

Christmas 2

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church
Orinda, California
January 4, 2026



Welcome to Worship with Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, whether you worship with us in-person or online (on Facebook Live or archived at www.holyshepherd.org.) May you know God's grace as we worship.

Know that You Are Welcome! We share in Holy Communion during the context of this morning's service. This is the table of the Lord. Jesus is the host and we are his guests. Jesus welcomes everyone to come and eat and be nourished, fed and forgiven. Come and eat and live!

Offerings are an Act of Worship! Offerings are one way we express both our gratitude for God's wondrous love and our commitment to for work of ministry. To support our work electronically, visit www.holyshepherd.org and utilize Givelify, our online giving platform.

▲ indicates that you are invited to stand as you are able

GATHERING MUSIC HOME BY ANOTHER WAY
Lyrics and Music by James Taylor

▲ A WORD FOR THOSE WHO GATHER

L: As we gather at the Christmas manger, let's recognize why it is that we stand so in need of the great news of this season — the news of the Christ-Child's birth. For Jesus comes as the light of the world

P: **But we've focused on the darkness that surrounds and overwhelms us, that frightens and numbs us.**

L: Jesus comes as the light of the world

P: **But we've used artificial lights to try and eliminate the darkness in our lives.**

L: Jesus comes as the light of the world

P: **But we've tried to deny the power of the darkness by pretending that it isn't there.**

L: Forgive us, O God, for these our actions of failure and our failures to act.

P: **Forgive us, O God, for putting our trust in ourselves rather than You.**

L: People of God, hear the good news! God has come to us as a light in the darkness. In the light of Christ we find forgiveness for our past, strength for our present and hope for our future. In and through this One, we have been enabled to live anew. Thanks be to God!

▲ **GATHERING SONG** WE THREE KINGS
Lyrics and Music by John Henry Hopkins / WOV #646

**We three kings of Orient are;
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.**

Refrain:

**O star of wonder, star of night!
Star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light!**

**Born a King on Bethlehem's plain
Gold I bring to crown Him again,
King forever, ceasing never,
Over us all to reign.** (Refrain)

**Frankincense to offer have I;
Incense owns a Deity nigh;
Prayer and praising, gladly raising,
Worshipping God Most High.** (Refrain)

**Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.** (Refrain)

**Glorious now behold Him arise;
King and God and Sacrifice;
Heav'n sing alleluia:
Alleluia the earth replies.** (Refrain)

▲ AN EPIPHANY LITANY

L: The news of Christmas – that Good News of great joy – isn't just for a day or a season.

P: **It is news that has changed our world and changes our lives forever!**

L: All we can do is give thanks, over and over.

P: **For unto us is born, in the city of David, a savior, who is Christ the Lord, Emmanuel, God with us.**

L: He will be the shepherd of our lives.

P: **He will lead us to springs of living water.**

L: He will be our great physician.

P: **He is the One who comes to make us whole.**

L: He will reveal to us our true selves.

P: **He is the One who will make us children of God.**

L: For unto us is born, in the city of David, a savior, who is Christ the Lord, Emmanuel, God with us.

P: **This is news that has changed our world and changes our lives forever!**

L: So let us pray:

P: **Lord Jesus, may your light shine our way, as it once guided the steps of the magi: that we too may be led into your presence and worship you, for you are the Lord of nations and the Savior of humankind; to whom be glory for ever. Amen!**

THE LESSON

John 1:35-51

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to

know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

KIDTALK

Pastor John Valentine

THE SONG OF THE DAY

THE FIRST NOEL

Traditional English Christmas Carol / ELW #300

***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.***

Refrain: ***Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!
Born is the King of Israel.***

***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]

***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]

***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]

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

THE SERMON

Pastor John Valentine

▲ WORDS TO LIVE BY

based on Philippians 2

As people of God, we find our hope and salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

THE OFFERTORY

FOLLOW THE STAR

Lyrics and Music by Tom Henry and David Mohr

THE PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

We gather our prayers, using the prayer refrain "God, in your mercy, hear our prayer."

▲ THE COMMUNION LITANY

L: Lord Jesus, you came to us as a tiny Baby born in danger and discomfort. You grew into a Man whom the world can never forget. You offered up your body and blood for the sake of our broken lives and our broken world. So come to us now in this bread and this wine. Unite us and strengthen us by your presence and through your Word, that we might be your faithful children in this world.

P: **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.**

L: 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.

HOLY COMMUNION

As we share the gift of Holy Communion, we invite you to come down the center aisle to receive the bread and wine that bear the Promise of Christmas. After consuming the elements, please deposit your empty cup in the basket and return to your seat by the side aisle. During Holy Communion, please join in the following songs:

AWAY IN A MANGER

Lyrics Trad. American / Music by J.R. Murray / ELW 277

*Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.*

*The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.*

*Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care
And fit us for heaven to live with you there.*

OH HOLY NIGHT

Lyrics by Placide Cappeau / Music by Adolphe Adam

*O holy night! the stars are brightly shining;
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope— the weary soul rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night, O holy night, O night divine!*

*Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His Gospel is peace.
Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother,
And in His name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we;
Let all within us praise His holy name.
Christ is the Lord! O praise His name forever!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!*

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

L: Let us pray ... We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

P: **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

▲ THE BENEDICTION

L: May the wisemen's starlight guide you on your journey. May the angels' chorus ring in your ears. May the humble trust of Mary fill your heart. And may

the promise that God is with us comfort you every step of the way.

P: **Amen!**

▲ **SENDING SONG**

JOY TO THE WORLD

Lyrics by Isaac Watts / Music by Lowell Mason / ELW #267

*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.*

*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.*

*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.*

*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, wonders of his love.*

▲ **THE CHARGE**

L: Go in peace, to love God by serving your neighbor!

P: **Thanks be to God!**

SENDING MUSIC

JOY TO THE WORLD (Reprise)

Tom Henry – Vocalist, Guitarist and Creative Director
Bethany Valentine – Vocalist
Diana Riveness Young — Vocalist
Elizabeth Humphrey — Vocalist
Marci Bauer – Vocalist
Bob Schmalz – Vocalist
Steve Swanback – Vocalist
Pastor John Valentine – Vocalist
Marc Levine – Pianist

Interested in reading ahead as we journey through the Gospel according to John this Epiphany season?
Next week's text is John 2:1-11

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