



**Welcome to Worship** with Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, whether you worship with us in-person or online (on Facebook Live or archived at [www.holyshepherd.org](http://www.holyshepherd.org).) May you know God's grace as we worship.

**Know that You Are Welcome!** We share in Holy Communion during the context of this morning's service. This is the table of the Lord. Jesus is the host and we are his guests. Jesus welcomes everyone to come and eat and be nourished, fed and forgiven. Come and eat and live!

**Offerings are an Act of Worship!** Offerings are one way we express both our gratitude for God's wondrous love and our commitment to for work of ministry. To support our work electronically, visit [www.holyshepherd.org](http://www.holyshepherd.org) and utilize Givelify, our online giving platform.

▲ indicates that you are invited to stand as you are able

**GATHERING MUSIC** ADVENT HYMN  
Lyrics and Music by Rick Lee James

▲ **OUR ADVENT INVITATION**

- L: Advent is a time of expectation.
- P: **A time to celebrate the One true hope of the world in which we live.**
- L: Advent is a time of preparation.
- P: **A time to prepare ourselves for the arrival of the Prince of Peace.**
- L: Advent is a time to remember ancient words.
- P: **A time to recall that those words are meant for us.**
- L: That the days are surely coming when righteousness and justice will abound.
- P: **That the days are surely coming when God's Word will be written on our hearts.**
- L: That the days are surely coming when the lion will lie down with the lamb.

- P: **That the days are surely coming when God will make all things new.**
- L: So let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ, we are a selfish people. Our peace depends on Your coming. We are a sinful people. Our pardon depends on Your coming. We are a broken people. Our lives depend on your grace. And so we pray those ancient words: "Maran atha" – "Lord, come soon."
- P: **Maran atha. Lord, come soon.**

▲ **GATHERING SONG** COME, LORD, COME  
Lyrics and Music by Harmony Smith and Nigel Briggs

***There's a cry in us, An ancient anthem of longing  
For Your kingdom to come, Show Your Glory***

***There's a hope in us, the promise of Your returning  
King of heaven come, in Your Glory***

Chorus:

***We join with all tribes and all nations and say  
Come, Lord, come***

***We join with the earth that is groaning and say  
Come, Lord, come***

***We join with the church through the ages and say  
Come, Lord, come***

***We join with the angels and worship the Lamb  
Come, Lord, come***

***There's a hope in us, the promise of Your returning  
Risen Savior, come, we are waiting***

(Repeat Chorus 2x)

▲ **A WORD FOR THOSE WHO JOURNEY**

- L: As we begin our journey to the Christmas manger, let us realize and recognize why it is that we stand so in need of the great news of the Christ-Child's birth ... for Jesus Christ is the light of the world.
- P: **But we've focused on the darkness that surrounds and overwhelms us, that frightens and numbs us.**
- L: Jesus Christ is the light of the world.
- P: **But we've used artificial lights to try and eliminate the darkness in our lives.**
- L: Jesus Christ is the light of the world.
- P: **But we've tried to deny the power of the darkness by pretending that it isn't there.**
- L: Forgive us, O God, for these our actions of failure and our failures to act.
- P: **Forgive us, O God, for putting our trust in ourselves rather than You.**

L: People of God, hear the good news! God has come as a light in the darkness. In the light of Christ we find forgiveness for our past, strength for our present and hope for our future. In Him we are enabled to begin the journey anew. Thanks be to God! So let us pray ...

P: **God of deliverance, you rescued Daniel from the mouths of the lions when he was punished for worshipping you. Liberate all who are endangered for the sake of their faith, and rescue us from anything that separates us from worshipping only you, for the sake of the one who made your name known to all people, across land and seas, Jesus Christ, our redeemer. Amen.**

## THE LESSON

Daniel 6:6-27

So the administrators and satraps conspired and came to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! All the administrators of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an interdict, that whoever prays to any god or human, for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the interdict and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." Therefore King Darius signed the document and interdict.

Although Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he continued to go to his house, which had windows in its upper room open toward Jerusalem, and to get down on his knees three times a day to pray to his God and praise him, just as he had done previously. Then those men watched and found Daniel praying and seeking mercy before his God. Then they approached the king and said concerning the interdict, "O king! Did you not sign an interdict, that anyone who prays to any god or human, within thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the den of lions?" The king answered, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." Then they responded to the king, "Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the interdict you have signed, but he is saying his prayers three times a day."

When the king heard the charge, he was very much distressed. He was determined to save Daniel, and until the sun went down he made every effort to rescue him. Then the conspirators came to the king and said to him, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed."

Then the king gave the command, and Daniel was brought and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you faithfully serve, deliver you!" A stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet ring of his lords, so that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no entertainment was brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

Then at dawn, the king got up and at first light hurried to the den of lions. When he came near the den where Daniel was, he cried out anxiously to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you faithfully serve been able to deliver you from the lions?" Daniel then said to the king, "O king, live forever! My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, because I was found blameless before him; also before you, O king, I have done no wrong." Then the king was exceedingly glad and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him because he had trusted in his God. The king gave a command, and those who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and thrown into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. Before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

Then King Darius wrote to all peoples and nations of every language throughout the whole world: "May you have abundant prosperity! I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people shall tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever. His kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion has no end. He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth; for he has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."

KIDTALK

Pastor John Valentine

**THE SONG OF THE DAY** O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL  
Lyrics and Music Trad. French / ELW #257

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

***O come, O Wisdom from on high  
embracing all things far and nigh:  
in strength and beauty come and stay;***

***teach us your will and guide our way.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel.***

***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 flight..  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel.***

**THE SERMON**

Pastor John Valentine

**▲ WORDS TO LIVE BY**

based on Philippians 2

**As people of God, we find our hope and salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross.**

**Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

**THE OFFERTORY**

STRANGE WAY TO SAVE THE WORLD

Lyrics and Music by David Allen Clark and Mark R. Harris

**▲ THE PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE**

*We gather our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation, utilizing the prayer refrain "God, in your mercy, hear our prayer."*

**▲ THE COMMUNION LITANY**

L: God spoke in the beginning; out of darkness came night and day, out of emptiness came creation, out of loneliness came humankind.

P: **And God said, "This is very good."**

L: God spoke when the world was troubled; giving voice to the prophets, moving through Mary as she gave birth to her child, crying as a baby lying in a manger.

P: **And still God said, "This is very good."**

L: God comes to us in bread and wine, for on the night when he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus Christ took the bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples and said, 'Take; eat; this is my

body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.' In the same way he also took the cup after the supper, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them saying, 'Drink of it, all of you. This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

P: **And still God says. "This is very good."**

L: And because of God's goodness we are bold to pray:

P: **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.**

**HOLY COMMUNION**

*We invite you to come to the Altar Rail and kneel or stand as you are able. During the serving of Holy Communion, you are invited to join in singing the following songs:*

IT CAME UPON A MIDNIGHT CLEAR

Lyrics by Edmund Sears / Music by R. Willis / ELW #282

***It came upon the midnight clear,  
that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth  
to touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,  
from heaven's all-gracious King."  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
to hear the angels sing.***

***Still through the cloven skies they come  
with peaceful wings unfurled,  
and still their heav'nly music floats  
o'er all the weary world.  
Above its sad and lowly plains  
they bend on hov'ring wing,  
and ever o'er its babel sounds  
the blessed angels sing.***

***And you, beneath life's crushing load,  
whose forms are bending low,  
who toil along the climbing way  
with painful steps and slow;  
look now, for glad and golden hours  
come swiftly on the wing;  
oh, rest beside the weary road  
and hear the angels sing!***

DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR?

Lyrics and Music by Noel Regney and Gloria Shayne

**Said the night wind to the little lamb**

**Do you see what I see? (Do you see what I see?)**

**Way up in the sky, little lamb**

**Do you see what I see? (Do you see what I see?)**

**A star, a star, dancing in the night**

**With a tail as big as a kite**

**With a tail as big as a kite**

**Said the little lamb to the shepherd boy**

**Do you hear what I hear? (Do you hear what I hear?)**

**Ringin' through the sky, shepherd boy**

**Do you hear what I hear? (Do you hear what I hear?)**

**A song, a song high above the trees**

**With a voice as big as the sea**

**With a voice as big as the sea**

**Said the shepherd boy to the mighty king**

**Do you know what I know? (Do you know what I know?)**

**In your palace warm, mighty king**

**Do you know what I know? (Do you know what I know?)**

**A Child, a Child shivers in the cold**

**Let us bring him silver and gold**

**Let us bring him silver and gold**

**Said the king to the people everywhere**

**Listen to what I say! (Listen to what I say!)**

**Pray for peace, people, everywhere**

**Listen to what I say! (Listen to what I say!)**

**The Child, the Child sleeping in the night**

**He will bring us goodness and light**

**He will bring us goodness and light**

**THE POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS / THE BENEDICTION**

**▲ SENDING SONG** HARK, THE HERALD ANGELS SING!

Lyrics by C. Wesley / Music by F. Mendelssohn / ELW #270

**Hark! The herald angels sing,**

**"Glory to the new-born king;**

**peace on earth, and mercy mild,**

**God and sinners reconciled."**

**Joyful, all you nations, rise;**

**join the triumph of the skies;**

**with angelic hosts proclaim,**

**"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"**

**Hark! The herald angels sing,**

**"Glory to the new-born king!"**

**Christ, by highest heav'n adored,**

**Christ, the ever-lasting Lord,**

**late in time behold him come,  
offspring of the virgin's womb.**

**Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!**

**Hail, the incarnate deity!**

**Pleased as man with us to dwell,**

**Jesus, our Emmanuel!**

**Hark! The herald angels sing,**

**"Glory to the new-born king!"**

**Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace!**

**Hail the Sun of Righteousness!**

**Light and life to all he brings,**

**ris'n with healing in his wings.**

**Mild he lays his glory by,**

**born that we no more may die,**

**born to raise each child of earth,**

**born to give us second birth.**

**Hark! The herald angels sing,**

**"Glory to the new-born king!"**

**▲ THE CHARGE**

L: Go in peace, to love God by serving your neighbor!

P: **Thanks be to God!**

**SENDING MUSIC**

HARK, THE HERALD ANGELS SING!

(Reprise)

Thank you to this morning's Worship Team for sharing their gifts of music with us today, including:

**Tom Henry** – Guitarist, Vocalist & Creative Director

**Diana Riveness Young** – Vocalist

**Elizabeth Humphrey** – Vocalist

**Bethany Valentine** – Vocalist

**Marci Bauer** – Vocalist

**Bob Schmalz** – Vocalist

**Pastor John Valentine** – Vocalist

**Marc Levine** – Pianist

Tired of watching your team underperform on Sunday afternoons? Join our Sanctuary Decorating Team next Sunday (December 8<sup>th</sup>) at 3pm for our 'Hanging of the Greens' event instead! You won't be disappointed!

CHRISTMAS EVE 2024

In response to numerous requests for an earlier-in-the-day opportunity to celebrate **Christmas Eve**, our 2024 Christmas Eve Worship schedule includes worship opportunities at 12 noon and 5pm on December 24<sup>th</sup>. Plan to join us as you are able!