

God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

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

Children's Message/Advent Lighting

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who opens the heavens
and draws near to us with salvation.

Amen.

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance.

Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Everlasting God,

you love justice and you hate wrongdoing.

**We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness
that make us reluctant to work against
oppression.**

We are complicit in systems of exploitation.

We choose comfort over courage.

We are careless with creation's bounty.

Look upon us with mercy.

Turn our hearts again to you.

**Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your
ways for the sake of our waiting world.**

Amen.

Hear these words of assurance:

God clothes you with garments of salvation
and covers you with robes of righteousness.

In the tender compassion of † Jesus Christ,
your sins are forgiven.

God's covenant is eternal,

and God's blessing rests upon us all.

Amen.

Gathering Hymn

"Joy to the World"

#247 vs. 1,2

Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Reading from 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" ⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as

formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke 1:26-38

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ

Sermon

A local reporter is on the scene of a Big Big Story taking place in Bethlehem. A star has appeared in the sky urging all to go and see what it is all about. They'll have interviews with the Star, Angels, Wisemen, Shepherds, and a young expectant couple carrying the Christ Child. You won't want to miss the Shepherd's Kids presentation of "Big Big Story" during worship at 9 am.

Apostle's Creed

Prayers of Intercession

With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence.

You promise mercy to Abraham and Sarah and their descendants forever. Bring your church into thoughtful, caring, and collaborative relationship with those of other faiths. Strengthen our shared values, that we work together in caring for our world. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

As fields and crops lie dormant, bless them with holy rest. Prepare them to thrive, that they provide abundant food in due season. Protect animals who hibernate and provide for all who scavenge for food in the lean season. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

You raise up the lowly and cast down the arrogant. Teach humility to all in positions of authority. Break down systems of oppression, especially systems that perpetuate inequity and exclusion. Do not allow wealth, power, or pride to become idols that obscure your call to justice. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Look with favor upon all who cry out to you. Accompany with tenderness all who are afraid or ill (*We pray especially for Peyton, Matt, David, Irene, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Jacob, Cherri, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay, Sherm and Mary*). Rescue all who

experience abuse or who live under threat of violence, especially refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers in search of a safe and stable home. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

You are pleased to make your home among us. Make our homecomings joyful as we gather with friends, families, and chosen families in celebration. Grant safety to all who travel. Sustain the work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and other ministries that assist in setting up new homes. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Blessed are you for Mary and all your servants in every generation who lived according to your promise of mercy (*especially*). Strengthen us by their example until the revelation of your glory is made known. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

God our provider,

by your merciful hand

abundance springs up from the earth.

Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty.

Let them be a sign of your steadfast love

and faithfulness for all people,

through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

Words of Institution

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 #471

Prayer

Generous God,

in bread and cup you have revealed your glory

for all people to see together.

Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim

your good news of liberation and release,

brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Keep Awake.

Okay! We will! Thanks be to God!

And all of Good Shepherd said...

AMEN!

Blessing

The God of peace bless you,
the love of Christ sustain you in hope,
and the anointing of the Spirit ✠ remain upon you
now and forever.

Amen.

December Financial Snapshot

Your Generosity in Action:

From Ruby's Pantry Distribution last week:
1 guest who came through was going through hard
times of their own, but had new clothing and other
items for those less fortunate than her, and donated
them to Shepherd's Closet. *She wanted to help out
others!*

Another guest chose to *pay it forward for a guest that
might not have* the funds for a share.

A third guest came through that didn't have the money
for a share but was given one anyways last month, this
month *returned with money for this month and last.*

GENEROSITY INSPIRES GENEROSITY!

THANK YOU!!

As of Today...

Total Revenue **\$13,437**

December 22: \$35,773

Total Expenses **\$16,816**

December 22: \$29,365

Difference to date:

-\$3,379

End of year donations must be at the church office by noon Dec. 29.





Your Neighborhood Church - Making Connections

Christmas Wish List

For an ECASD family in need

Monetary donations are being collected between now and next Wednesday, December 20th, to go towards making an ECASD families holidays a little brighter



I was recently approached by someone in the ECASD that they had a family that could use some help this Holiday Season. They've got a single mother with a 15-year-old struggling with health conditions that has forced mom to take time off of work without pay.

So, I was asked, "Would Good Shepherd consider adopting this family for Christmas?"

I didn't have to think long before saying, "of course."

Because, church, that is what we do.

So, between now and next Wednesday, December 20th, we will be collecting monetary donations for a group of Good Shepherd Shoppers to go out and make this family's Christmas.

Please prayerfully consider how you might contribute to this cause.

Thank you - Pastor Josh

A HOPEFUL FUTURE. TOGETHER WITH PURPOSE.

For each other. For the community. A future together.

- STEWARDSHIP APPEAL 2023 -

IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO PLEDGE YOUR COMMITMENT

Stewardship Appeal by the numbers:

40 total commitments received. 26 pledged for 2023 and 25 of those pledge to not decrease in 2024

Comparing 2023 actual ytd to 2024 pledged: 36 pledge an increase in giving



Join us for Advent and Christmas at Good Shepherd

Sunday, December 10

Good Shepherd Music Ministries

"The Road to Bethlehem"

Followed by

The Annual Christmas Tea

Christmas Eve

with Candlelight

"A Child Will Lead Them"

10:00 am & 4:30 pm

Sunday, December 17

Shepherd's Kids Christmas Program

"Big Big Story!"

Followed by

French Toast Bake Fellowship Brunch

Christmas Day

Come to the Manger

Lessons & Carols

10:00 am

GOOD SHEPHERD

New Year's Eve Worship

10 am - No Fellowship - No Faith Formation

