



Christmas
MYSTERY

December 3, 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 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Altar Flowers: This morning's altar flowers are given to the glory of God by Jon and Kiersten Nash in memory of Kayo Nash.

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

Advent Wednesdays: Starting **Wednesday, December 6th at 6 PM**, we will be having our Advent potluck dinners, where members are welcome to bring soup, a dish, sandwiches, or dessert to serve. Whether or not you provide food, please come and enjoy conversation and food with your brothers and sisters in Christ. **At 7 PM, on December 6th**, we will have our first Advent service. We hope you can join us for these special services as we prepare our hearts for the birth of our Savior.

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.

LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE

- P: We light one Advent candle remembering Jesus, who is coming again. He will come to gather his people from everywhere, both the living and the dead.
- C: We remember Jesus, who will come at the end of time. None of us know what day that will be.
- P: We hear his call to watch expectantly.
- C: We light one advent candle as a sign of our watchfulness and waiting.
- P: Even in the darkness of life's chaos and confusion, the light of God's promise shines brightly forth. The Prophecy Candle assures us that, in the coming of Jesus, our God does keep his word.
- C: When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near. (Luke 21:28)

OPENING HYMN

"The Advent of Our King"
CW 1

1 The ad - vent of our King Our prayers must now em - ploy,
2 The ev - er - last - ing Son In - car - nate deigns to be,
3 O Zi - on's Daugh - ter, rise To meet your low - ly King,
4 As judge, on clouds of light, He soon will come a - gain

And we must hymns of wel - come sing In strains of ho - ly joy.
Him - self a ser - vant's form puts on To set his ser - vants free.
Nor let a faith - less heart de - spise The peace he comes to bring.
And his true mem - bers all u - nite With him in heav'n to reign.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of two systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The lyrics are placed between the two systems.

5 Before the dawning Day
Let sin's dark deeds be gone,
The sinful self be put away,
The new self now put on.

6 All glory to the Son,
Who comes to set us free,
With Father, Spirit, ever one
Through all eternity.

CONFESSION OF SIN & GOD'S PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS

P: Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.

C: **Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low.**

P: The rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.

C: **And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind will see it.**

P: Brother and sisters in Christ, one day our Savior will come in glory to deliver his people. Therefore, let us prepare our hearts to meet him by humbly seeking his forgiveness.

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: All mankind has seen the salvation of our God. Christ came in human flesh to redeem our fallen race. With his perfect life, he kept the law in our place. With his innocent death, he paid the penalty for our sins. Therefore, at Christ's command and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

RESPONSE OF FORGIVENESS

"O Lord, our Lord"
p. 28 in front of Hymnal

Please sing at the beginning of the music...

**O Lord, our Lord, how glo-rious is your name in all the earth.
Almight-y God, mer-ci-ful Fa-ther, you crown our life with your love.
You take a-way our sin; you com-fort our spir-it;
You make us pure and ho-ly in your sight.
You did not spare your on-ly Son, but gave him up for us all.
O Lord, our Lord, how glo-rious is your name in all the earth.
O Son of God, e-ter-nal Word of the Fa-ther,
You came to live with us; you made your Fa-ther known;
You washed us from our sins in your own blood.
You are the King of glo-ry; you are the Lord!
O Lord, our Lord, how glo-rious is your name in all the earth.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Protect us by your strength and save us from the threatening dangers of our sins; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

✠ READINGS FROM GOD'S WORD ✠

FIRST READING

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

³ Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. ⁵ For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge— ⁶ because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. ⁷ Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. ⁸ He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 8

p. 67 in the front of the Hymnal



I will praise your name for - ev - er, my King and my God.



O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in áll the earth! *
You have set your glory above the heavens.

You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings *
and crowned him with glory and honor.

When I consider your heavens, *
the work of your fingers,

You made him ruler over the works of your hands; *
you put everything under his feet.

what is man that you are mindúful of him, *
the Son of Man that you care for him?

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son *
and to the Holy Śpirit,
as it was in the beginning, *
is now, and will be forever. Ámen.**

Refrain

Refrain

VERSE OF THE DAY

- P: Alleluia. "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." Alleluia. (Revelation 22:20)
- C: **These words are written that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing we may have life in his name.**

GOSPEL READING

Mark 13:26-37

²⁶ At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens. ²⁸ "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. ³⁰ I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. ³² "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. ³⁴ It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. ³⁵ "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. ³⁶ If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. ³⁷ What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C: **Praise be to you, O Christ.**

CONFESSION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

(THE NICENE CREED)

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and
for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin
Mary, and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered
death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He
ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to
judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

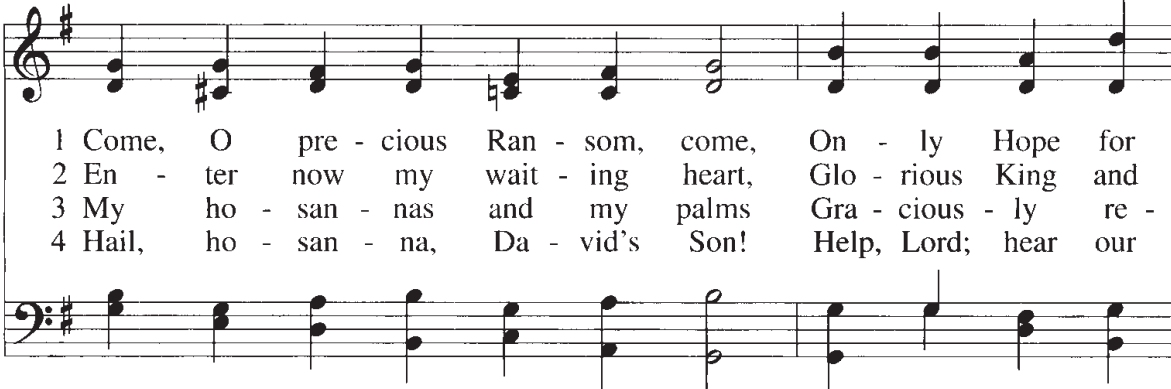
**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the
prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to
come. Amen.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

HYMN

"Come, O Precious Ransom, Come"

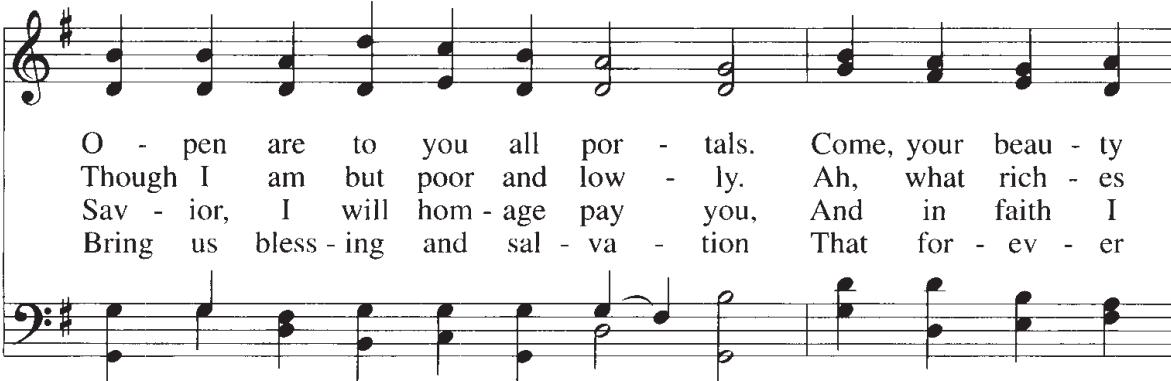
CW 8



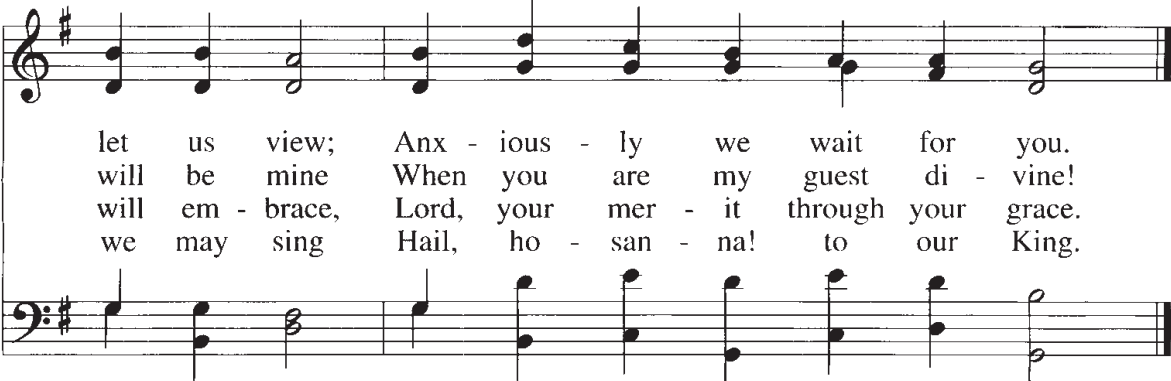
1 Come, O pre - cious Ran - som, come, On - ly Hope for
2 En - ter now my wait - ing heart, Glo - rious King and
3 My ho - san - nas and my palms Gra - cious - ly re -
4 Hail, ho - san - na, Da - vid's Son! Help, Lord; hear our



sin - ful mor - tals! Come, O Sav - ior of the world!
Lord most ho - ly. Dwell in me and ne'er de - part,
ceive, I pray you. Ev - er - more, as best I can,
sup - pli - ca - tion! Let your king - dom, scep - ter, crown



O - pen are to you all por - tals. Come, your beau - ty
Though I am but poor and low - ly. Ah, what rich - es
Sav - ior, I will hom - age pay you, And in faith I
Bring us bless - ing and sal - va - tion That for - ev - er



let us view; Anx - ious - ly we wait for you.
will be mine When you are my guest di - vine!
will em - brace, Lord, your mer - it through your grace.
we may sing Hail, ho - san - na! to our King.

† THE MESSAGE †

CHRISTMAS MYSTERY “Mysteries in the Mind of God”

Isaiah 64:1-9

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you! ² As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you! ³ For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you. ⁴ Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him. ⁵ You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways. But when we continued to sin against them, you were angry. How then can we be saved? ⁶ All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away. ⁷ No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins. ⁸ Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. ⁹ Do not be angry beyond measure, O LORD; do not remember our sins forever. Oh, look upon us, we pray, for we are all your people.

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.

† SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER †

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

P: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Through his holy prophets, he promised a King to bring light to those living in darkness and in the shadow of death. Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory for ever and ever.



C: **Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly is the Lord of hosts.**



The whole earth is full of your glo - ry.



You are my God, and I will ex - alt you.



I will give you thanks, for you have be - come my sal -



va - tion. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly is the Lord of hosts.



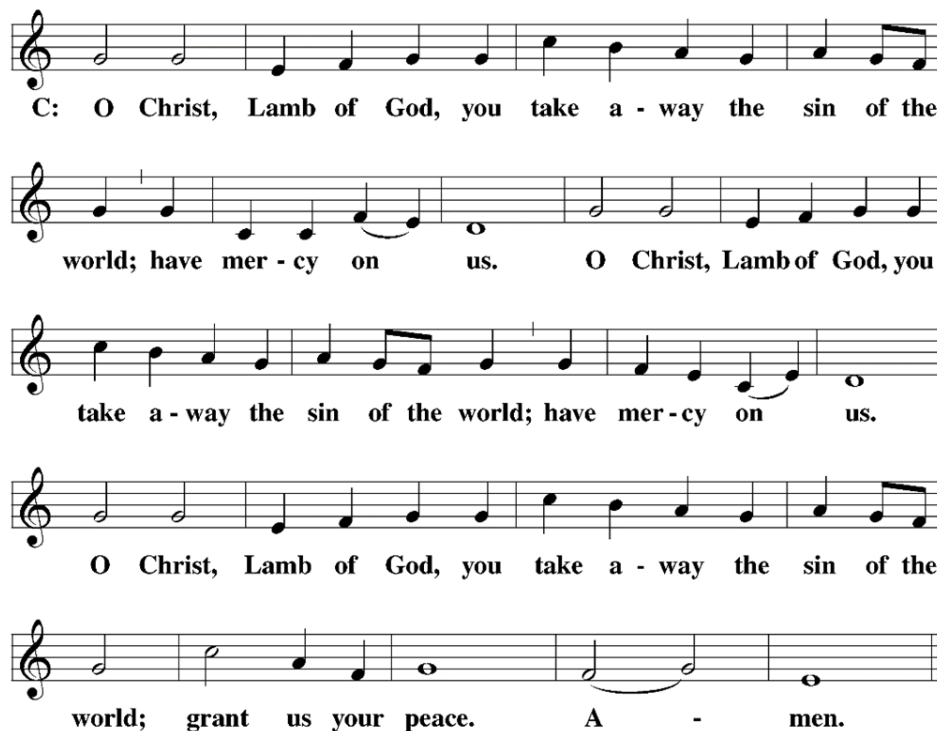
The whole earth is full of your glo - ry.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: Our Lord Jesus Christ on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take and eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.



C: O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; grant us your peace. A - men.

DISTRIBUTION

The Lord's Supper is a wonderful gift in which we receive Christ's true body and blood for our forgiveness and the strengthening of our faith. It is our practice that only those who are members of Shepherd of the Hills or members of another WELS congregation come forward to receive Holy Communion. If you are a visitor from another Christian church, we kindly ask that you refrain from participating in the Lord's Supper this morning. If you are interested in learning more about becoming part of our fellowship, please speak to Pastor Denney after the service.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

CW 441

Printed on the next page.

1 O God, our help in a - ges past, Our hope for
 2 Un - der the shad - ow of your throne Your saints have
 3 Be - fore the hills in or - der stood Or earth re -
 4 A thou - sand a - ges in your sight Are like an

years to come, Our shel - ter from the
 dwelt se - cure; Suf - fi - cient is your
 ceived its frame, From ev - er - last - ing
 eve - ning gone, Short as the watch that

storm - y blast, And our e - ter - nal home,
 arm a - lone, And our de - fense is sure.
 you are God, To end - less years the same.
 ends the night Be - fore the ris - ing sun.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
 Soon bears us all away;
 We fly, forgotten, as a dream
 Dies at the op'ning day.

6 O God, our help in ages past,
 Our hope for years to come,
 Still be our guard while troubles last
 And our eternal home!

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

“Thank the Lord”

After a brief introduction, please sing...



C: Thank the Lord and sing his praise. Tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let all who seek the Lord re-joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re-news his prom-is - es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy with



shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

CLOSING PRAYER & BLESSING

P: We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this holy supper. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

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.

CLOSING HYMN

“May the Grace of Christ Our Savior”

CW 326

Printed on the back of the Message Notes.

All hymns and music reprinted with permission - Onelicense.net #A-715857 CCLI License #11371750