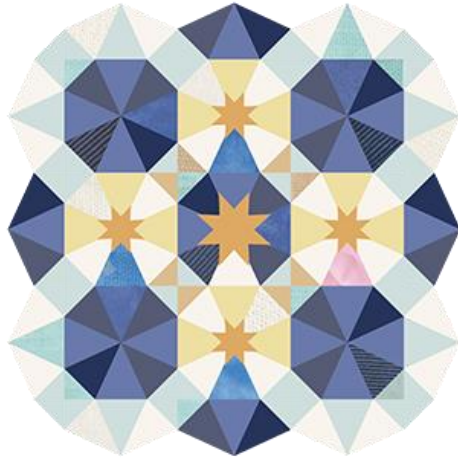


# YOU ARE A BLESSING

DECEMBER 22, 2024  
WITH HOLY COMMUNION  
10:00 AM



**WORDS**  
FOR THE **BEGINNING**

SHEPHERD OF THE MOUNTAINS LUTHERAN CHURCH  
PARK CITY, UTAH



## SHEPHERD OF THE MOUNTAINS

LUTHERAN CHURCH – PARK CITY, UTAH

### **WHEN WE SAY ALL ARE WELCOME, WE REALLY MEAN IT!**

As all people are created in the image of God, we embrace diversity in our congregation and community, and we affirm the dignity and worth of every person.

We honor the guiding principle that discrimination is incompatible with Christ's unconditional love and we are committed to racial equity.

We boldly embrace, love, celebrate and welcome persons of all faith backgrounds, races, ethnicities, cultures, ages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.

Everyone has a place here.

**All are Welcome!**

*We encourage the participation of children in our worship. Drawing materials and children's bulletins are available at the back of the sanctuary above the basket of crayons. There are spaces available among the chairs for children who need to move!*

*Hearing Assistant Devices are available in the narthex.  
Please ask an usher if you need one.*

***Please take a moment and silence your cell phones***

# CALL TO WORSHIP

## PRELUDE and WELCOME

### CALL TO WORSHIP

In this weary world,

**we sing of joy.**

In this fragile world,

**we lift each other up.**

In this beautiful world,

**we look for God.**

In this tender world,

**we hold onto hope.**

This is the invitation of faith.

So in this time of worship,

may we sing, lift up, look for, and hold onto our with-us  
God.

**With hope in our hearts, amen!**

### CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY | LOVE

In a weary and worn world,

how do we begin again?

Where do we start?

**Let us begin with tenderness.**

**Let us begin with our hearts on our sleeve.**

**Let us begin from a place of vulnerability  
and hope.**

**Let us begin with love.**

Yes, let us start with love.

**Today we light the candles of hope,  
peace, joy, and love.**

May the warmth of these lights be our  
cornerstone.

May the truth in these lights help us  
begin again.

### ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

*“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”*

*ELW 257*

*vv 1-4*

### CALL TO CONFESSION

Friends,

Hope can feel slippery...

So trusting that God’s grace does not let us go, join me in  
the prayer of confession:

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God,

You paint pictures of what could be,

**but we declare those visions impossible.**

You speak of the lion lying down with the lamb,

**but we spout skepticism and uncertainty.**

You dream of a more just day,

**but we poke holes in the plan, unable to fathom that  
horizon.**

Forgive us for losing sight of hope.

**Forgive us for assuming that what we see is all there is.**

Open up our hearts to see the world as you see it.

**Open up our hearts to risk hope, to dream dreams,  
and to not be afraid of either.**

**With gratitude we pray, amen.**

## **WORDS OF FORGIVENESS**

Friends,

No matter what you hold onto,  
and no matter what you let slip through your hands,  
God is holding onto you.

That good news will never change.

So hear and believe the good news of the Gospel:  
Today is a new day. Today, we have reason to hope.  
Today, we are forgiven.

And the same will be true tomorrow.

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

Amen.

## **GATHERING SONG**

**“Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers”**

**ELW 244**

## **PRAYERS FOR ILLUMINATION**

Holy God,

The stories of Advent are stories many of us have heard  
before.

We’ve arranged the nativity scenes.

We’ve read the children’s books.

We’ve seen the movies.

We’ve sung the songs.

But as we come to your scripture this morning,  
we pray: help us begin again.

Clear the distractions from our minds.

Center us in this space.

Move through the protective barriers we surround  
ourselves with

and speak to us here and now.

We are listening. We are hopeful. Amen.

# WORD

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

### READING

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to St. Mathew, the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*After the Gospel is read,*

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### SERMON

#### HYMN OF THE DAY

**"Hark the Herald Angels Sing"**

**ELW 270**

#### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe in a God who gives us reason to hope,  
a God who fills our nights with stars,  
who follows winter with spring,  
who dwells with and among us.**

**We believe that this God has dreams for creation,  
dreams of justice like a mighty stream  
and swords that will be beaten into plowshares.  
Therefore, we push cynicism aside.**

**We risk vulnerability.**

**We hold onto hope,**

**and we declare:**

**“My soul magnifies the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”**

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

*The assisting minister invites the assembly into prayer, saying,*

Holy God,

We come to you today feeling tenderhearted.

Lord in your mercy,

**Receive our prayer.**

*The pastor concludes the prayers:*

All this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## **PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you!**

# **MEAL**

## **OFFERING**

*The offering is received as the Lord's table is prepared.*

## **SPECIAL MUSICAL NUMBER – Keera Ryan**

**“Where Shepherds Lately Knelt”**

*Cash, check and online donations are all welcome  
Thank you for your generosity!*



Scan to donate online via Tithe.ly

## OFFERING PRAYER

### THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

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 our thanks and praise.**

### PREFACE

God of new beginnings, ...

### WORDS OF INSTITUTION

### LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven,**

**hallowed be your name,**

**your kingdom come,**

**your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins**

**as we forgive those who sin against us.**



**Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

## **DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION**

*All are welcome to come forward for Holy Communion in this church. You do not need to be Lutheran; you do not need to be a member of Shepherd of the Mountains; you do not need to worry about whether you commune in your own parish. Those communing may eat the wafer and drink from individual cups found on the communion tray (red wine) or (white grape juice). Please indicate to the Pastor if Gluten-free wafers are preferred. Those who do not desire the Sacrament may come forward, arms crossed, for a blessing.*

*When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say:*

*The body of Christ, given for you.*

*The blood of Christ, shed for you.*

*and each person may respond:*

**Amen.**

## **BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION**

*The Pastor offers a blessing for the congregation.*

*The people respond:*

**Amen.**

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Nourishing God,

Sometimes we tell ourselves that too much has  
taken place to begin again.

We think the world is too far gone.

We think we have made too many mistakes.

We tell ourselves that we couldn't possibly begin again.

But then we come to this Table and we get a glimpse of your kingdom. We come to this Table and all are welcomed, all are seen, all are fed. And just like that, we have hope.

Just like that, we begin again.

Thank you for the gift of this fresh start.

Thank you for planting hope deep in our bones.

Thank you for meeting us in ordinary bread and juice to remind us that it's never too late to build your kingdom here.

We are grateful.

We are *so* grateful.

**Amen.**

## SENDING

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

### BENEDICTION

As you leave this place,  
may you have the wisdom to lean on one other.  
May you have the courage to hold onto hope,  
the compassion to do the good that is yours to do,  
and the confidence to trust that God sees you as a  
blessing. For in a world full of dead ends,  
Advent invites us to begin again.  
So start here.  
Start now.  
Start with love and begin again.

In the name of Christ,  
our new beginning,  
go in peace.  
**Amen.**

**SENDING SONG**  
**“Joy to the World”**

**ELW 267**

**SENDING**

Go in peace. Encourage one another in Christ.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**



## Shepherd of the Mountains Lutheran Church

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Contact Pastor Derek Fossey: [pastor@shepherdofthemountains.org](mailto:pastor@shepherdofthemountains.org)

### **SHEPHERD OF THE MOUNTAINS MISSION STATEMENT**

*With open doors, minds, and hearts, we invite all to experience the joy of God's love through worship, community, and service.”*



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