

**SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS AT HOME WORSHIP**  
**SERMON AT NAZARETH**  
**JANUARY 19, 2025**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Gracious God, may your Spirit be upon us, and may the Spirit inspire us to stand with those who are oppressed, and proclaim your liberating love in the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS:**

**PSALM 146**

<sup>1</sup>Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!

<sup>2</sup>I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

<sup>3</sup>Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help.

<sup>4</sup>When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish.

<sup>5</sup>Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God,

<sup>6</sup>who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever;

<sup>7</sup>who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free;

<sup>8</sup>the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.

<sup>9</sup>The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

<sup>10</sup>The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

**GOSPEL: LUKE 4: 14-30**

<sup>14</sup>Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. <sup>15</sup>He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. <sup>16</sup>When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup>and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: <sup>18</sup>"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, <sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." <sup>20</sup>And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.



<sup>21</sup>Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." <sup>22</sup>All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" <sup>23</sup>He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.'" <sup>24</sup>And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. <sup>25</sup>But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; <sup>26</sup>yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. <sup>27</sup>There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." <sup>28</sup>When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. <sup>29</sup>They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. <sup>30</sup>But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

This is the Gospel of our Lord.

**Praise to you O Christ.**

#### **REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL BY ASSISTING MINISTER JOHN YARBERRY**

The Gospel reading strikes me as relevant to the modern dynamic we find ourselves in today. Consider these verses, starting with verse 25 Jesus said, "But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; <sup>26</sup>yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. <sup>27</sup>There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." <sup>28</sup>When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. <sup>29</sup>They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. The people got incensed when Jesus pointed out that two Gentile dogs, the Sidonian widow, and a leprouse Syrian army commander were more worthy of God's ministrations in their day than were his fellow Jews and Nazarenes.

There are many we meet either physically or over the media sphere that love it when those they consider inferior, the dogs if you will, the laws of God breakers, or those with differences of color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and yes of a different sex, suffer pain and incalculable loss. I think of Los Angeles California as the most current example.

In the view of many from the evangelical right, California and L.A., are getting the wrath of God for their chosen laws and policies, when the truth is God loves all of us, the Catholics, the Lutherans, the Baptists, the Muslim, the Buddhist, the transgender, the queer, the black, and the immigrant.

What then does God want us to do with this knowledge of his love for everyone? Does he expect our leaders to treat everyone with the same value, or does he expect our leaders to only enact laws that punish the queer, the transgender, the immigrant, or the ones that believe in God with a different religious tradition, or nationality? It does say in our founding documents that all are created equal.

The concept that all are created equal strikes me as closer to Jesus' commandment to love others as you would yourself, than let's govern so that what we believe becomes the law of the land.

Amen

**HYMN OF THE DAY | YOU ARE MINE**

ELW # 581

[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/SGM9LKTnQMC?FEATURE=SHARED](https://youtu.be/SGM9LKTnQMC?feature=shared)

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

We pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

*A brief silence*

Help us embody Jesus' message of liberation and justice in our communities. Grant us the courage to stand firm in faith, and may all that we do reflect the transformative power of your love. God With Us, **receive our prayer.**

Your call for justice and transformation extends to all of creation. Teach us to be good stewards of the earth, and inspire us to advocate for sustainable practices that benefit creation. God With Us, **receive our prayer.**

Empower your people around the world to work toward a future where all are welcomed and embraced. May dignity and compassion guide our interactions and decisions. God With Us, **receive our prayer.**

We lift up those who are burdened by physical, emotional, and spiritual afflictions. We pray especially for Rick and Kelly, Molly and her family, Terry Schreier, Lori, Pastor Phil, Jim and Sally, Dave, Dorothy, and all those we lift through our Prayer Chain. Help us create spaces of support and understanding for all who suffer. God With Us, **receive our prayer.**

The challenges we face today can seem insurmountable. Help us turn to you for hope and strength, and help us create a world where all can experience the fullness of life that Jesus' proclaims. Be with all those impacted by the wildfires raging in California. Unite us as a nation to surround them with comfort and aid, rather than judgment and condemnation. God With Us, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for our ability to care for one another. Let us love, not in words or speech, but in truth and action. Strengthen and equip us to care for those in need through the ministries of our community: Pardes Levavot, the Community Infant Program, the Little Free Pantry, All Roads of Boulder, Rise Against Suicide, and the other acts of kindness we share with one another. Use us to share Christ's love with our neighbors in need, especially those who are lost, poor, abused, forgotten, silenced, or avoided. God With Us, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for the work of the Joshua School and organizations like them. Empower those who nurture the minds, bodies and spirits of children and adults living on the Autism Spectrum. Help us to help them reach their fullest potential. God With Us, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for the nations now engaged in war. In the steadfastness of your love, hasten the day of peace. Look with mercy on those exposed to hatred, conflict, and death. Show compassion to the dying and those who have lost loved ones and the safety of home. In your mercy, remove all causes and occasions of war. Incline the hearts of all people to follow the path to peace and justice, that war may cease and reconciliation may come. God With Us, **receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Thank you for the saints who have paved the way for us to continue their labors of love and justice. Help us to keep striving to better the world for future generations. God With Us, **receive our prayer.**

Trusting in your mercy and grace, we lift up all of our prayers to you. **Amen.**

## **BENEDICTION & BLESSING**

We rejoice in God's steadfast presence in our lives, and in God's unique presence in the life of Jesus of Nazareth – in all his life manifesting the peace, love, and justice of God. Come to us, Lord Jesus. Be born in us – in our hearts, our minds, our lives. May the light of your life be kindled in us and lead us to the shining truth of God with us, God for us, God in us. **Amen.**

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

**This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here.**

We are the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace.

Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person—questions, complexities and all.

Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

# SHEPHERD CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## WEEK OF JANUARY 19– JANUARY 26, 2025

### Sunday, January 19<sup>th</sup> – Sermon at Nazareth

9:30 a.m. Hybrid In-Person/Zoom Worship with Holy Communion  
Annual Meeting Part II immediately following worship  
Coffee and Conversation

### Wednesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>

11:00 a.m. - Amazing Grace Bible Study

### Friday, January 24<sup>th</sup>

7:00 a.m. – Men’s Zoom Breakfast Bible Study  
5:00 p.m. – Friday Night Perspectives Gathering

### Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup> – Fish for People

9:30 a.m. – Hybrid In-Person/Zoom Worship with Holy Communion,  
Coffee & Conversation immediately following Worship

<p><b><u>JANUARY</u></b> <b><u>BIRTHDAYS</u></b></p> <p>NANCY C. 1/14 MARY M. 1/27 DAVE N. 1/27</p>
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## DAILY NARRATIVE LECTIONARY READINGS: WEEK OF JANUARY 19, 2025

### Monday, January 20, 2025

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/luke-431-37-jesus-casts-out-an-unclean-spirit2025>

Luke 4:31-37 Jesus Casts Out an Unclean Spirit

### Tuesday, January 21, 2025

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/luke-438-39-jesus-heals-peters-mother-in-law2025>

Luke 4:38-39 Jesus Heals Peter’s Mother-in-Law

### Wednesday, January 22, 2025

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/luke-440-44-jesus-heals-and-casts-out-demons2025>

Luke 4:40-44 Jesus Heals and Casts Out Demons

### Thursday, January 23, 2025

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/isaiah-611-3-the-spirit-of-the-lord2025>

Isaiah 61:1-3 The Spirit of the Lord

### Friday, January 24, 2025

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/1-kings-178-16-elijah-helps-a-widow2025>

1 Kings 17:8-16 Elijah Helps a Widow

### Saturday, January 25, 2025

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/2-kings-51-14-elisha-heals-naaman2025>

2 Kings 5:1-14 Elisha Heals Naaman

### Sunday, January 26, 2025

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/luke-51-11-fish-for-people2025>

Luke 5:1-11 Fish for People

