



Shepherd of the Hill Lutheran Church – ELCA

“Encouraging faith and proclaiming God’s love by Gathering, Growing and Giving.”

First Sunday after Christmas

Service of the Word

December 31st, 2023

This worship is being live streamed. Your presence in the sanctuary signifies your agreeing to be on our live broadcast.

NOTE: **Bold text** indicates worshippers’ response, and * means please stand as able.

PRELUDE

Michelle Young

WELCOME & MINISTRY MESSAGES

Steve and Holly Sweeney

Reader: Sarah Larson

Acolyte: Cade Larson

Video: Dave Young

Ushers: Tim Jenson

GATHERING

* GREETING 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.**

* GATHERING HYMN

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

LBW#54 all verses

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

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 heav'n'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!

For lo! The days are hast'ning on, by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and all the world give back the song which now the angels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876

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* CONFESSION Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the Word made flesh, our life and our salvation. Amen. Trusting the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior, let us confess our sin.
Silence is kept for reflection.

God of life, **you promise good news of great joy for all people, and call us to be messengers of your peace. We confess that too often we hoard our joy, our resources, and our security. We nurture conflict and build barriers. We neglect the needs of our neighbors and ignore the groaning of creation. Have mercy on us. Where we are self-centered, open our hearts. Where we are reluctant, give us courage. Where we are cynical, restore our trust. Renew us with your grace and give us again the hope of eternal life in you.**

Amen.

* FORGIVENESS Hear the good news: We are children of God and heirs of God's promises through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In † Jesus we are forgiven and redeemed. Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth shall know the salvation of God.

Amen.

* PRAYER OF THE DAY Almighty God, **you wonderfully created and yet more wonderfully restored the dignity of human nature. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of Jesus Christ who came to share our humanity, and who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.**

Amen

GROWING

Our first reading is from the 61st and 62nd chapters of Isaiah.

Isaiah 61:10-62:3 (NIV)

To the people who returned to Jerusalem after the exile, the prophet proclaims that God's salvation will fully come to pass. Jerusalem will become a shining light to the nations and righteousness and praise will spring up as surely as the earth puts forth vegetation.

¹⁰ I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹ For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

62 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her vindication shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. ² The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. ³ You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. Here ends the first reading. **C: Thanks be to God.**

Please join in reading Psalm 148 responsively.

Psalm: 148 (NIV)

¹ Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights above.

² **Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts.**

³ Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars.

⁴ **Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies.**

⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD, for at his command they were created, ⁶ and he established them for ever and ever he issued a decree that will never pass away.

⁷ **Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,**

⁸ **lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, ⁹ you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, ¹⁰ wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and**

flying birds, ¹¹ kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth,

¹² young men and women, old men and children.

¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.

¹⁴ **And he has raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all his faithful servants, of Israel, the people close to his heart.**

Our second reading is from Galatians 4th chapter.

Galatians 4:4-7 (NIV)

Paul seeks to show the Galatians that the purpose of Christ's birth was to liberate us from the law's condemnation so that we would be fully adopted into God's family as beloved children.

⁴ But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. ⁶ Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

Here ends the second reading.

C: Thanks be to God.

*Please stand as you are able.

The Holy Gospel according to Luke 2nd chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40 (NIV)

Luke's narrative continues with stories that emphasize Jesus' connection to Judaism. His family is devout in its observance of the law, and Jesus himself is recognized as one who will bring glory to Israel.

²² When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons." ²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: ²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. ³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel." ³³ The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too." ³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. ³⁹ When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

* HYMN OF THE DAY

What Child is This

LBW#40 all verses

What Child is This

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898

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*THE APOSTLES' CREED (*professed together*)

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**

**Or, He descended to the dead. ** universal*

Prayers of Intercession

Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

A brief silence.

You inspire faith in our hearts and call us to rejoice with our whole selves at the salvation you bring. Make our churches places of belonging for all people in the fullness of their being. Raise up the gifts and the witness of people who are neurodivergent, living with disability, or bearing invisible illness.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your praise is sung throughout creation in all times and seasons. As the new year turns, ground us in your changeless and sustaining love. Keep us attentive to the rhythms of the cosmos and inspire us to live in harmony with all the earth. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Give hope and stamina to leaders who work tirelessly for the sake of the most vulnerable. We pray especially for organizations working on behalf of children to provide basic needs, to protect from abuse and neglect, to address trauma, and to rescue from trafficking. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Sustain all people who have been waiting for salvation and wholeness. We pray especially for anyone living with cancer or chronic illness, all people who are in physical rehabilitation or addiction recovery, and those experiencing complications from long COVID. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Let this community of faith be a joyful and welcome place for all ages and generations. Teach us to honor the wisdom of children, the inquisitiveness of youth, the thoughtfulness of adults, and the knowledge of elders. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give thanks for all the beloved who lived with expectation and departed this life in peace. Sustain us in joy until we join them around your throne. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

Amen.

The OFFERING PLATE is located at the entrance of the church sanctuary. Your generous giving supports God's ministry at Shepherd of the Hill.

We are an Offering

We lift our voices we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you: we are an offering.
Lord use our voices, Lord use our hands, Lord use our lives, they are yours: we are an offering. All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be, we give to you, we give to you. We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you: We are an offering, we are an offering.

Text: Dwight Liles, b. 1957

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* OFFERING PRAYER God of abundance, **receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen.**

CAROL

Angels, we Have Heard on High

LBW#71 all verses

Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heav'nly song? **Refrain**

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king. **Refrain**

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864

Public Domain

* 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, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

* BENEDICTION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

* BLESSING God bless you and keep you, ✠ Jesus grant you grace and truth, and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Ron on vacation thru 1/1/2024 and will be back 1/2/2024.

If emergency contact Kris Jenson 715-563-1402 or Barb Vadnais 715-308-0252.

NO Sunday School or Adult Bible Study 12/31.

Worship on Sunday 12/31 is a Carol / Hymn Sing service.

*** Confirmation class resumes Wednesday 1/3/24 ***

*** Sunday School & Adult Bible Study resume Sunday 1/7/24 ***



Effective 10/16 Secretary will be in office Mondays 9:30-11:30 am or occasional Wednesday 6-8 pm depending on her schedule.

MAILING ADDRESSES for those folks who you may want to send words of care, concern, cheer or sympathy. **Please let the secretary know if you would like to be added and/or know someone who might like to be.**

- Audrey Bracher:
Meadowbrook at Bloomer 1840 Priddy St, Room 112 B, Bloomer, WI 54724
- Roger Tubbs: 3706 Damon St Apt 11, Eau Claire, WI 54701-9266

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Need an easy 2024 resolution? Give blood or platelets!

This time of year, American Red Cross donors often delay giving because of holiday travel, winter weather or seasonal illness. Everyone can help ensure blood products are available for patients as we start the new year by making an appointment to give in the coming days and weeks. Donors of all blood types (but especially type O blood donors and platelet donors!) are needed!

Resolve to save lives in 2024, sign up today!

Wednesday, January 10th 2024, 11am -5 pm

Elk Mound Community Blood Drive
at Shepherd of the Hill Lutheran Church.

<https://www.redcrossblood.org/local-homepage/location/eau-claire>

