

Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church  
Family Christmas Eve Service  
December 24, 2025 - 4:00pm

*Welcome to worship this Christmas Eve! Tonight we tell what might be the most famous story of all time, the story of Jesus' birth. While it's a story that happened long ago, it is a story that gets relived in our presence this evening, and in our lives forever. It's the story of God coming among us to show us a love beyond our imagination. It's a love that gives us life now and life forever. It's a story that is not just for us, it's a story for all people.*



Prelude to Christmas Eve

The Holly and the Ivy  
Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her (BWV 700)  
Pastorale in F (BWV 590A)  
'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime UNE JEUNE PUCELLE  
Still, Still, Still

Randall Manges, organ and Judith Jackson, piano

arr. Herbert Sumsion (Oecomuse, 1989)  
Johann Sebastian Bach  
Johann Sebastian Bach  
arr. John Carter (2010 Augsburg Fortress)  
arr. Paul Manz (Morning Star Music, 1987)

## Call to Worship

On this holy night, we come,  
**dazzled and awe-struck,**  
**ready to sing alongside the angels.**

On this holy night, we come,  
**eager and hopeful,**  
**ready to journey alongside the shepherds.**

On this holy night, we come,  
**quietly and tenderly,**  
**ready to worship alongside Mary.**

On this holy night, we come,  
**singing, trusting, believing, proclaiming:**  
**good news is louder than fear.**

Let us worship our good news, with-us God.

## GATHERING HYMN #283 O Come All Ye Faithful sts. 1 & 4

(Assembly responses in **bold**)

### Greeting

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

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow,

**we long to catch a glimpse of your Spirit.**  
**We cup our ears to hear the sound of the angel chorus.**  
**We turn our eyes toward the sky to see if we can find your star.**  
**We lean forward in our seat to see if we can feel your presence in our midst.**  
**We long to catch a glimpse of your Spirit, O God.**  
**So on this quiet night,**  
**on this holy night,**  
**on this joyful night,**  
**reveal yourself to us once more.**  
**Speak to us through the music and the children.**  
**Speak to us through starlight and candlelight.**  
**Speak to us through these ancient words once again.**  
**We long to catch a glimpse of you.**  
**Amen.**

## Readings

### First Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

## Gospel: Luke 2:1-14

## The Story

## HYMN OF THE DAY

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We have seen the valley.**

**We have seen a sky without stars. We have seen the longest night, and still we believe.**

**We believe in a with-us God.**

**We believe in the hope of tomorrow.**

We believe that good news is louder than fear. We believe this good news is for all people. So even when our knees shake, even when our voice trembles, even when fear is all around us, we will hold onto that good news.

**We will reach for each other.**

**We will look for God in our midst. We will sing songs of joy.**

## We will proclaim:

Unto us, love is born.

We have seen the longest night.

and we have seen unimaginable love. So still, we believe

Amen

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Holy One,  
tonight is a night for good news.  
Tonight is a night for candles in the window and joyful music in the air.  
Tonight is a night for family around the table, and children too excited to sleep.  
Tonight is a night for Christmas caroling and storytelling.  
Tonight is a night for good news.

And we are so grateful for that.  
We are so grateful for the good-news moments you sprinkle throughout our days.  
However, we also pray for those, both inside and outside this room, who struggle to hear the good news over the sound of their fear.  
For despite the joy of this evening,  
    we are well aware that we live in a world with plenty of reasons to be afraid.  
    We are afraid of the divisions that rack our country.  
    We are afraid of messing up our relationships, or losing the ones we love.  
    We are afraid of climate change and of saying the wrong thing.

*Add fears that resonate with your community or the week.*

Everywhere we look, we have reasons to be afraid.

And if we're honest, that fear can cling to us.  
So tonight, with-us God, we ask for your presence among us.  
So just like the shepherds on that first Christmas,  
may we hear the voice of angels.  
May you fill our hearts with a holy hope.  
And may we know, deep in our bones, that your good news is louder than fear.

And until the day when every reason to be afraid has been washed away,  
we ask that you would continue to inspire courage, conviction, and hope in us.  
Point our hearts toward sources of joy.  
Remind us of the good news of this night, and may we always hold onto some portion of the wonder, the mystery, and the joy found here.

With hope, we lift our voices together to pray in the name of Jesus, whose coming is sure.

**Amen.**

## SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

## OFFERING

OFFERTORY      *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks*    Harmonia Sacra, arr. Lloyd Larson

## Communion Dialogue

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ.  
In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh  
you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that,  
beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.  
And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of

pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -

san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the

name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

## PRAYER OF GREAT THANKSGIVING

With-us God,  
We live in a fearful world.  
If we're honest, we come to this Table today with the taste of fear on our tongues.  
We come to this Table carrying our anxiety.  
We come to this Table asking for guidance.  
We come to this Table with all of life's "what-ifs."

But you do not disregard our fear.  
You do not brush it under the rug or call us foolish.  
You do not ignore the realities in front of us.  
You do not dish out hurtful platitudes, telling us to "toughen up" or "power through."  
Instead, you meet us here.  
You listen to our fears.  
You remind us that we are not alone.  
You surround us with people who love us.  
You show us where we are strong.  
You walk beside us.  
And you give us a new song to sing.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

So today we pray, gracious God:  
replace the fear on our tongues with words of hope and songs of joy.  
As we come to this Table, pour out your Spirit on this bread and cup.  
Remind us that even in a fearful world, you are on the move.  
Remind us that even in a fearful world, you are here, inviting us to the Table,  
nourishing our spirits, reminding us that we belong, calling us by name.  
Instill that good news in us, for this is a joyful feast.  
Fear is not the loudest voice today.  
What a gift that is.  
Now with hope for a better tomorrow,  
we join our voices together to pray the prayer your son taught us to pray, saying. . .

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

## INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Friends, did you ever have a moment growing up when you walked into the school cafeteria, panned the faces in the crowd, and wondered if you were going to have a place to sit?

Did you ever have a moment, maybe as a new student or at the start of a new school year, when fear nibbled at the back of your mind because you weren't sure where you belonged?

I imagine, at some point or another, most of us have experienced that kind of fear. But here at this Table, you never have to wonder.

Here at this Table, there is enough room, enough food, enough love for everyone.

Here at this Table, Jesus is standing up on his chair, waving his hands over his head, saying to each of you, "I saved you a seat!"

Here at this Table, you are wanted and welcomed. You are safe and loved.

Here at this Table, you belong.

So my friends, there is no need for fear here, for this is a joyful feast.

And you are invited. Come. All are welcome.

***About Communion:** This is Christ's table and meal of grace! All are welcome! Ushers will guide you forward. Receive the bread (gluten free available); wine or white grape juice is received from a cup from the gold tray. If you have difficulty coming forward for the distribution, please let one of the ushers know and they will ask the pastor to bring you communion in the pew. Children may come forward for a blessing.*

## DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

Special Music	<i>Sweet Little Jesus Boy</i>	Robert MacGimsey
		Jeanne Aurelius, soloist
<b>HYMN 277</b>	<b>Away in a Manger</b>	
<b>HYMN 289</b>	<b>Angels We Have Heard on High</b>	

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Loving God,  
In a world racked with fear, you gather us together.  
You set the table. You meet us here.  
You nourish our bodies as you nourish our spirits.  
You remind us that this is a joyful feast, and that fear cannot win every time.  
So with renewed courage,  
    with renewed hope,  
    with renewed conviction,  
    send us out into the world.  
Help us to feed others as you have fed us.  
With gratitude we pray.  
**Amen**

## **Lighting Our Candles**

**HYMN 281    Silent Night sts. 1 & 3**

### **Blessing**

In a fearful world, may you look for God's spirit.  
May you reach for each other's hands.  
May you choose courage whenever you can.  
And in all things, may you remember that good news is louder than fear.  
In the name of the one who calls,  
    the one who sends, and the one who journeys with—  
go in peace and be not afraid.

**Amen.**

### **Sending Hymn**

**HYMN 290                    Go Tell it on the Mountain**

### **Dismissal**

Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

*In dulci jubilo* (BWV 729)

Johann Sebastian Bach

*Merry Christmas! We're so glad you are with us to hear the age-old story and to worship the newborn king with us. Whether you have been here for years or walked in for the first time today, whether you are young or old or somewhere in between, whether you are blue collar, white collar, pink collar or buffalo plaid collar, you are welcome here. We are a community that relishes God's rich love and grace and seeks to live as followers of Jesus in our lives and in our community. You are always welcome to join us.*

*Pr. Jim Honig*

Please join us for weekly worship:

Sundays    9:30am Worship & Sunday school  
                  10:30am coffee & fellowship

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