

**GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**120 West Gano Chance Road**  
**Centralia, Missouri 65240**  
**The Nativity of Our Lord**  
**December 24, 2025**



**WELCOME**

**Rev. James Lanning**

**ENTRANCE HYMN – “Joy to the World”**

**LSB 387**

**INVOCATION**

**P** In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** **Amen.**

**EXHORTATION**

**P** I will go to the altar of God,

**C** **to God my exceeding joy.**

**P** Our help is in the name of the Lord,

**C** **who made heaven and earth.**

**P** Let us confess our sins to our Heavenly Father, in the goodness of His mercy, through His Son Jesus Christ

**CONFESSION OF SINS**

**C** **O almighty God, merciful Father, I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of**

**Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

P God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith.

C **Amen.**

P Do you believe that the forgiveness I speak is not my forgiveness but God's?

C **Yes.**

### **ABSOLUTION**

P Then, in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit. May it therefore be as you have confessed, and so believe.

C **Amen.**

### **BLESSING**

P Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it.

C **Amen.**

### **INTROIT**

*Isaiah 9:2-7*

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
**those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.**

<sup>3</sup> You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy;

**they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.**

<sup>4</sup> For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder,

**the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.**

<sup>5</sup> For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood  
**will be burned as fuel for the fire.**

<sup>6</sup> For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
**and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

<sup>7</sup> Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,  
**on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it**  
with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

**The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.**

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and evermore shall be. Amen.**

### **KYRIE**

P Lord, have mercy.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P Christ, have mercy.

C **Christ, have mercy.**

P Lord, have mercy.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

*Please be seated*

**READING - The Birth of Jesus Foretold****Luke 1:26-28**

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" <sup>29</sup>But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He 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 father David, <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>And the angel answered 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 called holy—the Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup>And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

**"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"****LSB 356***First set of candles are lit***READING – Joseph's Dream****Matthew 1:18-25**

<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: <sup>23</sup>"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup>but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

**"Of the Father's Love Begotten"****LSB 384***Second set of candles are lit***READING - The Birth of Jesus****Luke 2:1-7**

<sup>2</sup>In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>And all went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup>And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup>to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup>And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

**"What Child Is This?"****LSB 370***Third set of candles are lit*

**READING – the Angels and the Shepherds****Luke 2:8-21**

<sup>8</sup> And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. <sup>10</sup> And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” <sup>15</sup> When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” <sup>16</sup> And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup> And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. <sup>21</sup> And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

**“Angels We Have Heard on High”****LSB 368***Fourth set of candles are lit***READING – Jesus Presented at the Temple****Luke 2:22-38**

<sup>22</sup> And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” <sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. <sup>27</sup> And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup> he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, <sup>29</sup> “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; <sup>30</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation <sup>31</sup> that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, <sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.” <sup>33</sup> And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. <sup>34</sup> And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed <sup>35</sup> (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.” <sup>36</sup> And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, <sup>37</sup> and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup> And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

**“O Come, All Ye Faithful”****LSB 379***Fifth set of candles are lit***READING - The Visit of the Magi****Matthew 2:1-12**

<sup>2</sup> Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” <sup>3</sup> When Herod the king heard this, he was

troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup> “‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’” <sup>7</sup> Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” <sup>9</sup> After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. <sup>11</sup> And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

### **“Angels from the Realms of Glory”**

**LSB 367**

*Sixth set of candles are lit*

#### **READING – The Angel Warns of Herod’s Wrath**

**Matthew 2:13-23**

<sup>13</sup> Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” <sup>14</sup> And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.” <sup>16</sup> Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. <sup>17</sup> Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: <sup>18</sup> “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.” <sup>19</sup> But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, <sup>20</sup> saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” <sup>21</sup> And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

### **“Hark the Herald Angels Sing”**

**LSB 380**

*Seventh set of candles are lit*

*Please rise for the reading of the Holy Gospel*

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the nineteenth and twentieth chapters

C **Glory to you oh Lord**

#### **GOSPEL READING**

**John 19:17-22, 28-42; John 20:1-18**

<sup>17</sup> and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. <sup>18</sup> There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. <sup>19</sup> Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” <sup>20</sup> Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. <sup>21</sup> So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but rather, ‘This man said, I am King of the

Jews.”<sup>22</sup> Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”<sup>28</sup> After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.”<sup>29</sup> A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.<sup>30</sup> When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.<sup>31</sup> Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away.<sup>32</sup> So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him.<sup>33</sup> But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.<sup>34</sup> But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.<sup>35</sup> He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe.<sup>36</sup> For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.”<sup>37</sup> And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.”<sup>38</sup> After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body.<sup>39</sup> Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight.<sup>40</sup> So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.<sup>41</sup> Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.<sup>42</sup> So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

20 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.<sup>2</sup> So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.”<sup>3</sup> So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb.<sup>4</sup> Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.<sup>5</sup> And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in.<sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there,<sup>7</sup> and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself.<sup>8</sup> Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed;<sup>9</sup> for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.<sup>10</sup> Then the disciples went back to their homes.<sup>11</sup> But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb.<sup>12</sup> And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet.<sup>13</sup> They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.”<sup>14</sup> Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus.<sup>15</sup> Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.”<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher).<sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”<sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.

**“O Come, All You Unfaithful”** duet by **Kim Rainey and Abigail Rainey**

*The Christ candle is lit*

**Message: “”**

**Rev. James Lanning**

**Offering**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**C** 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.

### **BENEDICTION - (Pauline)**

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

**C** Amen.

### **SENDING HYMN: “Silent Night, Holy Night”**

**LSB 363**

*The pastor will light his candle from the Christ candle, who will share his light with the ushers, who will then share their light with the congregation. Remember, when you are sharing your light with your neighbor, that only the one whose candle is unlit tips their candle (to avoid spilling wax).*

### **DISMISSAL**

*Congregation extinguishes their candles and departs in the peace of our Lord*

### **Acknowledgments**

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### **Church Directory**

**Pastor James Lanning** (512) 968-4587,

**Email:** [pastorlanning@goodshepherdcentralia.org](mailto:pastorlanning@goodshepherdcentralia.org)

**Church office:** (573) 682-3941,

hours: 8am-1pm M & Th; 11 am – 4 pm T-W

**Email:** [office@goodshepherdcentralia.org](mailto:office@goodshepherdcentralia.org)

**Church Updates:** [www.goodshepherd.churchupdates.org](http://www.goodshepherd.churchupdates.org)

**Website:** [www.goodshepherdcentralia.org](http://www.goodshepherdcentralia.org)

### **Elders:**

Jeff Jaeger (573) 682-0902

Gary Seider (573) 489-6629

Mark Nygren (763) 274-4308



*Isaiah 9:6, 'For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called...Prince of Peace.'*

God With Us, born into the heart of our darkness, given into the midst of our strife with one another and the midst of our enmity toward God—born and given into this context as our Peace. Bearing in Himself the fullness of the animosity between man and man, and the fullness of humanity's deicidal hatred for God, and the fullness of divine wrath against sinful humanity, bearing all these in love (as True Man and True God) in His cruciform Body on the cross and harmonizing all of these in His anastasiform Body by the resurrection, He reconciles man to man and man to God in Himself, so becoming our Peace. May we be given the grace to remember and to feel in our marrow that our Peace is supremely a Person. Our peace is not found in the removal of this pain or this threat or this trial, it is not found in the answer we are hoping for, it is not found in the relationship we are longing for, it is not found in any change of circumstance—internal or external. Peace is an objective Person and to know Him, to belong to Him, to be united as one flesh to His Body by the Spirit and simply to 'be' in this place of merciful, mastered, transformative belonging—is our experience of Peace. So, may the crucified and risen Jesus—in whom we know the God of all reality in truth and so as Peace—be deep and sustaining peace to His Bride in this season. A Blessed Christmas to you all.