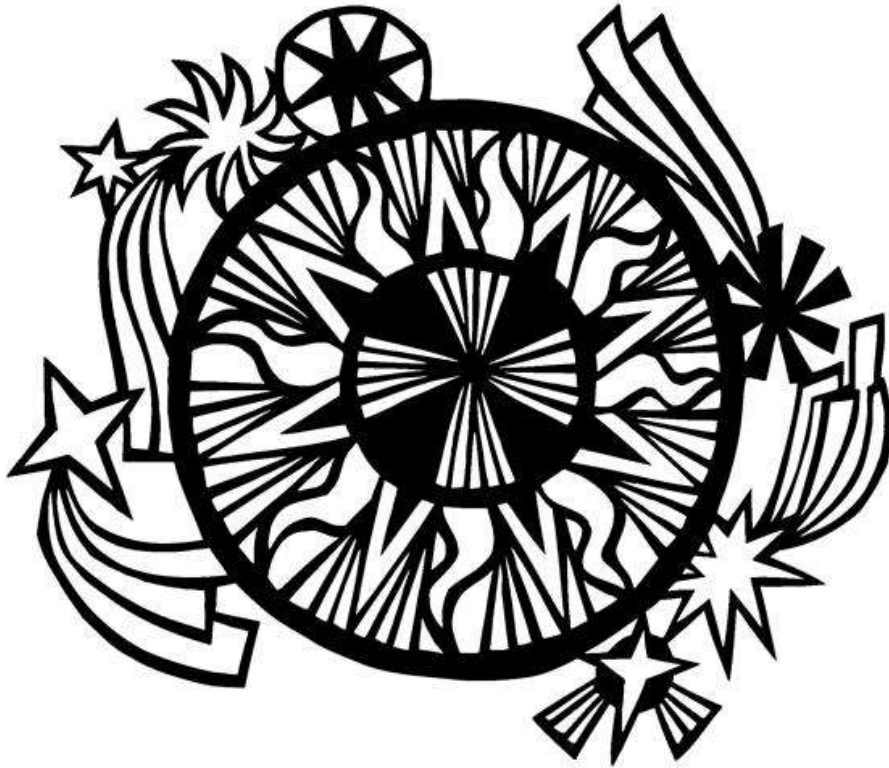


**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas**  
**Sunday, January 3, 2021**



**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**  
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**Happy New Year! Welcome to worship, one and all. Please greet one another with the peace of Christ.**



## **GATHERING**

### **LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

**P:** Lord God, may your Word become flesh through our lives so that we may see him in the fullness of his glory

**C:** **Amen.**

### **PASTORAL GREETING**

**P:** 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**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**P:** The Lord be with you.

**C:** **And also with you.**

**P:** Let us pray.... Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C:** **Amen**

### **FIRST READING: JEREMIAH 31:7-14**

**L:** The First Lesson is from Jeremiah the 31<sup>st</sup> chapter, beginning at the 7<sup>th</sup> verse:

<sup>7</sup>Thus says the Lord:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,  
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;  
proclaim, give praise, and say,  
“Save, O Lord, your people,  
the remnant of Israel.”

<sup>8</sup>See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,  
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,  
among them the blind and the lame,  
those with child and those in labor, together;  
a great company, they shall return here.

<sup>9</sup>With weeping they shall come,  
and with consolations I will lead them back,

I will let them walk by brooks of water,  
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;  
for I have become a father to Israel,  
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

<sup>10</sup>Hear the word of the Lord, O nations,  
and declare it in the coastlands far away;  
say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him,  
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock."

<sup>11</sup>For the Lord has ransomed Jacob,  
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

<sup>12</sup>They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,  
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord,  
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
and over the young of the flock and the herd;  
their life shall become like a watered garden,  
and they shall never languish again.

<sup>13</sup>Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,  
and the young men and the old shall be merry.

I will turn their mourning into joy,  
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

<sup>14</sup>I will give the priests their fill of fatness,  
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,  
says the Lord.

L: The Word of the Lord

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## **SECOND READING: EPHESIANS 1:3-14**

L: The Second Lesson is from Ephesians the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter, beginning at the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse:

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup>just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup>He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup>that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup>he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, <sup>10</sup>as a plan for the

fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

<sup>11</sup>In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will,

<sup>12</sup>so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup>In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; <sup>14</sup>this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

L: The Word of the Lord

C: **Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL: JOHN 1:[1-9] 10-18**

P: The Holy Gospel according to John the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter, beginning at the 1<sup>st</sup> verse:

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup>(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") <sup>16</sup>From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup>The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

# SERMON

## HYMN OF THE DAY

### APOSTLE'S CREED

A: God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith:

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come 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.**

### PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

A: Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

Redeeming God, you gather together your people from the farthest parts of the earth. Protect your church from stumbling. Let it not be overcome by sorrow, division, or despair. Make us radiant with goodness, that we might live always to the praise of your glory. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: You bring together heaven and earth. All creation testifies to your splendor. Hold the ecosystems of this earth in delicate balance, from coastlands to farmlands, forests to wetlands, deserts to rainforests. Show us new ways to live in harmony with the world around us. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

- A: You overflow with grace upon grace. Expand the imaginations of those who serve in positions of authority. Open their hearts to the needs of their nations and communities. Protect all those in harm's way and those risking danger for the sake of others. Hear us, O God.
- C: Your mercy is great.**
- P: You bring consolation to those who weep. Embrace those who feel far-off, excluded, or defeated. Accompany those living with chronic and invisible illness. Sustain the weak and weary. Refresh those who labor under the weight of pain or sickness..... Hear us, O God.
- C: Your mercy is great.**
- P: Gracious God, watch over and care for all persons who serve in the military. Today we especially remember .....Hear us, O God.
- C: Your mercy is great.**
- A: You come to us in the beauty of darkness and of light. Bring justice and reconciliation to communities divided by oppressions and misuse of power. Guide us to speak holy words of advocacy and truth. Help us to honor your image in one another. Hear us, O God.
- C: Your mercy is great.**
- A: You turn our mourning into joy. We give thanks for those who have died in faith. With all the saints, give us our inheritance in Christ. In the fullness of time, gather us all together in your mercy. Hear us, O God.
- C: Your mercy is great.**
- P: God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.
- C: Amen.**

## PEACE

- P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.
- C: And also with you.**
- P: Let us greet one another with a sign of God's peace.  
*The congregation is invited to greet one another with a gesture of peace (hand shake or hug) using these or similar words – God's peace be with you.*

## OFFERING

### SOLO

## OFFERTORY RESPONSE

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

- A: Gracious God, you came to us as one unknown, bringing joy and salvation to the earth. Nourish us at your banquet table, that with all who welcome your birth we may proclaim your peace, revealed in Jesus Christ, our Savior
- C: Amen**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

**P:** Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**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.**

## **DISTRIBUTION**

We welcome you to the Lord's Table to share the Sacrament of Holy Communion with us. Holy Communion is served with both red wine and white grape juice. It is your choice to receive either one.

Empty cups may be placed in the bowl to the left or right as you return to your seat.

## **COMMUNION**

### **COMMUNION BLESSING**

**P:** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**C:** **Amen**

## **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**A:** We give thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us from your very self with the body and blood of Christ. Through this mystery, send us forth to proclaim your promise to a world in need, through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**C:** **Amen**

## **BLESSING**

**P:** The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

**C:** **Amen**

## **LIGHTING OF CANDLES**

## **SENDING HYMN**

## **POSTLUDE**

## **DISMISSAL**

**A:** Go in peace. Share the good news.

**C:** **Thanks be to God.**

### **Truth beyond the Facts**

There are many questions today about facts. Who do we trust to give us the facts? What sources and individuals are reliable? Social media can be a great tool for sharing, but it has also become a means of spreading misinformation, false beliefs, and bad advice. Many people today are suspicious of what some claim to be the facts.

Even if we have the right facts, we might not have something more important: the truth. Facts can be a partial representation of the truth. Facts might tell us that it is sunny and warm this morning, but the weather forecast might say thunderstorms are coming in the afternoon. The latter statement is truth. Truth is the larger reality that smaller facts don't capture, and sometimes contradict.

John tells us that Jesus is God's Word, full of grace and truth. In Jesus we get the full truth of God, not merely the facts. What are the facts we might see? We are all sinful and have strayed from God's just and loving ways. The world is a mess. Left to our own ways, we are surely lost. These are the facts, as if we woke up to a dangerous thunderstorm but don't know what the weather forecast is after that. Jesus is the fuller truth that in spite of the stormy mess of the world and our individual lives, God's grace is a gift to us in Christ. There is a blue sky and a safe calm that is ours through divine love.

Some of us live with messages that tell us we are not the right kind of person to receive God's grace because of our past mistakes, or ethnicity, or gender identity, or level of education, or poverty. The truth of Jesus Christ tells us we are children of God. "From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace" (John 1:16). This is the truth that gives us life.