



**SHEPHERD
OF THE HILLS
LUTHERAN
CHURCH**

Pastor
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"Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." *Luke 1:28*

Dear friends in Christ,

On Sunday we heard the angel Gabriel tell Mary that God wanted to do something special through her. Mary, a young, unmarried, tween girl in a small far-away place was told she will bear Jesus, the expected and longed for Savior. No small task! And how did she respond? All she did was one little thing that is everything. She said, "Yes."

I have been honored and delighted to serve you the past few months. In that time, I have begun to hear your stories and have grown to love you. I know that each and every one of you are favored ones of God. I also believe that God wants to do something special through us at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church for both our community and world around us. Our greatest challenge is to open the windows of our hearts and minds to God at work around and in us and to say, "Yes."

I want to invite you to the Christmas Eve Worship. There will be a choice of two very different services here on Saturday, December 24. If you have young children, or you feel like a young at heart, be sure to come to the 5:00 PM Family Service, a highly participatory service including Holy Communion and candlelight. If you prefer the more solemn joy and mystery of a traditional candlelight and Holy Communion Christmas Eve Service please join us at 9:00 PM.

On Christmas Day, I encourage you to worship with your family. Take some time to read the Christmas story from Luke 2 and to sing your favorite carols. Please remember to keep in prayer those who are alone, homeless, or depressed this year. New Year's Day we will hear once again the Christmas story and sing many of your beloved carols at our 10:00 AM Service of Lessons and Carols.

I pray that you are blessed with peace, comfort and joy as we approach the celebration of Jesus' birth. God's presence with us in Immanuel, opens our hearts to receive and know God's unconditional love for us and all people. May it strengthen us to respond to God's call as Mary did, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." *Luke 1: 38*

The Peace of Christmas be with you,

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