

Christmas in July:
A Musical Tour of the People and Places
Of the Nativity



Good Soil Lutheran Ministries

Growing Together in Christ

July 26th, 2026

9:30 am



20300 Hilliard Blvd
Rocky River, OH 44116

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Website: GoodSoilLutheran.org

Facebook/Instagram: [goodsoillutheranministries](https://www.facebook.com/goodsoillutheranministries)

YouTube: Good Soil Lutheran Ministries

Welcome

Reflecting the abundant welcome of the Kingdom of God as revealed by Jesus, GSLM welcomes all who seek God's love and grace. We affirm and celebrate the diversity of humanity in all its races, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, social and economic circumstances, abilities, and disabilities. Together, we commit ourselves to racial equity and to justice for all, because in God's kingdom, we are all beloved children of God.

For Parents with Children

Good Soil loves kids and the "holy noise" they bring! Your children are warmly welcome in worship. Sing, pray, and respond; your children will learn by worshiping with you. There's also a "playground" area in the back of the sanctuary and a nursery/cry room (with changing table) behind that on the back left side. We pray that worshiping together as a family is a meaningful experience!

For Those Needing Hearing Assistance

Ask an usher about hearing assistance devices to enhance your worship experience.

Holy Communion

Christ is truly present with us in worship and through this meal. All are welcome to participate in Holy Communion here at Good Soil. Children may commune with elements or receive a blessing depending on parent/guardian preference. Gluten-free wafers and grape juice are available upon request.

Bulletin Key

Bold Font – Spoken by the Congregation

Regular Font – Spoken by the Pastor or Worship Assistant

† – Please stand as you are able, in body or spirit.



RECONCILING IN CHRIST

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost: Christmas in July

Welcome to Christmas in July Worship: A Musical Tour of the People and Places of the Nativity. Through song and scripture, we visit again the story of Christ's birth unfolding among us. O come let us adore!

Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Prelude and Welcome

† Call to Worship (based on Isaiah 9 and John 1)

The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light.
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given.
He is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace.

For the Word became flesh and lives among us.
We have seen his glory. O come, let us adore him!

† Gathering Hymn: Oh Come, All Ye Faithful (ELW 283) v. 1, 2

- 1 O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him,
born the king of angels:

Refrain

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

- 2 The highest, most holy,
light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father
now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

† Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you made that holy Christmas night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on Earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence, and in the last day, wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Children's Sermon and Noisy Offering to Support ELCA Good Gifts

Sunday School is on summer break! Young children are welcome to remain in the sanctuary during the sermon or go to the "learn & grow in faith" area (nursery room, end of the hall, east side of the building). Children must be supervised by an adult. On select Sundays there may be a faith craft activity with a Sunday School teacher in the lounge.

The Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

NAZARETH

Matthew 1:18-23

A reading from Matthew:



Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.'

Reflection on Nazareth

Nazareth Hymn: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (ELW 257) v. 1, 7

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

7 O come, O King of nations, come,
O Cornerstone that binds in one:
refresh the hearts that long for you;
restore the broken, make us new. *Refrain*

Text: Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, Köln, 1710; tr. composite
Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

BETHLEHEM Luke 2:1-7

A reading from Luke:

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 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.



Reflection on Bethlehem

Bethlehem Hymn: O Little Town of Bethlehem (ELW 279) v. 1, 4

- 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.
- 4 O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
oh, come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Immanuel!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

THE COUNTRYSIDE OF JUDEA Luke 2:8-16

A reading from Luke:

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those God favors!’

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.’ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Reflection on the Countryside of Judea



Countryside of Judea Hymn: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing ELW 270 v. 1, 3

- 1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king;
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations, rise;
join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"

- 3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace!
Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth,
born to give us second birth. *Refrain*

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

A reading from Matthew:



In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all

Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

“And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.” ’

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Reflection on the Home of the Messiah

Home of the Messiah Hymn: We Three Kings of Orient Are (WOV 646 v. 1, 5)

- 1 We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

Refrain

Oh, star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright;
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light!

5 Glorious now behold him arise,
King and God and Sacrifice;
heav'n sings alleluia:
alleluia the earth replies. *Refrain*

Text: John Henry Hopkins Jr., 1820-1891, alt.

† Prayers of the Church

Emmanuel – God is with us. Let us pray. *A brief silence.*

We pray for the Church universal. *A brief silence.*

We pray for Creation and the stars in the sky. *A brief silence.*

We pray for the places of Jesus' birth and life, the nations, and all leaders around the world, that they may lead following the example of the Prince of Peace. *A brief silence.*

We pray for any in need, especially: Dale, Jane, Darlene, Diane, Mike, Steve, the Busby family, Joe, Elizabeth, Jon, Audrey, Frank, Kay, Kay, Brendan, Sarah, Donna, Chris, Rev. John K., Jim & Toni, Kate, Charley & Cindy, Bianca, Joyce, Susan, Lou, Sally, Ruth, Emily, Kristina, Kim, Jeanette, James, ...and those we name aloud or in our hearts. *A brief silence.*

We give thanks for generations of the faithful and all resting in the eternal arms of Jesus. *A brief silence.*

We give all our prayers to you, through your son, the Word-Made-Flesh.
Amen.

† Passing of the Peace

The Peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

The people greet one another saying, "Peace" or "Peace be with

you.” This greeting can take the form of shaking hands, waving, or making the peace sign with one another.

The Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus



Offering

God's ministry through Good Soil makes a difference, and your offering makes that possible. Help Good Soil keep making an impact by giving today using the QR code or at pushpay.com/g/goodsoillutheran

Aim your phone camera at the QR code, but don't take a picture. A link will appear to click on that will take you to Good Soil's support page.

† Offering Prayer

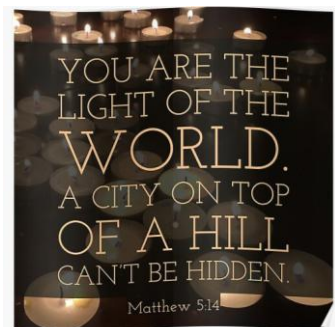
O Lord, our God, as we celebrate the festival of Christmas, remind us again of our calling to be your incarnate body of love in the world. Help us to follow the example of Jesus, who did not come to be served but to serve. In his name may we devote ourselves to the care and service of all in need. Bless now these offerings, that they may be used to spread your light throughout this community and this world, in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH!

Matthew 5:14-16

A reading from Matthew:

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.



Reflection on To the Ends of the Earth!

† Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

† Words of Institution

† Lord's Prayer

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus first taught us:
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.

Communion

Christ is with us in this meal. All who are hungry for the presence of Jesus are welcome to commune here at Good Soil.

Children are welcome to come to the Lord's table for communion or for a blessing, depending on parent/guardian's preference.

When you receive the elements, you are invited to respond with "Amen" or "Thanks be to God."

Please wait for the usher to release your row before proceeding down the center aisle to the front in a single-file line. We will be observing standing processional communion, one side of the sanctuary at a time, for the summer.

Gluten-free bread is available on request. The wine (red) is in the outer rings of the tray, the grape juice (white) is in the center. Communion cups can be returned at the end tables on your way back to your seat.

Communion Hymn: Away in a Manger (ELW 277)

- 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.

- 2 The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,
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.
- 3 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.

Text: North American, 19th cent.

Communion Hymn: The First Noel (ELW 300)

- 1 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.

- 2 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*
- 3 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*
- 4 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*
- 5 Then entered in those wise men three,
full rev'rently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence

their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. *Refrain*

Text: English traditional

† Post-Communion Table Blessing

Now may the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

The Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

† Blessing

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the courage of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child. Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

† Sending Hymn: Joy to the World (ELW 267) v. 1-3

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 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.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

† Dismissal

Go in peace; Emmanuel has come!
Thanks be to God!

Postlude

Scripture: New Revised Standard Version Bible©1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. Worship texts: sundaysandseasons.com Copyright 2026 Augsburg Fortress All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies License #SA5020986 Music reprinted under One License #A-719034/CCLI license #3013830. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Today's Worship Servants:

Ushers: Sharon Hollowell & Lance Curtis	Livestream: Jessica Berkshire
Reader: Kaitlyn Regan	Acolyte: George Young
Counters: Kirsten Reading & Jessica Berkshire	Cantor: Beau Reddington
Online Usher: Ellen Young	Altar Care: Paula Maeder Connor
Communion Bread: Michael Mitterholzer	



Announcements from Good Soil for Sunday, July 26, 2026

Especially in our prayers: Dale Alexander, Jane Beese, Darlene Beesley, Diane Bennett, Mike Bishop, Steve Bugosh, the Busby family, Joe Cassatta, Elizabeth Danish, Jon Deye, Audrey Dorin, Frank Dunaway, Kay Eaton (Welsh Home), Kay Eaton (Renaissance Home), Brendan Erchul, Sarah Gresh, Donna Handy, Chris Jacobson, Rev. John Keller, Jim & Toni Kulma, Kate Labuda, Charley & Cindy McCabe, Bianca Miller, Joyce Miller, Susan Omerod, Lou Paine, Sally Pate, Ruth Patrick, Emily Reilly, Kristina Seeley, Kim Taylor, Jeanette Weidlich, James Younger, and all those suffering because of war, violence and humanitarian crises, including in Ukraine, Gaza, Iran, Israel, & surrounding countries in the Middle East.

For those celebrating birthdays: Dave Blocksom (7/26), Jenna Carlson (7/28), Jay Cox (7/29), David David (7/30), Taylor Nichols (7/30), Gretchen Bowman (8/1)

For those celebrating Baptism anniversaries: Amanda Inman (7/26), Riley Johnson (7/28)

For those celebrating Wedding anniversaries: David and Lisa Sierk (7/30), Jerad and Becky Williamson (7/30)

The flowers adorning the altar today are given to the Glory of God by Sharon Hollowell as we celebrate the beauty of summer.

Thank you, Cara Rovella! – Cara Rovella has resigned from her role as Communications and Community Life Coordinator (CCLC). We thank Cara for her 3 years of service with this faith community. The CCLC position oversees tasks related to the bulletin, worship slides, livestream recordings, website, social media accounts, newsletter (currently on summer break), and bulletin board. If you're able to volunteer with any of these weekly tasks (or other office-related tasks) during this interim time, please reach out to Sean Kennedy, admin@goodsoillutheran.org or Pastor Marissa, pastormarissa@goodsoillutheran.org. Please hold this community in prayer as we discern next steps and listen for where God is leading us with this staffing opportunity. Note: the church's office hours are now 9:30am-1pm, M-F, instead of 9:30am-3pm.

SAVE THE DATE: Outdoor Worship and Picnic with Bethesda, 8/23 – Worship outside with our siblings in Christ in Bethesda's backyard on 8/23, 28607 Wolf Rd, Bay Village. Bring a lawn chair and please park on Beach Ln or Oakland Rd. There will be a potluck afterwards with sides and desserts while Bethesda provides the burgers and hot dogs from the grill. Good Soil will host Bethesda for outdoor worship on Sunday, 9/27. Hope to see you there!

Looking to put your faith into action? Hunger continues growing in our community affecting people of all ages and backgrounds. You can be part of the solution by volunteering:

New Covenant Produce for the People: 4th Sat of each month, 9a-12p, at New Covenant Lutheran, 1424 Hayden Ave, Cleveland.

Lakewood Fresh Produce Distribution: 3rd Sat of each month, 9am-12pm, through October. Meet at the Lakewood Congregational Church parking lot located on the corner of 1375 W. Clifton Blvd at Detroit Ave, Lakewood.

Our neighbor Trials For Hope needs food items. Items should be easy to open such as pouches, pull tabs or tear away tops: tuna, fruit cups, protein or granola bars, applesauce, etc. Place items in the designated bucket next to the front door or under the table & label as TFH if bucket is full.

Do you have a handy person in your life? Good Soil is in search of a reliable and responsive person to help serve as a backup for our maintenance contractor and provide on-call support for building-related issues. This Sexton role includes responding to building alarms or emergencies, coordinating with contractors while they are on site, and assisting with maintenance needs during unexpected weather events or other special occasions. We're looking for someone dependable, hands-on, and willing to be available in an on-call capacity as needed. If you are interested or would like to recommend someone—please contact Sean at admin@goodsoillutheran.org to learn more.

MOW looking for Drivers – West Shore Rocky River-Lakewood-West Park Meals on Wheels

works in Good Soil’s kitchen M-F! They need more drivers to bring meals to recipients, especially Mon, Wed, & Fri. Contact 440-333-6298 or rrlwcoordinator@westshoremow.org.

Bethesda Staff Partnership for Shared Minister for Christian Formation – The Ministry Site Profiles (MSP) for each congregation are live on the ELCA mobility system and interested candidates have started reaching out to Pr. Mitch Phillips, Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership, who is connecting candidates with the call committee. The Call Committee will complete a practice interview this month (standard part of the process), and then candidate interviews will begin soon after that! Please hold our Call Committee, council leaders, and this call process in your prayers as we discern who God is calling to serve as our shared Minister for Christian Formation. Questions? Contact Call Committee Co-Chair, JoAnne Wancata at (440) 655-3674. [What is Christian Formation?](#) Sunday School, Confirmation, Bible Studies, small group ministry, service and learning opportunities, acolyte and communion instruction classes, spiritual practices, and worship are all examples of how we are “formed” in the Christian faith and life.

Flower Sign-Up – Interested in adorning Christ's altar with flowers for worship? Sign up on the flower list on the hallway bulletin board (the online form is not accepting responses currently). Each Vase is \$35 from Cottage Flowers. You may bring your own flowers instead of purchasing through Good Soil, but please still sign up to reserve your slot. Questions about flowers? Email Church Admin Sean Kennedy at admin@goodsoillutheran.org



Newsletter (on Summer Break) – Want to keep up with news at Good Soil or share the e-news with friends? Sign up or share our newsletter using the QR code or URL to the right: <https://tinyurl.com/bddjk7yp>

Calendar of Events		
Date	Event	Time
Sun, Jul 26	In-Person & Livestream Worship: Christmas in July with Noisy Offering to Benefit ELCA Good Gifts	9:30 am
Sun, Jul 26	Christmas Lemonade and Cookies Fellowship	10:30 am
Sun, Aug 2	In-Person & Livestream Worship: Tenth Sunday after Pentecost	9:30 am
Sun, Aug 9	In-Person & Livestream Worship: Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost	9:30 am
Sun, Aug 16	In-Person & Livestream Worship: Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost	9:30 am
Sun, Aug 23	Outdoor Worship at Bethesda on the Bay , 28607 Wolf Rd, Bay Village (park on Beach Ln or W Oakland Rd), bring a lawn chair!	10:00 am
Sun, Aug 30	In-Person & Livestream Worship: Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost and Baptism of Elsie and Ayla Nichols	9:30 am