

**FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:7-14** [not printed]

*or Sirach 24:1-12* [not printed]

**Psalm 147:12-20**

*or Wisdom 10:15-21*

**SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:3-14**

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.

**GOSPEL: John 1:[1-9] 10-18**

[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

*continued*

## Beyond Boundaries

One difficulty with the Gospel of John as we read it in our own context is grappling with passages that draw boundaries between who is “in” and who is “out.” The gospel sometimes edges toward contempt, or at least uncharity, for those who reject Jesus’ identity and message. Historically, this gospel has been used to perpetuate anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic rhetoric, so we need to approach it with care and love.

The verses in our reading today reflect a concern with Jesus’ identity and the boundaries between those who do and those who do not accept him. Verses 10 and 11 refer to the ignorance and rejection Jesus faces on earth. The passage continues by lifting up the benefits of choosing to receive and follow Jesus: the power to become children of God (as Jesus himself is a child of God).

Because Jesus, the Word made flesh, has come to earth to reveal the grace, truth, and glory of God—a God who pours out an abundance: “grace upon grace”! (John 1:16)—we read today’s passage not as guidance about who gets cut out of God’s inheritance but, rather, as assurance of the wideness of God’s love.

Jesus will make God known to the world, despite conflicts and hostilities that might threaten this work. At many later places, the gospel also points to the expansiveness of this mission, whether the assurance in John 3 that “God so loved the [whole] world” or Jesus’ promise in John 10 that he has sheep from other folds.

We cling to a Jesus who crosses boundaries—even the final boundary of death. There are no conflicts, powers, divisions, disagreements, or hostilities that can turn Jesus away from his message of abundant life for all.

*Gospel, continued*

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.

**Next Sunday’s Readings:** Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22.

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We have all received,  
grace upon grace

JOHN 1:16



# Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

7800 West McCarthy Road, Palos Heights, IL 60463

The Pastor: Rev. Chris Buresh

The Associate Pastor: Rev. Andrew Bell

The Director of Children's & Family Ministry: Lori Puttkammer

The Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Wayne A. Basch



## THE 9:00 AM SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

### *A Time for Silent Prayer and Meditation*

The Prelude: "We Three Kings/What Child Is This?" Keveren

+THE HYMN: THE FIRST NOEL No. 300

+ The Kyrie – page 203 (Sung by All)

+ The Canticle of Praise: "Glory Be to God" – page 204

+ The Prayer of the Day (insert)

The Readings for the Epiphany of Our Lord

The Sermon: "Satan's Favorite Game"

+THE HYMN: IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER No. 294

+ The Nicene Creed – page 104

+ The Prayers (insert)

The Voluntary: "Coventry Carol" Hughes

+ The Communion Liturgy – page 206

THE HYMNS DURING COMMUNION:

WHAT CHILD IS THIS No. 296

AS WITH GLADNESS MEN OF OLD No. 302

+ The Prayer after Communion

+ The Blessing and Dismissal – page 209

+ THE HYMN: SONGS OF THANKFULNESS AND PRAISE No. 310

The Postlude: "Prelude on 'The First Noel'" Hughes



Today's chancel flowers are given by the Hennessy family in celebration of Kelsey Seaborg's birthday.

**Portals of Prayer** should be arriving the week of Jan. 13. They were lost in transit and have been re-ordered.

## THE 11:00 AM SERVICE OF THE WORD

### *A Time for Silent Prayer and Meditation*

The Prelude: "We Three Kings/What Child Is This?" Keveren

+THE HYMN: THE FIRST NOEL No. 300

+ The Kyrie – page 213

+ The Hymn of Praise: "Glory to God" – page 213

+ The Prayer of the Day (insert)

The Readings for the Epiphany of Our Lord

The Sermon: "Satan's Favorite Game"

+THE HYMN: IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER No. 294

+ The Nicene Creed – page 104

+ The Prayers (insert)

The Voluntary: "Coventry Carol" Hughes

+ "Salvation Belongs to Our God" – page 219

+ The Closing Prayers – page 220

+ The Blessing and Dismissal – page 221

+THE HYMN: SONGS OF THANKFULNESS AND PRAISE No. 310

The Postlude: "Prelude on 'The First Noel'" Hughes



The Organist: Beth Ridderhoff

The Lectors: 9:00 Edith Schmitt

11:00 Mandy Buresh

The Acolytes: 9:00 Isaac Bell and Marek Bell

11:00 Lukas Bort and Thalia Marsh

**The 2025 giving envelopes** are available in the narthex today. If you do not see a set for you and would like one, please contact Donna in the office. Thank you!

**Save the Date:** The annual congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, February 9 at 9:50 am. Every effort is made for efficient use of time. Please come and participate as we take care of family business.

Pictures may be taken at our service to use on our updated website. Please contact us if you desire we not use any photograph including your image.

## Our intercessions include:

**The hospitalized:** Donna Dinkmeyer (Good Sam), Marj Hultquist (Palos)

**The bereaved:** The Skoglund family upon the passing of Ron's father, Robert.



**The 2025 Flower Chart** is posted on the bulletin board. There are several dates available in January. Please consider signing up for flowers to celebrate an anniversary, wedding, birthday or to remember a loved one. The cost remains \$40.

**Attention Choirs:** **Junior Choir** will be starting up on Mon., Jan. 6; **Joy Ringers & Carillon** on Thu., Jan. 9; **Cherub Choir** on Sun., Jan. 12; **Adult Choir** on Wed., Jan. 15. Now is a great time to join!

**Attention Youth!!** Save the date for the **Mokena Indoor Go-Karts** on January 12, 2025 at 1:00 pm. Open to all 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders, their friends and parents who are 58" or taller. RSVP to Pastor Bell or sign up on the bulletin board. Hope you can make it!

**The 2025 High School Basketball season is about to begin.** The first meeting and scrimmage will be held on Sunday, January 12, 2025 from 7:00 – 8:00 pm in the Family Life Center. Games will begin on Sunday, Jan. 26 at 7:00 & 8:00 pm. Cost is \$20 to participate in the league. See Pastor Bell for more details.

**Attention Early Childhood Moms!** Make plans to gather together on Friday, January 24 at 6:30 pm for a freezer meal Mom's night out. Please see the bulletin board for meals and either sign up or email Lori if interested in joining us.

**See the back of the insert for this week's calendar and more important notes.**

## DURING THE WEEK OF JANUARY 5

SUN	10:10 am	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation
	11:00 am	Sunday School
MON	6:00 pm	Junior Choir
	7:00 pm	6 <sup>th</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation
	8:00 pm	"Body and Soul"
TUE	7:30 pm	Deacons' Meeting
WED	1:00 pm	Gamers Anonymous
	2:00 pm	Peace Village Service
THU	6:00 pm	Joy Ringers
	7:00 pm	Carillon Choir
	9:00 pm	Prayer Walk
SUN	9:00 am	<b>Service of the Word</b> <b>Online service</b>
	10:10 am	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation
	10:15 am	Puppets
	10:30 am	Cherub Choir
	<b>11:00 am</b>	<b>Service of Holy Communion</b>
	11:00 am	Sunday School
	1:00 pm	K1 Indoor Racing, Mokena
	7:00 pm	High School Basketball League Meeting

O Lord, let my  
New Year's resolution  
be to   
**follow you**  
**more closely**  
and to  
**trust in your**  
**loving guidance.**

## Welcome to Worship

*The Magi followed a star to worship Jesus and present him gifts. We too have been guided here by God's light, to worship Jesus and offer him our gifts of love. Welcome.*



Like the Magi, we can respond with our best gifts — our industry, our devotion, our very lives. We disciples are Christ's tangible presence in the world. That same Child whose light brought such joy to the Magi now, through us, offers his mercy to every person.

Through us, every day, Christ feeds multitudes; he heals, teaches and guides countless people. Through individual volunteers and major institutions, through simple acts of kindness or worldwide coordinated efforts, the world can encounter, through the Christian community, the enduring, tangible presence of Christ.

—Michael Simone

### *New Year's Blessing*

*The eighth day of Christmas, the eighth day of Creation,  
the Next New Day, New Year's Day.*

*May every day be a new year's day for you:  
a chance to forgive and be forgiven, to start again.*

*May you take courage to begin anew. ...*

*As you let go of the year past,  
may you ... in your free fall find yourself held  
by an eternal love that has come ages to be with you,  
and will carry you all the way to the end. ...*

*Every day may you trust your belovedness,  
your freedom from having to prove yourself,  
and receive the grace that is given to you.*

*May this year be a year of grace and hope.*

—Steve Garnaas-Holmes, [unfoldinglight.net](http://unfoldinglight.net)

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives and bring us to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Filled with good news of great joy, let us pray for the church, the earth, and all people.

*A brief silence.*

Bless the work of all who build bridges across your church. That despite our differences, we would unite around the shared mission of revealing your boundless love to the world. Especially, we pray for our siblings in Coronationville. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Send rain to water-parched lands. Revive ecosystems and habitats threatened by a changing climate and protect the peoples and creatures who live in them. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Give world leaders your justice and reveal your righteousness to those who serve our country and communities. Frustrate the plans of tyrants and oppressors. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Help those who have no helper. Draw near to those who feel forgotten. Deliver those who call to you in grief, illness and loneliness (*especially*). God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Liberate our churches from a yearning for the past that forgets the future. Fuel in us a passion for discovery. Give us the boldness to dream and to imagine new ways to share your Gospel in this new year. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We give thanks for all your holy ones who now rest in your radiant glory. Make us, with them, sharers in the boundless riches of Christ, our hope and promise. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

We commend these prayers to you, O God, trusting your grace made known to all, through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## PRAYER LIST

### Members of the Congregation

Marj Hultquist	Gerhard Haigis
Matt Wolan	Chriss Hassel
Donna Dinkmeyer	Jack Tinberg
Lynn Evers	Nicole Baldwin
Carol Ross	Sue Buerger
Bill Johnsen	Georgia Brennan
BJ Quigley	

### Family and Friends of Members

Carol & Rick Challenger	Rose Shannon
Mike Maty	Barbara Borg
Clara Gersch	Tom Seiberlich
Jim Lawler	Mary Harris
Lee Sheridan	David Payne
Alma Fremarek	Dannis Angeles
Howard Butville	Tracy Simmonds
Jean Madaus	Samantha Shank
Jasper Farr	Dale Koch
Dean Huidobro	Arlene Hajost
Al Innocenti	Joyce Latham
Bob Stevens	Anya Magnuson
Justin Emmick	Sylvia Rodriguez
Debbi Barry	Howard Gantz
Bill Poore	Greg Feil
Dave Wonder	James Mayerak
Ray Fredrick	Mary Jones
Cathi Kay	Dan Zakowski
Katy Peterman	



The Prayer List has been recently edited. If there is someone you need added or removed, please contact the church office by 9 am Friday. Thank you!