

Welcome to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Building up God's people through His word for His world

Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 21, 2025

Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

We especially welcome our guests who are worshipping here today. What a privilege to greet you! If you have no church home in the area, we invite you to participate in the life and ministry of Good Shepherd. For information about our congregation, visit gslcva.org. Also, please fill out a Welcome card, which you'll find near the hymnals, and place it in the offering plate.

Our worship reflects the liturgical tradition of the Christian church. Holy Communion is celebrated on the first, third, and fifth Sundays at 8:00 and 11:00 a.m. Our informal worship service features contemporary music and is held in the Fellowship Hall at 11:00 a.m. on the second and fourth Sundays of the month, with communion celebrated on fourth Sundays.

To all worshippers: The presence of children in worship is a gift to the Body of Christ and a reminder that our congregation is growing. Remember that Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me." Please welcome our young ones and give their parents a smile of encouragement or a helping hand, if needed.

To the parents of young ones, here are a few suggestions for worshipping with your children: Relax! God put the wiggles and giggles in kids; don't feel that you have to suppress them in His house. All are welcome! Sit toward the front, where it is easier to see and hear what's going on. Quietly explain the parts of the worship service and actions of the pastor, ushers, communion assistants, etc. Sing the hymns and songs, pray, and voice the responses aloud. Children learn worshipful behavior by copying you. If you have to leave the worship service with your child or stand up and walk around the back of the sanctuary, feel free to do so, but please come back! And finally, if you so choose, . . .

You are welcome to use our nursery, as well as our parents' room next to the nursery, if your young ones need a break from the service. The Parents' Room is also a comfortable place where mothers may nurse their babies. The worship service is livestreamed to a monitor in the Parents' Room.

We offer Sunday School and a variety of Bible studies and spiritual growth opportunities for children, youth, and adults on Sunday mornings. All Sunday School classes resume on January 4.

Flowers and plants in our worship areas are supported by financial donations to the Flower Fund. These floral offerings beautify the church, uplift service participants, and remind us of God's good creation. You can find information about being a flower sponsor on the bulletin board near the Fellowship Hall and at gslcva.org/giving (look for the sponsorship form at the bottom of that page). Today's flowers are sponsored by Rob and Linda Fekete in celebration of Alex's birthday.

| | | |
|------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Prelude (8:00) | "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" | arr. Janet Linker |
| Prelude (11:00) | "Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland" (BWV 659) | J. S. Bach |
| Welcome | | Pastor James |

Please stand

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Opening Hymn | "Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending" | Hymn No. 336 |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|

Invocation, Confession, and Forgiveness

The sign of the cross + may be made by all in remembrance of their baptism.

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence for reflection on God's word and for self-examination. You may kneel or remain standing.

P: Long-expected God,

C: we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.

P: God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. + You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.

C: Amen.

Please stand

SERVICE OF THE WORD

Kyrie ~ Lord, have mercy

Music in hymnal, pages 152-53

Salutation and Prayer of the Day

Music in hymnal, page 156

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Today, on the fourth Sunday of Advent, we light four candles on the Advent wreath. The wreath, as an unbroken circle, is an image of eternity. The wreath is also a reminder of the victory wreath, the crown of Christ. As we light the candles in the midst of growing darkness, we remember that Christ reaches into our time to lead us to the light of everlasting life.

P: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. In your Son, Emmanuel, you have shown us your light and saved us from the power of sin. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath. Increase our longing for your presence, that at the celebration of your Son's birth his Spirit might dwell anew in our midst, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever.

Please sit

First Reading

Isaiah 7:10-16

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!

R: ¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." ¹² But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." ¹³ Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Second Reading

Romans 1:1-7

Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.

R: ¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand

Alleluia

Music in hymnal, page 156

Holy Gospel

Matthew 1:18-25

P: The Holy Gospel, according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.

C: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

Music in hymnal, page 157

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

P: ¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Music in hymnal, page 157

Please sit

Hymn of the Day

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

Hymn No. 357

Verses 1-3

If you think your child might be unable to sit through the entire service, this would be an appropriate time to take him/her to the nursery.

Message

"The Babe Emmanuel – Part 2"

Pastor Johann

Musical Reflection

Please stand

Nicene Creed

**C: 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;
by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary
and was made man.**

**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.**

With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic 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.

Please sit

Announcements

Pastor James

Please fill out a Welcome card and place it in the offering plate.

Anthem (8:00)

“Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland” (BWV 659)

J. S. Bach

Anne Lee, organ

“Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland” (“Savior of the nations, come”) is a Lutheran chorale associated with the season of Advent. Based on Martin Luther's German paraphrase of the ancient Latin hymn Veni, Redemptor Gentium, the melody expresses the church's prayerful longing for the coming of Christ. In Bach's setting, the chorale is presented with clarity and reverence, reflecting both the mystery of the incarnation and the hope of redemption.

Anthem (11:00)

“O magnum mysterium”

Morten Lauridsen

Sanctuary Choir

O magnum mysterium et admirabile sacramentum, ut animalia viderent Dominum natum jacentem in praesepe! Beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt portare Dominum Christum. Alleluia!

[O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament, that animals should see the newborn Lord, lying in a manger! Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy to bear Christ the Lord. Alleluia!]

Please stand

Offertory Prayer

**C: Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert.
Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the
world signs of your kingdom come. Amen.**

Prayer of the Church

At the end of each petition, the prayer leader will say, “God of grace ...”

The congregation responds, “hear our prayer.”

Please see the News and Announcements sheet for a listing of intercessions.

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT**Preface and Proper Preface****Music in hymnal, page 160****Sanctus ~ Holy, Holy, Holy****Music in hymnal, page 161****Lord’s Prayer**

**C: 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.**

The Words of Our Lord**Pax Domini ~ The peace of the Lord**

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Agnus Dei ~ Lamb of God**Music in hymnal, page 163**

Please sit

Distribution

We believe that Christ is truly present in the bread and wine, according to His Word: “This is My Body . . . this is My blood” (Matthew 26:26-27), and that in this sacrament our Lord gives us forgiveness of our sins, unity with God, and strength for a life of service.

We invite all baptized Christians who have made their First Communion, examined themselves, discern the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament for the forgiveness of their sins, and sincerely seek to amend their lives to join us at His Table.

Distribution procedure: Please come forward by the center aisle or as instructed by the usher. Fill the rail, beginning at the end near the wall. Kneel. Cup your hands to receive the bread. Then, take an individual cup from the tray as it is passed. **Cups in the innermost circle of the communion tray contain juice** for those who do not wish to drink wine. **For those who need gluten-free wafers:** Bring with you one of the brightly colored pieces of paper from the pews and hand it to the communion assistant who is distributing the wafers. That person will bring a gluten-free wafer to you.

Return to your seat via the aisle next to the windows. Place your empty communion cup in the bowl near the end of the rail. If you are unable to walk to the communion rail, please speak to an usher, and we will bring the sacrament to you.

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| Distribution Hymns | “Here, O My Lord, I See Thee Face to Face” | Hymn No. 631 |
| | “At the Lamb’s High Feast We Sing” | Hymn No. 633 |

Please stand

Prayer after Communion

P: God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

C: **Amen.**

Blessing

P: May God who comes among us, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always.

C: **Amen.**

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|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Closing Hymn | “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” | Hymn No. 357 |
| | | Verses 4-7 |

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Keep awake.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

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|-----------------|--------------------|------------|
| Postlude | “Joy to the World” | Don Hustad |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------|

During the postlude, please take a moment to get up and greet guests and worshippers at this service who are new to you. You are also welcome to stay seated for a time of prayer and reflection.

+ + +

Please join us for coffee and conversation following the service.

Serving Today

| | 8:00 | 11:00 |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Worship Leader | Pastor James | Pastor James |
| Preacher | Pastor Johann | Pastor Johann |
| Crucifer | Hugh Conschafter | * |
| Acolyte | * | * |
| Scripture Reader | Stacey Tyley | Jerry Johnson |
| Prayer Leader | Kirsten Bates | Joshua Stone |
| Cantor | | Eugene Stromecki |
| Communion Assistants | Pastor Johann (host) Pastor James (host) Reginia Benjamin (tray) Melinda DeWan (tray) | Pastor Johann (host) Pastor James (host) Brian Vanderhoof (tray) Don Kidwell (tray) |
| Ushers | Bob Camin (lead) Jamie Ellor Gary Budzier * | Ron Voigt (lead) Jim Ellis Paul Devine Rob Fekete |
| Choir Director | | Anne Lee |
| Organist | Anne Lee | Anne Lee |
| Altar Care | Rhoda Camin | Joey Tempel |
| Projectionist | Jeff Donahue | Jeff Donahue |
| Audio Engineer | Matt Hardy | Adam Sherman |
| Livestream Manager | | Matt Hardy |
| Greeter | Georgia Thorstenson (door) *(welcome center) | Bill Ciesar (door) Deb Ciesar (door) June McGurn (welcome center) |
| Guest Welcome | * | Heidi Cooper |
| Engagement | Heidi Cooper | Heidi Cooper |
| Opener | Ric Nickerson | |
| Closer | | Martin Farley |
| Coffee Setup | Wenda Smith | |
| Kitchen Cleanup | | Mia Millman |

* = unfilled as of December 17

Please join us for worship on Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m. — Family-focused service in the Fellowship Hall

Featuring our Praise Band and a relaxed atmosphere

7:30 p.m. — Traditional candlelight service; Holy Communion; in the sanctuary

Preservice music begins at 7:05 p.m.

Board of Servant Leaders

Rob Fekete, chair
Tony Esse, vice-chair
John Purtilo, secretary

Larry Austin
Drew Lipman
Jennifer Pelletier
Bernie Schoch

Core Ministry Areas

Worship

Team Leaders: Georgia Thorstenson and Julie Schorfheide; Staff Liaison: Pastor Johann

The Worship Team encompasses music, seasonal celebrations, arts, worship schedule, Sanctuary Choir (Anne Lee), Handbell Choir (Anne Lee), traditional worship, and contemporary worship (Matt Hardy), the worship spaces, and support personnel (e.g., ushers, greeters, acolytes).

Discipleship

Team Leader: Pastor James

The Discipleship Team oversees adult education, Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, children's ministry (Michelle Tenhaeff), and youth ministry (Holly Vanderhoof).

Parish Life

Team Leader: Brian Cors; Staff Liaison: Heidi Cooper

The Parish Life Team helps foster our community through Life Groups, member engagement, fellowship events, new member inclusion, concerts, public events, picnics, and intergenerational events, and reaches out to guests who worship at Good Shepherd.

Mission

Team Leader: Pastor Johann

Through this core ministry area, Good Shepherd supports a variety of mission efforts: financial and prayerful partnering with missionaries, worldwide and local (Randy and Melanie Stockman); synod/district, social ministry, and community service (Holly Vanderhoof); evangelism, publicity, media, and social media (Jeff Donahue).

Congregational Care and Nurture

Team Leader: June McGurn; Staff Liaison: Pastor Johann

The Congregational Care and Nurture Team helps support the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health of the congregation through literature, programs, and opportunities to serve others at Good Shepherd. This ministry's volunteers help in many ways: at memorial services and receptions; through member care visits and transportation; by sending cards for life events; and by arranging meals ("Take Them a Meal" team) for the sick and infirm, for their families, and for families with newborns.

Administration

Team Leader: Pastor Johann

This team is in charge of property and contracts (Roger Thorstenson), financing the mission (Mike DeWan), stewardship (Don Kidwell), human resources/personnel (Matt Frankner), communications (Jeff Donahue), and technology (Gary Budzier).

Good Shepherd's Staff

Jotham Johann, Senior Pastor

Room 201; pastorjo@gslcva.org; 703-439-2754

Gary James, Assisting Pastor

Room 209; pastorgary@gslcva.org; 703-437-5020

Sarah Brazell, Preschool Director

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Georgia Thorstenson, Business Manager

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Jeff Donahue, Communications Director

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Heidi Cooper, Director of Engagement

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Anne Lee, Organist & Director of Choirs

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Michele Clair, Administrative Assistant

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Holly Vanderhoof, Community Service Coordinator & Youth Ministry Director

Room 208; holly@gslcva.org; 703-437-5020 x213

Matt Hardy, Praise Band Director & Video Production Specialist

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Michelle Tenhaeff, Children's Ministry Coordinator

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Julie Schorfheide, Communications Assistant

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Reid Otterbacher, Communications Assistant

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Chloe Vanderhoof, Social Media Assistant

chloe@gslcva.org

Please note that the church office is closed on Mondays.

Good Shepherd is a member congregation of the Southeastern District
of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

We hope you will continue to connect with us by liking our Facebook page and following us on Instagram. Find them by searching @gslcva on those platforms. We also encourage you to subscribe to our YouTube channel and follow us on Vimeo so that you don't miss any of our virtual services, kids' messages, and more. Questions? Contact Communications Director Jeff Donahue, jeff@gslcva.org