



**Fourth Sunday in Advent
Holy Communion
December 21, 2025: 9:30 a.m.**

**Shalom Lutheran Church, ELCA
681 Voyager Drive — Alexandria, MN 56308
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“We believe God is calling us to invite people into a deeper relationship with Christ, that they may discover true peace and be prepared to follow Him in compassionate service”

GATHERING

INVITATION TO WORSHIP: "Emmanuel" Love & the Outcome
ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Welcome and Introduction

MC: Merry Christmas... a little early...and welcome to the Christmas Interactive Family Worship Service....At this time, please stand as you are able and join in the call to worship.

Call to Worship

MC: Come, holy people, called by God, let us follow the way prepared for us.

C: Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth among those who please God.

MC: Once again the world is surprised at a manger, as the glory of God surpasses what is expected.

C: Let us go to Bethlehem to see what God has made known to us.

MC: There in Bethlehem and here today at Shalom, we are reminded anew of the wonder of God's ways.

C: Let us glorify and praise God for all that we have seen and heard!

Prayer of the Day

MC: Please join me in the prayer of the day. Amazing God,

C: on this night so long ago, You gathered a group of unlikely outsiders—Mary, Joseph, shepherds, and others to be part of a great miracle: the birth of Jesus, our Savior. Today You have sought us out and brought us to the manger. You have interrupted our routines with Your Good News. You have gathered this unlikely assortment of folk to become a holy people, a community of faith. We want to respond. Show us how. Amen.

The congregation may be seated.

Narrator: In the Genesis story, we hear that God created the world with language. God *said*, "Let there be light." God *said*, "Let there be night and day." God *said*, "It is good." Then, in the first chapter in the Gospel of John, we hear how this language, the Word, is with God and Jesus.

Reading: John 1:1-4, 9 –13, 18b (Reader #1)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people....

The true light, which helps everyone to see, was coming into the world. Jesus was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. It is Jesus, a child of God, who by being close to the Father's heart, has made God known.

Candle Lighting Song: "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"

ELW 240

Lighting of the Advent candles vv. 1-4



- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954

Music: TIF IN VELDELE, Yiddish folk tune

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Narrator: In the 1st chapter of the Gospel of Luke, we learn of Mary's willingness to work with God even though what is being asked of her will not be easy. Being pregnant when not married is against the rules where and when she lives. There are some very hard consequences for breaking these rules – the worst consequence being death.

Reading: Luke 1:26 – 38 (Reader #2)

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, the messenger of God, Gabriel, was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to an unmarried woman engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The young woman's name was Mary. And Gabriel said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But Mary was much perplexed by his words and wondered what sort of greeting this might be. Gabriel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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 ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary asked, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And 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. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the messenger of God departed from her.

Song: "Annunciation" from *Holden Evening Prayer*

An angel went from God to a town called Nazareth to a woman whose name was Mary.

The angel said to her, "Rejoice, O highly favored, for God is with you.

You shall bear a child, and his name shall be Jesus, the Chosen One of God Most High."

And Mary said, "I am the servant of my God, I live to do your will."

Narrator: The place of Jesus' birth is in Bethlehem, a small town a few miles south of Jerusalem. But Bethlehem was not Joseph or Mary's hometown. They had to go to Bethlehem because Caesar Augustus had made a law that everyone must be counted in the towns where their great-great grandparents (or ancestors) had been born. This was a long trip to travel by foot (about 60 miles or 3 days time). It would've been even more difficult since Mary was pregnant. When Mary and Joseph finally made it to Bethlehem, the hotel was already filled with people and there was no place for Mary and Joseph to stay. But there was a stable, where the animals rested, that Mary and Joseph were allowed to rest in as well.

Song: “O Little Town of Bethlehem” vv. 1 & 2 *ELW* 279

Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus enter sanctuary and take seats in the chancel.

Verse 1

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Verse 2

For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!

Narrator: In this stable, with only Joseph to help her, Mary gave birth to a baby boy. She wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger. Mary and Joseph named him Jesus.

Song: “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” *ELW* 276

Verse 1

Infant holy, infant lowly,
for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, angels singing,
bells are ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child is Lord of all!

Verse 2

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping
vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story,
tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,
praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the child was born for you!
Christ the child was born for you!

Star moves behind Mary and Joseph.

Narrator: Now, it was night time and in the fields nearby, shepherds were watching their flocks. Then an angel stood before the shepherds and the glory of the Lord shone around all of them. And the shepherds were terrified. But the angel of the Lord said to them: Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." Immediately after the angel stopped speaking, there were suddenly many angels praising God and saying “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors.”

Song: “Angels We Have Heard on High” *ELW* 289

Verse 1

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.

Continued on next page

Verse 2

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

Refrain**Verse 3**

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

Refrain

All angels surround the baby Jesus.

Narrator: Then the angels left the shepherds and the shepherds took a deep breath (or maybe five or six deep breaths). Then they looked at each other and said: "We better go see this baby!"

Song: "He Came Down" *ELW* 253

Verse 1

He came down that we may have love;
he came down that we may have love;
he came down that we may have love;
hallelujah forevermore.

Verse 2

He came down that we may have light;
he came down that we may have light;
he came down that we may have light;
hallelujah forevermore.

Verse 3

He came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have peace;
hallelujah forevermore.

Verse 4

He came down that we may have joy;
he came down that we may have joy;
he came down that we may have joy;
hallelujah forevermore.

All shepherds move to front during singing.

Narrator: So this stable that Mary, Joseph and Jesus were staying was, as you heard earlier, home to some of the animals of the village. And these animals must've been pretty curious as to what a baby was doing in their feeding trough. If animals have thoughts, some of them might have sounded like this, "Hey this baby sure is cute, but where did our dinner go!?" and "What are all these humans doing in our home! Let's smell them and find out!" So it's quite likely that these animals may have gathered around Mary, Joseph, Jesus and the shepherds for a closer look.

Song: "The Friendly Beasts"

All animals move to front during singing.

Verse 1

Jesus our savior kind and good
Was humbly born in a stable of wood
And the friendly beasts around Him stood
Jesus our savior kind and good

Verse 2

"I" said the donkey shaggy and brown
"I carried your mother up hill and down
I carried your mother to Bethlehem town"
"I" said the donkey shaggy and brown

Verse 3

"I" said the cow all white and red
"I gave you my manger for a bed
I gave my hay to pillow your head
"I" said the cow all white and red

Verse 4

"I" said the sheep with the curly horn
"I gave you my wool for a blanket warm
You wore my coat on that Christmas morn
"I" said the sheep with the curly horn

Continued on next page

Verse 5

Thus every beast remembering it well
In the stable dark were glad to tell
Of the gifts they gave Emmanuel
the gifts they gave Emmanuel

Narrator: Now when the shepherds saw Mary, Joseph and Jesus in the stable, and saw that what the angel had said to them was true, they went out and made it known to whomever they met. Which means it's very possible that some of the townspeople went to the stable that very night to see and maybe even help Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus because of what the shepherds had told them.

Song: "Go Tell It on the Mountain" *ELW 290*
All townspeople move to front during singing.

Refrain

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

Verse 1

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.

Refrain

Verse 2

The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo, above the earth
Range out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth.

Refrain

Verse 3

Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.

Refrain

Closing Statement

MC: Well look at us! What a full and busy stable we are! In all this busyness and moving around, it is possible to forget why we came here in the first place. So, I remind us in this season that we celebrate and remember the birth of Jesus not just because he was born, but because of the life that Jesus lived. The baby-Jesus grew into an adult-Jesus, an adult who chose to live God's way, all the time, even to the point of giving his life for us.

Continued on next page

It is exciting that Jesus was born in a manger. But what is even *more* exciting is that Jesus was born of a mother, just like us, and grew up, just like us. Then, when he was all grown up, he chose to live God's way, and said to us, "You, too, are children of my Father. Follow me and I'll show you how to live."

This is the Good News today, and why we celebrate Christmas, because Christmas reminds us that Jesus has chosen us as his brothers and sisters, children of the same heavenly Father. So let us go from here today, giving thanks to God for Jesus and reminding others that the gift of Jesus is the new life we have in him. Hallelujah! Amen!

Song: "Joy to the World" *ELW 267*
Everybody leaves the front and makes a circle around the sanctuary while singing.

Verse 1

Joy to the world. The Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Verse 2

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Verse 3

No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

Verse 4

He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love, and wonders, and wonders of his love.

ALL: Merry Christmas, Everybody!

OFFERING

Offering baskets will be passed. If you prefer to give digitally, you can scan the QR code to give. White cards to place in the plate are available in the guest pad for those who give digitally.



MUSICAL OFFERING: "His Name Is Wonderful" Chris Tomlin

The congregation may stand.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A: 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.
C: Amen.

MEAL

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.
C: And also with you.
P: Lift up your hearts.
C: We lift them to the Lord.
P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P: In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

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

**C: 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.**

COMMUNION INVITATION

P: God feeds us with tender mercy.
Come to the table.

The congregation may be seated.

LAMB OF GOD: McKinney

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
Have mercy on us,
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
Have mercy on us,
Grant us Peace, grant us peace,
Oh, Lamb of God grant us peace.

COMMUNION SONG: "I Wonder As I Wander"**Verse 1**

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die
For poor ord'nr'y people like you and like I.
I wonder as I wonder, out under the sky.

Verse 2

When Mary birthed Jesus, all in a cow's stall,
Came wise men and farmers and shepherds and all,
And high from the heavens a star's light did fall;
The promise of the ages it then did recall.

Verse 3

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,
A star in the sky or a bird on the wing,
Or all of God's angels in heav'n for to sing,
He surely could have it, 'cause he was the king.

Verse 4

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die
For poor ord'nr'y people like you and like I.
I wonder as I wonder, out under the sky.

COMMUNION SONG: "The First Noel"**Verse 1**

The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Cont'd on next page

Refrain

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!
Born is the King of Israel.

Verse 2

They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.

Refrain**Verse 3**

And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.

Refrain**Verse 4**

This star drew near to the northwest,
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
and there it did both stop and stay
right over the place where Jesus lay.

Refrain**Verse 5**

Then entered in those wise men three,
full rev'rently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.

Refrain**BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION**

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

C: Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A: 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.

C: Amen.

BENEDICTION

P: Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and
forever.

C: Amen.

DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Prepare Emmanuel's way.

C: Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

"Go Tell It On The Mountain" Zach Williams

SHALOM LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Week of December 21, 2025

Church Office Hours: M-F 8:00 am—12:00 pm

Welcome to our Shalom gathering! All God's children are welcome here, especially our guests, whoever you are or wherever you come from. We invite you to sign the guest pad in your row and hope you'll join us for refreshments after worship in the Community Room. If you have any questions about Shalom or how we worship, please ask our greeters and ushers (wearing name tags). You may also contact Pastor David. If you can't catch him after worship, you may call the office at (320) 762-8461 or email him at pastor@shalomlutheran.org.

COMMUNION: Lutherans believe that Christ is truly present in Holy Communion. We trust Jesus when he says that it is his body and blood, given and shed for us for the forgiveness of sins. All baptized Christians who trust these words of promise are welcome to receive communion today. Children under the guidance of their parents or caregivers may also receive. Those who do not receive may come forward with arms crossed over their chest for a blessing. To receive communion, come forward to receive the bread from the pastor. Gluten-free bread is also available in small containers by the individual communion cups. You may take a cup from the tray by the pastor, then move to either the wine or grape juice chalice. The wine chalice is first, the grape juice chalice is second. Wine or grape juice will be poured into your cup. There will be a basket for used cups. Those who cannot come forward for communion are asked to inform the ushers so that communion may be brought to them.

OBA 25TH ANNUAL APPEAL UPDATE: Donations have been coming in steadily to reach our goal of \$5,000 for the School Lunch Program. So far the OBA office has received close to \$3,500. That includes a generous \$500 from Shalom's WELCA. Thank you!

A CHRISTMAS EVE candlelight service of lessons and carols, including meditations from a Christmas sermon by Martin Luther, will be held at 4:30 p.m. Come welcome the Christ Child with us!

PASTOR DAVID will be out of the office Dec. 29-Jan. 4. If you need pastoral assistance, please contact the church office at (320) 762-8641 or Pr. Kathryn Rothman at (320) 760-6439.

OFFERING ENVELOPES are in your mailbox, please let me know if you need a box or if you don't need one please turn it in to the office.

CHRISTMAS SEASON OPPORTUNITIES: We are coming into the Christmas season. That means a few different things.

1. We will be doing the same Christmas program that we did last year that everyone loved so much. Come join us on 12/21, grab a costume and immerse yourself in the story of the birth of Jesus Christ!
2. Following the Christmas program, during coffee hour, we will be holding our annual youth bake sale. Come support the youth and get some delicious goodies! Like we have in years past, we will give folks the option to contribute baked goods to this years bake sale. If you have too many baked goods an nowhere to bring them for the holidays, you can bring them to Shalom for the youth bake sale.

THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE is asking ALL members of staff and of the congregation to please aid in the snow removal of the walkway at Shalom, specifically door to door. If you have a moment, if you are passing by, please swing in and push the snow off. If everyone helps it will take the load off the couple guys that have been doing the brunt of it last year and this year thus far....both of which work full time and cannot always be pulled away. If you are walking on it, push it. It makes it that much harder to push if several walkers pass through it. The shovel and salt are in the entry. Thank you.

FLOWERS: Envelopes are available in the narthex to donate to the flower fund for Poinsettias until December 21.

HOSPITALITY servers for Dec 28 are the Freier/ Malvin Family.

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS

Family of *Phyllis Strand, *John & Carrie Carlberg, *Bob Hildebrandt, *Dave & Mary Owen, *Gerry Kingsburg, Bill Malvin (Dave Malvin's Father), *Delores Martin, *Evie Raguse, *Charles & Jeanne Tanksley, Teri Market, *Jeanette Priebe, *Bonnie Anderson, *Dave Burbank, Joan Searles (Pastor David's aunt), *Skeeter Kingsburg, Ben DeLong (brother of Chrissy Oachs) Rod Miller (Geri's Brother). *Rol Halvorson. **Shalom member*

Jan/25—Nov/25 Activity

<u>Revenues</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Surpl/(Deficit)</u>	
\$ 57,759	\$ 72,463	\$ (14,704)	Building Fund
\$ 228,828	\$ 244,084	\$ (15,256)	General Fund

The annual General/Bldg Funds budget was approved with a budget of Offerings equal to the congregation approved expenses. Current General/Bldg fund cash balance is \$104,662.

Shared Ministry

<u>Shared Ministry</u>	<u>12-21-25</u>	<u>12-28-25</u>
Acolyte	Olivia Flaten	Rhe'von Richmond
Assisting Minister	Cami Pexsa	Carol Hedlund
Communion Assist	Grant Pexsa	Dean Kliewer
Communion Assist	Dave Morgan	Catherine Kliewer
Greeters	Pam McCormick	Eric Holthusen
Greeters	Amy Schlosser	Kala Holthusen
Lector	Sarah Fleener	Brian Casavan
Musicians		
Proclaim/FB Live	CJ/Kim/Julie	CJ/Kim/Julie
Ushers	Renae Hills	Dave Malvin
Ushers	Sue Engstrom	Sherri Endreson
Counters	Derek Navratil	Craig Neubarth
Counters	Dave Burbank	Al Anderson

THIS WEEK AT SHALOM

Sunday	12-21	9:30 am 10:30 am	Worship in-person or online Hospitality Christmas Program
Tuesday	12-23	7:30 am 9:00 am 5:00 pm 6:00 pm 6:30 pm	Men's Bible Study at Common Ground Dartball Gospel of Uke Newcomers Runestone Chorus
Wednesday	12-24	4:30 pm	Christmas Eve Service
Thursday	12-25	8:00-12:00	Christmas Day: Office Closed
Sunday	12-28	9:30 am 10:30 am	Worship in-person or online Hospitality