

Hanging of the Greens Worship

November 26, 2023
8:30 & 9:45am



Good Shepherd
LUTHERAN CHURCH
651-451-6225
www.goodshepherdigh.com

Welcome to Worship

Whether one's feet are big or small, fresh or worn, running or crawling
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church is:
Together on the Journey, Sharing God's Love

PRELUDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CAROL *"Go Tell It on the Mountain"*

Refrain: **Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!**

**While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. *Refrain***

**The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain***

**Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain***

CALL TO WORSHIP (*Isaiah 2*)

P. Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

C. Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord.

P. With what shall we come to God's house?

**C. Bring branches of cedar and holly,
bring evergreens and a pine tree,
hang wreaths and garlands.**

P. During this Advent season, we will learn of God's ways and walk in God's paths.

C. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

C. And also with you.

L. Let us pray together,

**C. Good Lord, by your mercy, guide our outward actions in such ways that our
inward being is formed in hope, joy, peace and love. May the decorations we offer
engage our senses during the days of Advent and enliven our praise and worship.
In the name of the Child of Bethlehem, our risen and coming Savior, Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

Why do we decorate the Sanctuary in preparation of Christmas?

During the Season of Advent, we prepare for the One who has come, whom we expect to come, and who will come again. We prepare our hearts and make room for the Messiah. In the hanging of the greens we share with Christians throughout the ages the memory and anticipation of Christ's coming. We decorate our church with the symbols of hope, peace, joy and love. Why do we do this? To tell the story again and then proclaim: Jesus is born.
God is with us!

Altar Paraments

BIBLE READING Isaiah 40:3-5

A voice is crying out: "Clear the LORD's way in the desert! Make a level highway in the wilderness for our God! Every valley will be raised up, and every mountain and hill will be flattened. Uneven ground will become level, and rough terrain a valley plain. The LORD's glory will appear, and all humanity will see it together; the LORD's mouth has commanded it."

NARRATIVE

We place the Advent altar paraments, which are deep blue, the color of the predawn sky, the color that covers the earth in the hours before the sun rises in the east. We use the deep blue for Advent to shade the season with a hint of expectation and anticipation of the dawn of Christ. The deep blue of Advent is meant to inspire in us the hope of faith, and to encourage us to keep watch for the promised light of Christ to break over the horizon, changing night into day, darkness into light, and filling our lives and our world with a hope and righteous splendor.

CAROL "Love Has Come"

Love has come – a light in the darkness! Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies. See, all heaven has come to proclaim it; hear how their song of joy arises: Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior! Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

Love has come and never will leave us! Love is life everlasting and free. Love is Jesus within and among us. Love is the peace our hearts are seeking. Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Advent Candle Wreath

BIBLE READING Jeremiah 23:5-6

The time is coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up a righteous descendant from David's line, and he will rule as a wise king. He will do what is just and right in the land. During his lifetime, Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And his name will be The LORD Is Our Righteousness.

NARRATIVE

The Advent Candle Wreath is shaped in a circle, reminding us of the continuation of life and life without end. The lighting of a new candle each of the four weeks before Christmas reminds us that something is happening, but more is yet to come. The four candles symbolize HOPE, PEACE, JOY and LOVE. May the light sent from God shine in the darkness to show us the way.

CAROL "He Came Down"

**He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love; hallelujah forevermore.**

**He came down that we may have hope; he came down that we may have hope;
He came down that we may have hope; hallelujah forevermore.**

**He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;
He came down that we may have peace; hallelujah forevermore.**

**He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;
He came down that we may have joy; hallelujah forevermore.**

The Greens

BIBLE READING Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned. A child is born to us, a son is given to us, and authority will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be vast authority and endless peace for David's throne and for his kingdom, establishing and sustaining it with justice and righteousness now and forever. The zeal of the LORD of heavenly forces will do this.

NARRATIVE

Christmas greens point to deep, rich meanings of the season: laurel and bay symbolize victory and triumph; yew and cypress stand for eternal life; mistletoe represents peace; and the prickly leaves of holly are symbols of the crown of thorns. From ancient times, evergreens have been a sign of God's everlasting nature. The Prophet Isaiah tells us that there will be no end to the reign of Christ. Therefore, we place greens in our sanctuary, as a sign of God's abiding love in Jesus.

OFFERING

Poinsettias

BIBLE READING Numbers 24:17

I see him, but not now; I look at him, but not nearby. A star comes from Jacob; a scepter arises from Israel, smashing Moab's forehead, the head of all the Sethites.

NARRATIVE

The poinsettia speaks to us in several ways in our place of worship today. The star shaped formation of the bloom calls to mind the star which shone brightly on that first Christmas. In a less joyous sense, the color of the flower is blood red, reminding us of the male infants killed because King Herod wanted to eliminate any threat to his throne. Sometimes, we fail to remember this part of our story, which made it necessary for Mary, Joseph and the Christ Child to flee to Egypt.

CAROL "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

**Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung! Of Jesse's lineage
coming as seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, amid the cold of winter,
when half-spent was the night.**

**Isaiah had foretold it, the rose I have in mind; with Mary we behold it, the virgin
mother kind. To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior, when half-spent was
the night.**

**This flow'r, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air, dispels with glorious
splendor the darkness ev'rywhere. True man, yet very God, from sin and death he
saves us and lightens ev'ry load.**

Manger

BIBLE READING Luke 2:6-7

While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom.

NARRATIVE

The manger or animal trough, is placed as a reminder that Jesus was born in the humblest of places, in a stable filled with animals. Mary and Joseph watched in wonder as shepherds and angels came searching for their child, baby Jesus. We set this scene before us during the Advent season as a reminder of God's gift to us.

CAROL "Away in a Manger"

**Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**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 cradle till morning is
nigh.**

**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 fit us for heaven, to live with you
there.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE 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.**

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

SONG "In the Bleak Midwinter"

**In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron, water like
a stone; snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long
ago.**

**Heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain; heav'n and earth shall flee away when he
comes to reign; in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed the Lord God almighty,
Jesus Christ.**

**What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb; if I
were a wiseman I would do my part; yet what I can I give him – give my heart.**

SONG "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile
here until the Son of God appear.**

Refrain: **Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

O come, O Wisdom from on high, embracing all things far and nigh: in strengthened beauty come and stay; teach us your will and guide our way. *Refrain*

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer; O Sun of justice, now draw near. Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to fight. *Refrain*

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

COMMUNION BLESSING

Christmas Tree

BIBLE READING Micah 5:2,4

As for you, Bethlehem of Ephrathah, though you are the least significant of Judah's forces, one who is to be a ruler in Israel on my behalf will come out from you. His origin is from remote times, from ancient days. He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. They will dwell secure, because he will surely become great throughout the earth.

NARRATIVE

Martin Luther is believed to be the first to use the pine and cedar at Christmas. While on a walk one Christmas Eve, he noticed an evergreen tree with snow that shined in the moonlight. He couldn't forget the beautiful picture. He returned home with an evergreen tree and decorated it with shining candles. He told his children the lighted tree will remind them of the brightness the birth of the Savior brings and the everlasting life he gives. The world, he said, would be in eternal darkness without Christ, its light.

CAROL *"Once in Royal David's City"*

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed, where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed. Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ, her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all, and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall; with the poor and meek and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love; for that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heav'n above; and he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.

The Lighting of the Sanctuary and Tree

BIBLE READING John 1:3b-9

What came into being through the Word was life, and the life was the light for all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light. A man named John was sent from God. He came as a witness to testify concerning the light, so that through him everyone would believe in the light. He himself wasn't the light, but his mission was to testify concerning the light. The true light that shines on all people was coming into the world.

NARRATIVE

As our final preparation for the coming of Jesus, the Light of the World, we will light our tree and sanctuary. In this time of Advent, whenever you see a lighted tree, let it call to mind the One who brings light into our darkness, healing in our brokenness, and peace to all!

Please stand for the lighting of the Sanctuary

CAROL *"Joy to the World"*

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king; let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

ADVENT PRAYER

C. Lord Jesus, we await your coming. We wait filled with hope, knowing your light will shine in the darkness. We wait anticipating your peace, believing that one day it will fill our world. We wait embracing your love, knowing it will inspire us to reach out to share it with our neighbors. We wait with joy, bubbling up in expectation of your birth. Lord, we wait, come soon and fill us with your life. Amen.

BLESSING

**P. The starlight guides your steps towards this place of wonder.
Angels sing their news as you travel to the manger.
Promise fills these days as we watch at the edge of birth.
Now faith tells you, Emmanuel will be with us soon! Amen.**

CAROL *"Good Christian Friends Rejoice"*

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice: now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this! He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore. Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

SENDING

**P. Go in Peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.
C. Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

