

Welcome to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Building up God's people through His word for His world

The Nativity of Our Lord
December 24, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

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 near the doors to the sanctuary.

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. Sunday School classes resume on January 4.

Preservice Music

*Handbell Choir; Brass Quintet; Organ;
Cameron Farnsworth, tuba; Sanctuary Choir*

Please stand

The Christmas Proclamation

P: As on the first day of creation, on this Christmas Eve the Word illumines the world, shining forth to bring all things into being. Today we celebrate the incarnate Word, God becoming flesh to live among us in the person of Jesus Christ then and now. Emboldened by the good news of Christ's birth, along with the shepherds, Mary and Joseph, and all witnesses to the light of Christ, we declare to the world that we have indeed seen and been transformed by the arrival of "the salvation of our God." O come, let us adore him!

C: Amen.

Opening Hymn

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

Hymn No. 379

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, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace.

C: Amen.

P: Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection on God's word and for self-examination.

P: Reconciling God,

C: **we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain, and despair. We confess that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for your love; we have not always recognized your presence among us; we have not always embraced your message of peace. We cry out, weary with the burden of violence, oppression, and fear. We confess our failure to make room for those seeking refuge; our participation in violent systems that harm your innocent ones; our reluctance to embody your good news. Be born in us today and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation. Amen.**

P: God's grace upon grace flows over you. + Christ's presence redeems the whole creation. Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!

C: Amen.

Hymn of Praise

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

Hymn No. 380

Prayer

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last

day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Please sit

First Reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

R: ²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
³You have multiplied exultation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
⁴For the yoke of their burden
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders,
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷Great will be his authority,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Anthem

“While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks”

arr. David Willcocks

Sanctuary Choir; Brass Quintet

The congregation is invited to sing with the choir on the final verse.

While shepherds watched their flocks
by night
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down
And glory shone around.

“Fear not,” said he (for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind);
“Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind.

“To you in David’s town this day
Is born of David’s line
A Savior, who is Christ the Lord;
And this shall be the sign:

“The heav’nly Babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,
And in a manger laid.”

Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus
Addressed their joyful song:

“All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace;
Goodwill henceforth from heav’n to men
Begin and never cease.”

Second Reading

Titus 2:11-14

*The appearance of God’s grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity.
Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope
of our Savior’s final appearance.*

R: ¹¹ The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹² training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Responsive Reading of the Christmas Gospel

Luke 2:1-20

Please remain seated

*God’s greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the “good news
of great joy” and proclaim God’s blessing of peace.*

P: ¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

C: ² **This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.** ³ **All went to their own towns to be registered.**

P: ⁴ Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

- C:** ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.
- P:** ⁸ Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.
- C:** ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.
- P:** ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”
- C:** ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,
- ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”
- P:** ¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.”
- C:** ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger.
- P:** ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child,
- C:** ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them,
- P:** ¹⁹ and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.
- P:** This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- C:** Praise to You, O Christ.

Hymn of the Day “Once in Royal David’s City” **Hymn No. 376**
Verse 1: Rose Austin, solo; Verses 2-5: Congregation and Choir

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 3” Pastor Johann

Musical Reflection

Anthem “O Holy Night” A. Adam/arr. John Rutter
Sanctuary Choir

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Savior’s birth;
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till he appeared, and the soul felt its worth.

A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.
Fall on your knees! Oh hear the angel voices!

O night divine! O night when Christ was
born,

O night divine, O night, O night divine.

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,
With glowing hearts by his cradle we stand;
So, led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
Here came the wise men from the Orient
land.

The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger,
In all our trials born to be our friend.

He knows our need, to our weakness no
stranger;

Behold your King! Before him lowly bend!

Behold your King! Before him lowly bend!

Truly he taught us to love one another;

His law is love and his Gospel is peace.

Chains shall he break, for the slave is our
brother,

And in his name all oppression shall cease.

Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise
we,

Let all within us praise his holy Name.

Christ is the Lord, then ever, ever praise we,

His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim,

His pow'r and glory ever, evermore
proclaim.

Please stand

Offering Moment and Prayer

**C: God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you
bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of
the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Christmas offerings may be placed in the basket by the center exit of the sanctuary.

Prayer of the Church

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

The congregation responds, "receive our prayer."

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.**

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: Communion will be distributed in a continuous walking fashion. At the direction of the ushers, walk toward the front of the church in single-file lines. The pastors will distribute the host (communion wafers). Receive the host in hand, consume it, and then take the wine from the tray (held by the communion assistant). After you have drunk the wine, place the empty cup in the bowl and return to your pew. If you are not receiving communion, please fold your arms across your chest with hands toward your shoulders (St. Andrew’s cross) and approach to receive a blessing. There will be a single dismissal blessing after all have communed.

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. A gluten-free wafer will be brought to you.

Music during Distribution

Anthem	“Nativity Carol”	John Rutter
	<i>Sanctuary Choir; Charlotte Lee, violin</i>	
Born in a stable so bare, Born so long ago; Born ’neath the light of star He who loved us so.	<i>Refrain</i> Wise men from distant far land, Shepherds from starry hills Worship this babe so rare, Hearts with his warmth he fills.	
<i>Refrain:</i> <i>Far away silent lay,</i> <i>Born today, your homage pay;</i> <i>For Christ is born for aye,</i> <i>Born on Christmas Day.</i>	<i>Refrain</i> Love in that stable was born Into our hearts to flow; Innocent dreaming babe, Make me thy love to know.	
Cradled by mother so fair, Tender her lullaby; Over her son so dear Angel hosts fill the sky.	<i>Refrain</i>	
Hymns	“O Little Town of Bethlehem” “Away in a Manger”	Hymn No. 361 Hymn No. 365

Please stand

Dismissal after Communion

Lighting of the Candles

P: Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). "You are the light of the world. . . . Let your light so shine before others, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14, 16).

*The pastor lights the candles of the ushers, who in turn share the light with the congregation. **When lighting your candle, tilt your unlit candle toward a lit candle. Keep candles upright after they have been lit.***

When all the candles are lighted, the following prayer is read:

P: Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of His glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

Hymn	"Silent Night"	Hymn No. 363
	<i>Congregation; Sanctuary Choir; Charlotte Lee, violin</i>	

The choir will begin by singing a verse in German, which is printed below. Then all will join in singing verses 1- 3 in English. You are welcome to join in the German verse, if you wish.

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht	Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar
Alles schläft, einsam wacht	Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh
Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar	Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh

Blessing

P: The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter, ✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.

C: **Amen.**

Extinguish candles

Closing Hymn	"Joy to the World"	Hymn No. 387
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Dismissal

P: Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude	"Joy! to the World"	arr. Steven Strite
	<i>Brass Quintet, Organ, Sanctuary Choir</i>	

Serving Tonight	
Worship Leader	Pastor James
Preacher	Pastor Johann
Crucifer	Bradley Noble
Acolyte	*
Scripture Reader	Stacey Tyley
Prayer Leader	Reginia Benjamin
Communion Assistants	Pastor Johann (host), Pastor James (host) David Ellison (tray), Reginia Benjamin (tray) Jamie Ellor (runner), John Purtilo (runner)
Ushers	Jim Ellis (lead), Ric Nickerson, Jeff Peterson, Rob Fekete, Jim Micsan, *
Choir Director	Anne Lee
Handbell Director	Anne Lee
Organist	Anne Lee
Altar Care	Diane Ellor, Brenda Blisk, Joey Tempel
Projectionist	Reid Donahue
Audio Engineer	Adam Sherman
Livestream Manager	Matt Hardy
Greeters	Georgia Thorstenson (door), Heidi Cooper (door), *(door) * (welcome center)
Engagement	Heidi Cooper
Closer	Goodwyn Morgan

*unfilled as of December 18

Thanks to our instrumentalists: Hart Guonjian-Pettit, trumpet; Alexis Kalivretenos, trumpet; Dave Mosko, trombone; Claire Bradley, French horn; Cameron Farnsworth, tuba; Morrison Mast, percussion

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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

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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

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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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Chloe Vanderhoof, Social Media Assistant

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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