morning 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.

### SERVICE NOTES

**Photography for this special service:** Because this is a worship service we ask that photographs not be taken out of respect for God's Word. Thank you.

**Preservice music** performed by Donovan Wittenberg, Matthew Yukich, Laura Metcalf, & Alison Moeri

### THANK YOU

Thank you to our Sunday School teachers, Lisa Sanders, and Miriam Hokanson for working with the students to prepare them for today. And a special thanks to Lisa Dunsmoor and Laura Metcalf for planning and organizing today's service.

Lisa Dunsmoor  
Laura Metcalf  
Miriam Hokanson  
Lisa Sanders  
Alison Moeri  
Becky Miller  
Adult Choir Members

Donovan Wittenberg  
Matthew Yukich

---

### 🎄 NOTE FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES 🎄

---

**We invite you to worship with us: Christmas Eve 9 AM, and Christmas Day 9 AM**

The Sunday School children and teachers wish you a blessed Christmas as you are reminded of the "great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!"

P: "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"

## PROCESSIONAL

"Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes"

CW 12

All: Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes, The Savior promised long;  
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne And ev'ry voice a song.

He comes the captives to release, In Satan's prison held.  
The gates of brass before him burst; The iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken heart to bind, The bleeding soul to cure,  
And with the treasures of his grace To enrich the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace, Your welcome shall proclaim,  
And heav'n's eternal arches ring With your beloved name.

## 1. GOD'S LOVE AT CREATION

---

## HYMN

"Of the Father's Love Begotten"

CW 35

C: Of the Father's love begotten Ere the worlds began to be,  
He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending he,  
Of the things that are, that have been, And that future years shall see  
Evermore and evermore.

## NARRATION

The very first verse of the Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Mountains, seas, and rivers; every form of plant life; the universe with the sun, moon, and all the stars; all the living creatures on land and in the water. For all of it, he simply said, "Let there be . . ." and there it was. And then . . . he created once more. This time, the Bible chronicles a different process altogether in Genesis 1 verses 26 and 27 "Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

## NARRATION

Genesis chapter 2 verses 7 through 9 goes on to describe the way God created the first human: "Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." And God provided for every need of this special creation, his children. "Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

## RECITATION

1. The tree of life with ev'ry good In Eden's holy orchard stood,  
And of its fruit so pure and sweet God let the man and woman eat.  
Yet in this garden also grew Another tree, of which they knew;  
Its lovely limbs with fruit adorned Against whose eating God had warned.
2. **The stillness of that sacred grove Was broken as the serpent strove  
With tempting voice Eve to beguile And Adam to by sin defile.  
Oh, day of sadness when the breath Of fear and darkness, doubt and death,  
Its awful poison first displayed Within the world so newly made.**
3. **What mercy God showed to our race, A plan of rescue by his grace:  
In sending One from woman's seed, The One to fill our greatest need—  
For on a tree uplifted high His only Son for sin would die,  
Would drink the cup of scorn and dread To crush the ancient serpent's head!**
4. **Now from that tree of Jesus' shame Flows life eternal in his name;  
For all who trust and will believe, Salvation's living fruit receive.  
And of this fruit so pure and sweet The Lord invites the world to eat,  
To find within this cross of wood The tree of life with ev'ry good.**

## 2. GOD'S LOVE WHEN HUMANS SINNED

---

### NARRATION

The perfect world God made for his perfect children did not last. Genesis 2 verses 15 through 17 tells us more about the beginning days of God's new earth: "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.'"

### NARRATION

Why would God give such a command? The threat of death does not sound very loving at all. Placing the tree in the garden, along with the command not to eat from what is always there in front of them, seems like a recipe for disaster. With our limited reason, we might wonder how that could be good. God had made the entire universe for his children—the cycle of day and night, food for nourishment, a suitable place in which to live, and beauty beyond compare. What love God had shown for his children! And that completely out of his goodness, for they had done nothing to earn it or deserve it.

### NARRATION

What could they do to show their love for him in return? How could God's children express their love to their most generous God? God gave them a way. They could eat from ANY tree . . . except one. In walking past the forbidden tree, they were able to show their love for God by following what he said. In John 10 verse 27 God says that his children listen to his voice, and they follow him. But Genesis chapter 3 verses 1 through 5 reveals what happened not long after God gave his children a way to express love for him. "Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, "You must not eat from any tree in the garden"? The woman said to the serpent, 'We ma eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, "You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

## RECITATION BY CONGREGATION

---

C: **“You will not certainly die,’ the serpent said to the woman. ‘For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”**

## NARRATION

Genesis 3 continues: “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.”

## HYMN BY CHILDREN

**“All Mankind Fell in Adam’s Fall”**

CW 378

1. All mankind fell in Adam’s fall;  
One common sin infects us all.  
From one to all the curse descends,  
And over all God’s wrath impends.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

## NARRATION

What happened next shows us again the great love of our God and Father. Sin had come. Death was inevitable. But God promised a Savior who would defeat death and the devil and restore peace between God and people. Please stand, and let’s read together these words from Genesis chapter 3:

## PLEASE STAND

## RECITATION BY CONGREGATION

---

C: **“Then the Lord God said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’ So the LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. 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.”**

## PLEASE BE SEATED

## HYMN BY CHILDREN

**“All Mankind Fell in Adam’s Fall”**

CW 378

4. But Christ, the second Adam came  
To bear our sin and woe and shame,  
To be our life, our light, our way,  
Our only hope, our only stay.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

## RECITATION

### 3. GOD'S LOVE IN HIS FAITHFULNESS

---

#### HYMN BY CONGREGATION

**"Of the Father's Love Begotten"**  
CW 35 v. 3

**C: This is he whom heav'n-taught singers Sang of old with one accord;  
Whom the Scriptures of the prophets Promised in their faithful word.  
Now he shines, the long-expected; Let creation praise its Lord  
Evermore and evermore.**

#### NARRATION

The Savior did not come right away. Adam and Eve did not know it, but it would be many centuries before the Savior would be born. God lavished his love on his children by reminding them of his promise over and over. Again and again, he renewed his promise through his believers and prophets. The prophet with perhaps the most to say about the coming Savior lived eight hundred years before the Savior was born. His name was Isaiah, and he said this:

#### NARRATION

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel," Isaiah 7 verse 14. Later in chapter 9 of Isaiah we hear: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, . . . and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

#### RECITATION

### 4. GOD'S LOVE IN BETHLEHEM

---

#### HYMN BY CONGREGATION

**"Of the Father's Love Begotten"**  
CW 35 v. 2

**C: Oh, that birth forever blessed When the virgin, full of grace,  
By the Holy Ghost conceiving, Bore the Savior of our race,  
And the babe, the world's Redeemer, First revealed his sacred face  
Evermore and evermore.**

#### NARRATION

Finally, the time came. The time was right. Over three hundred reminders from the Old Testament prophets had revealed details of the great love the Father lavishes on us. When that set time had come, all the events came together in one moment in history. In Luke chapter 2 it tells us: "In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register."

#### RECITATION

"So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them."

## NARRATION

Luke chapter 2 verses 8-14 records for us: "And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.' Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

## RECITATION

## HYMN BY YOUTH &amp; CHILDREN

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

CW 63

1. Angels we have heard on high,  
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply,  
Echoing their joyous strains.

*Refrain:*

Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
Which inspire your heav'nly song?

*Refrain*

3. Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

*Refrain*

## RECITATION

## NARRATION

The familiar words of Luke chapter 2 continue: "So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."

## RECITATION

## WORSHIPING THE LORD WITH OUR OFFERINGS

## 5. GOD'S LOVE TO ALL

## HYMN BY CONGREGATION

"Of the Father's Love Begotten"

CW 35 v. 4

**C:** Let the heights of heav'n adore him, Angel hosts his praises sing,  
 Pow'rs, dominions bow before him And extol our God and King.  
 Let no tongue on earth be silent, Ev'ry voice in concert ring  
 Evermore and evermore.

## NARRATION

Who are the "children of God"? In the Old Testament, the descendants of Abraham were rarely called God's children but were instead often referred to as "God's people" or his "chosen people." God kept these people separate from other nations to preserve the human line for the birth of the promised Savior. But "children of God" appears more often in the New Testament, and the inspired writers tell us who God's children are: Please join in proclaiming the words of Galatians 3 verse 26 and Romans 9 verse 8:

## RECITATION BY CONGREGATION

**C:** "In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. It is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring."

## NARRATION

Believers are God's children! When the Holy Spirit works faith in a person's heart, that person becomes a child of God. Romans chapter 10 verse 17 tells us how faith comes: "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." And that word of Christ, in John 3 verse 16 is this:

## RECITATION

## RECITATION BY CONGREGATION &amp; CHILDREN

**All:** "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!  
 And that is what we are!"

## RECESSIONAL

"Joy to the World"

CW 62 (Children sing stanza 1, Congregation sings stanzas 2 &amp; 4.)

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;  
 Let ev'ry heart prepare him room And heav'n and nature sing,  
 And heav'n and nature sing, And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.
2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,  
 While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains Repeat the sounding joy,  
 Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
4. He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the nations prove  
 The glories of his righteousness And wonders of his love,  
 And wonders of his love, And wonders, wonders of his love.