



HOPE
LOVE
PEACE ✦ JOY



CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE

December 21, 2025

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church

Office Phone (218) 722-4364 | Email contact@dulutheran.org | 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 today or watching online, we are happy you have joined us.

WORSHIP SERVICE

The goal of our worship is to praise God and enrich your faith through his Word. To make your experience today 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. **In today's special service, the pieces marked [N] are spoken by the children narrators.**

FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Our congregation enjoys the "worshiping family." 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

Altar Flowers: Today's bouquet is given to the glory of God by Kim Kirkland in honor of her mother Olive's 100th birthday.

Thank you to all the Sunday School children for using their talents to share the message of Christmas this afternoon!

Today's Schedule: After the service, Sunday School children are invited to meet in the Fellowship Hall, where they will join their teachers to do some fun Christmas activities in the classrooms. Youth Group is invited to the conference room to do an activity related to fundraising for the upcoming Youth Rally. There is no Adult Bible Study today.

Weekly Communion: Today is the start of our weekly communion. If you would like to take communion, it will be offered in the conference room after the service. Please let an elder know if you plan to partake. As a reminder, communion will typically be offered during the service on the first and third Sundays, and after the service on the second, fourth, and fifth Sundays.

Teacher Call Update: On Thursday we extended a call to Molly Berg, who currently teaches at Holy Trinity in New Hope, MN, to serve at Little Lambs Learning Center. Please keep Molly in your prayers while she deliberates her calls.

Christmas For Kids Update: Thank you to everyone who volunteered for last Saturday's Christmas for Kids event! We had 32 children attend and learn about their Savior's birth, sing praises, make crafts, play games, and enjoy a movie together.

Candlelight Christmas Eve: We will be having a traditional candlelight service on **Wednesday December 24th at 5:00pm**, led by Elder Ryan Bogart. We hope you will be able to come be a part of this special evening!

Christmas Day Service: Our Christmas Day service will be **Thursday December 25th at 9:00am**, led by Elder Ryan Bogart. Please join us as we rejoice in the birth of our King!

For more announcements and event information, visit the church website at www.dulutheran.org/events or sign up for our weekly email at www.dulutheran.org/subscribe. You can also view the church calendar at www.dulutheran.org/church-calendar.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN: O Come, All Ye Faithful

CW 354 sts. 1, Ref, 2-3

Congregation stands at start of stanza 2



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
2 God from true God, and Light from Light e - ter - nal,
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,



come ye, O come_ ye to Beth - le - hem!
born of a vir - gin, to earth he comes!
sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav'n a - bove!



Come and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels:
On - ly - be - got - ten Son of God the Fa - ther:
Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the high - est:



O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

INVOCATION

P: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C: Amen.

RESPONSIVE READING

Psalm 33

P: Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.
C: For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.

P: By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.
C: Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere him.

P: The plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.
C: We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.

P: In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.

C: **May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you.**

P: Heavenly Father, our hearts again rejoice this Christmas as we hear sweet angel voices proclaiming “Christ is born!” Softly, Jesus calls from his lowly manger, saying, “You are safe from danger. Children, from the sins that grieve you, you are freed; all you need I will surely give you.” Come, then, banish all our sadness! Accept our songs of gladness. Fix our eyes on the day when we shall live with you forever on high in that joy which will vanish never; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

Be seated

✠THE MESSAGE ✠
Peace. Hope. Joy. Love.

1. HOPE

P: Please join in reading responsively to learn how life on earth would be perfect no more:

Men: [The serpent] said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” (Genesis 3: verse 1)

Women: *The woman said to the serpent, “We may 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.’”* (Genesis 3: verses 2 through 3)

Men: “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.” (Genesis 3: verses 4 through 5)

Women: *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.* (Genesis 3: verse 6).

P: What had they done? And what does it mean for all of us here today? The need for hope was born. From that moment forward, all people ever born, right up to all of us here today, are born sinful, will someday die, and have earned an eternity in hell.

CHILDREN’S RECITATION

Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned (Romans 5: verse 12)

C: **Everyone has turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.** (Psalm 53: verse 3)

P: We all desperately need hope, just as Adam and Eve did. With generations of God’s people, we confess our sins.

Lighting of the Hope candle

- P: God did not leave Adam and Eve in despair. He promised a Savior from sin, death, and hell.
- C: **The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! . . . 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.” (Genesis 3: verses 14 and 15)**
- P: When God said this to the devil, who had taken the form of a serpent, God was promising Adam and Eve a Savior, a unique offspring who would defeat the devil forever. But this promise wasn't just for Adam and Eve; it is for all of us too! This Christmas, let's celebrate how God in his great love provided the hope we need by sending the Offspring—Jesus. Let's explore God's Word, in which “everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.” (*Romans 15:4*) Let's look at prophecy, fulfillment, and promise, and by these renew our hope in the peace, joy, and love of God our Father and Jesus Christ, his Son, our Savior.

YOUTH & ADULT CHOIR: Of the Father's Love Begotten

Arranged by Lloyd Larson

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.

O ye 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.

O 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.

Christ, to thee, with God the Father,
and, O Holy Ghost, to thee
hymn and chant and high thanksgiving
and unwearied praises be,
honor, glory, and dominion
and eternal victory
evermore and evermore.

2. PEACE

- N: After God made the first promise of the Savior in the Garden of Eden, questions were natural. Who would he be? How would we recognize him? What would he do? What would it mean for life now and beyond the grave? As time passed and the promise awaited fulfillment, God answered these questions through his prophets.

Isaiah 9 verses 6 and 7 proclaim: To us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.

N: Isaiah 53 verses 2 and 5 explain: He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

From Micah 5 verses 2 and 4 through 5a we hear: “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, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” He will stand and shepherd his flock. . . . They will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And he will be our peace.

Lighting of the Peace candle

N: Some of the answers are straightforward: This Savior would be born just like any other human child, in the town of Bethlehem. There is also this common answer regarding what he would do: He would achieve peace. He would be our peace. Does that seem hard to believe? The conflicts around the world are the exact opposite of peace. Do you feel at peace? Perhaps you and I do briefly from time to time, but daily we face all kinds of things that oppose any sense of lasting peace—personal failures, strained relationships, myriad tasks that are expected at work and are required to keep the household humming. In this broken world, peace always seems elusive. Please join in reading Psalm 35 verse 20 and Psalm 120 verse 6 to consider what these Psalm writers said.

C: They do not speak peaceably, but devise false accusations against those who live quietly in the land. Too long have I lived among those who hate peace.

N: But enter Jesus. He would suffer in our place the eternal punishment we each deserve. He would restore our peace with God and make peace possible among the people of God. God’s forgiveness grants peace to our minds, consciences, and souls. Jesus even made it possible for us to be at peace in the face of death.

What price would you pay for such peace? How can you make sure it is yours? Such profound and eternal peace is beyond price. It is too lofty to attain by any effort or means of our own. But when the time was right, God sent Jesus—to us and for us and without cost—listen to what Luke says in chapter 2 verses 1 through 7.

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 their own town to register.

CHILDREN’S 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. (Luke 2: verses 4 and 5)

CHILDREN’S RECITATION

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.

CHILDREN’S RECITATION

She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

The preschool children of Little Lambs Learning Center are invited to come forward and join in singing.

1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
2. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky, And stay by my side until morning is nigh.
3. Be near me, Lord Jesus: I ask you to stay Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care, And take us to heaven to live with you there.

3. JOY

N: There are many short verses in the Bible. Job 3: verse 2 is “He said.” Famously, John 11: verse 35 says, “Jesus wept.” Here is another one: “Rejoice always” (First Thessalonians 5: verse 16). Always? Just as peace seems elusive, so does joy—at least, joy all the time. How can we be joyful when we are sick or injured? when we are suffering consequences for our poor choices? when friends or family somehow hurt us, or worse yet, when we hurt them? Because of our own sin and life in a world that is affected by sin, we tend toward sorrow rather than joy.

Lamentations 5 verses 15 and 16 describe it this way: Joy is gone from our hearts; our dancing has turned to mourning. The crown has fallen from our head. Woe to us, for we have sinned!

N: There were shepherds near Bethlehem the night Jesus was born. They too were sinners living in a fallen world. Consider their situation: They were working the night shift while their families slept. They fended off dangers for the flock, or they faced the consequences for fleeing from danger and abandoning the flock. They were endlessly saving dumb animals from forever making bad and dangerous decisions. What could bring these shepherds joy? What could bring us joy as we navigate trade-offs between work and family, difficult decisions, and the fallout from our sinfulness and that of others?

Luke 2 verses 8 and 9 reveal: 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. Please join in reading what the angel said in verses 10 through 12.

C: **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.”**

CHILDREN’S RECITATION

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Luke 2: verses 13 and 14).

Please stand.



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let men their
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her King; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his right - eous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
 plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Be seated.

Lighting of the Joy candle

N: The joy we seek, the joy Paul tells us to have always, comes from the Savior born for us! With the shepherds that first Christmas night, we hurry to see him.

We sense the shepherds' joy as Luke 2 verses 15 and 16 record: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

N: Whom do we seek when our hearts are heavy with guilt? See Jesus in the manger, born to give us peace in sins forgiven! What do we hold on to when our death looms large? See Jesus in the manger, born to ensure the hope of life eternal! What do we do upon seeing this peace and hope in our Jesus, who is lying in the manger? What did the shepherds do?

Listen to what Luke 2 verses 17, 18, and 20 tells us: 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. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

The peace and hope we have in Jesus are not just for us gathered here; they are for everyone—people all around us who suffer under the curse of Adam but to whom Jesus offers hope and peace and joy. Like the shepherds, we have good news to share with the whole world!

OFFERTORY: O, Come, O, Come, Emanuel

Sunday School Tone Chime Choir

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, scan the QR code here or visit our website: www.dulutheran.org and click on the "GIVE" tab.

4. LOVE

N: What makes this all possible? We know our sins are great and many. Does your conscience still accuse? Does your soul still yearn? Does your mind still ask: How can we possibly have firm and uninterrupted hope, peace, and joy? Do you wonder: Why would God do this for me? After all, recorded in Romans 5 verse 7 Paul wrote to the Romans saying, "Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die." Thankfully, Paul doesn't stop there. He continues in verse 8:

CHILDREN'S RECITATION

God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

N: Love—God's amazing and perfect love—is behind it all. Addressing a different group of Christians, Paul wrote in Ephesians 2 verses 4 and 5: Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Lighting of the Love candle

N: God has such great love for us that he made certain we would have hope beyond the grave, peace in the forgiveness of all our sins, and joy in these most gracious gifts! We have them because God sent his Son Jesus to be our Savior. We have them despite what we may see, think, or feel. As one Christian songwriter said, "I can't live by what I feel but by the truth your Word reveals." Written in First John 4 verses 9 and 10 that Word says:

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

N: But does God's love ever seem far off? Do you ever wonder if it has run out or if it could be revoked at some point? Again, we live by this truth of God's Word, his perfect promise and commitment to us: Romans 8 verses 38 and 39 provide us with strength as we stand firm in God's relentless love. I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

PREK-6TH GRADERS: Manger Throne

*Words & Music by Phil Wickham, Jonathan Smith,
& Tony Wood—Arranged by Cliff Duren*

You could have stepped into creation with fire for all to see,
Brought ev'ry tribe and nation to their knees;
Arriving with the host of heaven in royal robe and crown,
The rulers of the earth all bowing down.
But You chose meekness over majesty,
Wrapped Your power in humanity.

Glory be to You alone, King who reigns from a manger throne!
My life, my praise, ev'rything I own, to Jesus, the King on a manger throne.
You could have marched in all Your glory into the heart of Rome
And showed them splendor like they'd never known.
But You wrote a better story in humble Bethlehem:
Creator in the arms of common men.
You will die for our redemption,
And You'll rise so we can live!

Glory be to You alone, King who reigns from a manger throne!
My life, my praise, ev'rything I own, to Jesus, the King on a manger throne.

From heaven to the cradle, from cradle to the cross,
Let heaven and nature sing, This is our King!
But the grave couldn't hold Him; our God has overcome.
Let heaven and nature sing, This is our King!
From heaven to the cradle, from cradle to the cross,
Let heaven and nature sing, This is our King!

But the grave couldn't hold Him; our God has overcome.
Let heaven and nature sing, This is our King!
All hail the King! All hail the King! All hail the King!

Glory be to You alone, King who reigns from a manger throne!
My life, my praise, ev'rything I own, to Jesus, the King on a manger throne.
My life, my praise, ev'rything I own, to Jesus, the King on a manger throne.
To Jesus, the King on a manger throne. To Jesus, the King on a manger throne.

Please stand.

Lighting of the Christ candle

P: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (*John 1:1-5,9-14*)

Are you looking for durable hope? Are you yearning for lasting peace? Do you want abiding joy? This Christmas, be filled with the hope and the peace we have through the perfect and never-ending love of God in Jesus, our Savior. Please join us with joy, as we proclaim with the psalmist in Psalm 89 verse 1, the words printed for us together:

Congregation and Children: I will sing of the Lord's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.

P: And we pray:

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: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C: Amen.

Be seated.

RECESSIONAL HYMN: Go, Tell It on the Mountain

CW 361

Children sing stanzas 1-2 and refrain, then congregation sings stanza 3 and final refrain as the children exit.



Go, tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills, and ev - 'ry - where;



go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born.



1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,

2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo, a - bove the earth

3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born,



be-hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.

rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.

and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

We invite you to join with us for the following:

Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship: December 24 at 5:00pm

Christmas Day Worship: December 25 at 9:00am

The Sunday School children and teachers

wish you a blessed Christmas

filled with hope, peace, joy, and love!

Acknowledgments

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