

Welcome to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

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

First Sunday of Christmas
December 28, 2025

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the "holy innocents" of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

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. Sunday School classes and Bible studies 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).

Prelude "In Dulci Jubilo" (BWV 608) J. S. Bach
Welcome Pastor James

Please stand

Opening Hymn "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" Hymn No. 358
Verses 1, 3, 4, 8

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

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.**

Please stand

SERVICE OF THE WORD

Kyrie ~ Lord, have mercy Music in hymnal, pages 168-69

Hymn of Praise "Glory to God in the Highest" Music in hymnal, page 170

Salutation and Prayer of the Day Music in hymnal, page 172

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us pray.

O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

Please sit

First Reading

Isaiah 63:7-9

God does not delegate divine intervention to a messenger or angel. God's own presence brings salvation. The prophet and all who read these words join in celebrating God's gracious deeds. God trusts that God's people will not act falsely.

R: ⁷ I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD,
the praiseworthy acts of the LORD,
because of all that the LORD has done for us
and the great favor to the house of Israel
that he has shown them according to his mercy,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.
⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people,
children who will not act deceitfully,"
and he became their savior
⁹ in all their distress.
It was no messenger or angel
but his presence that saved them;
in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Second Reading

Hebrews 2:10-18

Through Jesus' suffering and death, the trail to eternal salvation has been blazed for us. We do not fear death, because he has conquered the power of death. Thus Christ, our merciful and faithful high priest, has the final say over the destiny of our lives.

R: ¹⁰ It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹² saying,

"I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

¹³ And again,

"I will put my trust in him."

And again,

"Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of

death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand

Alleluia

Music in hymnal, page 173

Holy Gospel

Matthew 2:13-23

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

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

Music in hymnal, page 173

*In a dream, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus
from the jealousy of Herod.*

P: ¹³ Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

Music in hymnal, page 173

Please sit

Hymn of the Day “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”

Hymn No. 359

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 “What Now?”

Pastor James

Musical Reflection

Please stand

Apostles’ Creed

**C: I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Please sit

Announcements

Communications Director Jeff Donahue

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

Anthem “Bethlehem Down”
Richard Jacobson, baritone

Peter Warlock

“When He is King we will give Him the
Kings’ gifts,
Myrrh for its sweetness, and gold for a
crown,
Beautiful robes,” said the young girl to
Joseph,
Fair with her firstborn on Bethlehem Down.

Bethlehem Down is full of starlight,
Winds for the spices, and stars for the gold,
Mary for sleep, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.
When He is King, they will clothe Him in
gravesheets,

Myrrh for embalming, and wood for a
crown,
He that lies now in the white arms of Mary
Sleeping so lightly on Bethlehem Down.

Here He has peace and a short while for
dreaming,
Close-huddled oxen to keep Him from cold,
Mary for love, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

Please stand

Offertory 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.

Prayer of the Church

At the end of each petition, the prayer leader will say, "Hear us, O God, ..."

The congregation responds, "Your mercy is great."

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

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.**

Blessing

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

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn

"Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer"

Hymn No. 918

Dismissal

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

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

"Joy to the World"

Michael Bedford

*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.*

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Please join us for coffee and conversation following the service.

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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

Serving Today

Worship Leader	Pastor James
Preacher	Pastor James
Crucifer	*
Acolyte	*
Scripture Reader	Jim Micsan
Prayer Leader	Henry Eickelberg
Cantor	Richard Jacobson
Ushers	Goodwyn Morgan (lead) Marty Gurtz Bernie Schoch Jeff Peterson
Organist	Anne Lee
Altar Care	Cynthia Lion
Projectionist	Jeff Donahue
Audio Engineer	Adam Sherman
Greeters	Brian Cors (door) Carolyn Linke (welcome center)
Guest Welcome	Donna Harper
Engagement	Heidi Cooper
Opener	Jim Smith
Closer	Martin Farley
Coffee Setup	Wenda Smith
Kitchen Cleanup	Jan Morgan

* = unfilled as of December 23

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

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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

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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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Reid Otterbacher, 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