

Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church-E.L.C.A.



Christmas Eve Worship Service

Wednesday, December 24th, 2025 - 4:00 PM

Theme: The Power of Yes

In this liminal time, there are so many reasons to not say yes. Even the small yeses in our daily lives feel riskier somehow. Decisions about where we put our money, our time, our energy, our confidence, and our faith feel more important than ever during these volatile times. We come from a history of people who said yes. Throughout the story of the people of God, brave and faithful, everyday people said yes to God. In Advent, these yeses are even more significant. What does it take to get to yes? Why does it matter? Why does it matter that we believe this? This is a story that we tell, that isn't just on a page or in ancient tales, but one that lives in our bones, and calls to us to say our own yes when we are called into what God is doing now.

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Christmas Eve Worship Service

Wednesday, December 24th, 2025

Ministers:

You, All Members of G.A.

Pastor:

Jaime Decker

Prelude Music & Welcome/Announcements

Call to Worship

P: Blessed be the Holy Trinity, + one God, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved. **C: Amen**

CANDLE-LIGHTING (GA Council)

We light the Christ candle to remember Jesus, the Light of the World.

We light the Christ candle wondering how love could come so small, so fragile, so human.

We light the Christ candle to say YES to the invitation to let this light rekindle our faith and renew our wonder.

We light the Christ candle to remind us that Christ, who dwells among us, invites us to say YES, again and again, to walk in love, and to shine with hope for all the world.

CANDLE LIGHTING HYMN

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

ELW #276

Call to Confession

Did you know that a version of the phrase, "Be not afraid" is written in scripture as many as 365 times? That's one for every day. God says, "Be not afraid." The angels say, "Be not afraid." Over and over again, we are told to not be afraid. Friends, that sentiment carries us into this moment of prayer. During the prayer of confession we are honest with God about the mess of our lives and we are met with God's grace. God does not meet us with anger. God does not hold a grudge. God does not keep score. Instead, God wraps us in mercy and holds us in love. So be not afraid, and join me in the prayer of confession.

Prayer of Confession

L: Loving Christ, **C: Scripture tells us that you were born in a stable because there was no room in the inn. There was no room in the inn for a woman in need, no room in the inn for an innocent baby. Forgive us. We should have learned our lesson by now, but just as others turned their backs on you, we continue to turn our backs on one another. Teach us how to make room for one another. Teach us how to make room for you. Carve out space in our hearts to love as you love, for we do not want to build hostility here. We want to build your promised day. Guide us forward. With hope and honesty we pray, amen.**

Words of Forgiveness

L: Friends, the angels say, "Be not afraid," but they also say, "Unto you a child is born." Christ is born for you. Christ walked this earth for you. Christ forgives you. That's what love does. It makes room. It offers grace. It learns your name. So repeat these words of hope after me:

L: Unto us a child is born. **C: Unto us a child is born.**

L: Unto us grace is given. **C: Unto us grace is given.**

L: May this good news change the very fabric of our lives.

C: Christ has made room for all of us. Amen.

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

Lord God, The shepherds were so afraid, and sometimes we are, too. Make our curiosity greater than our fear, and our faith greater than our doubts, Amen.

Word

First Reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined. ³ You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴ For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶ For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

R: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Hymn

O Little Town Of Bethlehem

ELW #279 (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.

Second Reading

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

R: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Hymn

Away In A Manger

ELW #277 (Verse 1)

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

Third Reading

Luke 2:8-14

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

R: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Hymn

Angels We Have Heard On High

ELW #289

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains, and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains. Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong? What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song? Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing; come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King. Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Fourth Reading

Luke 2:15-20

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."

¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

R: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Hymn

Go Tell It On The Mountain

ELW#290

Refrain : Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere; go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is Born!

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

The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo! above the earth rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. [Refrain]

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

Message

Prayer of the People

Offering

Ways To Give Offering: In Person, Venmo and Online www.galutheranchurch.org



*Because you give...
we worship, fellowship, learn, serve and grow.
Thank you for your generosity!*

Offering Hymn

What Child Is This

ELW #296

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping? This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding? Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you; hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant king, to own him. The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him. Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby; joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

Offering Prayer

God of every good gift, We offer what we have back to you, knowing that your son is the greatest gift we will ever receive. Grant us glad and generous hearts, ever and always, Amen.

Meal

Eucharistic Prayer/Words of Institution

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

***Invitation to Communion**

P: At this table, Christ invites us to step into God's power of Yes—to say Yes to hope stronger than despair, Yes to mercy wider than our mistakes, Yes to a Savior who meets us in bread and cup. Come, you who are weary. Come, you who rejoice. Come, you who are still searching. Your presence here is already a Yes. Come to the table of grace where the Power of God's Yes meets our open hands.

Distribution Hymns

It Came Upon A Midnight Clear

ELW #282

I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve

ELW #271

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

ELW #270

Post Communion Blessing

Post Communion Prayer

L: Christ Jesus, You have fed us with love incarnate, and we are utterly changed. Send us forth from this meal to be forces for change in this world, as we find the YES within each of us, **C: Amen.**

(Dim Lights) Light Candles

Fifth Reading

John 1:1-9

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

R: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Hymn

Silent Night, Holy Night!

ELW #281

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright round yon virgin mother and child. Holy infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight; glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing, alleluia! Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light radiant beams from your holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

Sending

BLESSING

May God bless you with courage, as you seek the YES within you; May Christ be born again in every risk you take for the sake of the world; And may the Holy Spirit remind you, again and again, that you are never alone, and that you are loved beyond measure. **C: Amen.**

(Turn up Lights) Extinguish Candles

Hymn

Joy To The World

ELW #267

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king; let every heart prepare him room and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and heaven 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.

***Dismissal**

P: Go in peace, Live in Hope

C: and Share the Good News of God's Word and serve the community and the world.

Thanks be to God.

*Postlude

Mission Statement of Gustaf Lutheran Church (Adopted in 2022)

To share the Good News of God's Word and to serve the community and the world.

Matthew 22:39 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name
of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

+++++

We celebrate weekly Holy Communion. We welcome all who believe in the Risen Christ and who find in the sacrament our Lord's real presence for the forgiveness of sins and the renewal of life. If you receive communion in your home congregation, you are invited to receive it here at G.A. Red wine and white grape juice will be offered to you in Christ's name. You may choose your preference. If you are unable to receive wheat bread, or wine, be sure that in a single element you receive the Presence and all the gifts of the sacrament.

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A Thrill of Hope: Advent in a Box Volume 2 Written by: Nate Crary & Rev. Miriam Samuelson Roberts

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