

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 3, 2023

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF NORTHEAST MINNEAPOLIS



Welcome to worship! We are a congregation with a long history of loving God and serving our neighbors. We welcome and celebrate all of you, including race, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, age, and family.

We welcome you to share fellowship with us in your joys and struggles. If you hunger for a good meal, a bag of groceries, the bread of communion, an opportunity to serve your neighbors, or a welcoming church home, there is a place for you at Grace!

✝ When you see this symbol you're invited to stand as you are able.

We love to sing! When music and words are not printed in the bulletin, you can find the song in the red hymnal underneath the chairs at the page number listed.

Children belong in worship! We recognize that children aren't wired to "sit still" for an hour, so we welcome their quiet movement, joyous singing, and encourage their involvement in worship. Children of any age may pick out a book, toy, or art supplies in the Commons for use during the service.

Help love reach beyond these walls. You can give online at gracnempls.org/give or scan the code at the right. You can also place your offering in the plate as you come up for communion (envelopes are on the cart in the Commons).



All are welcome at Jesus' table to receive holy communion. We set the table with wheat bread, gluten-free crackers, white grape juice, and red wine.

Join us for fellowship time! All are invited to stay after worship for coffee, treats, and community connection in the Multi-Purpose Room.

Stay connected to what's happening at Grace: sign up for our weekly online newsletter, "The Scroll." Find the latest editions and the link to subscribe on our home page at gracnempls.org.

Two single-stall and wheelchair-accessible restrooms are just outside the sanctuary in the Commons, and another one is down the hallway across from the gym.

Front cover © 2023 Lisle Gwynn Garrity, A Sanctified Art, sanctifiedart.org. All other images © 2023 sundaysandseasons.com • Scripture citations based on the Common English Bible © 2011 CEB. • "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah." Words and music arrangement by Wayne L. Wold © 1984 Fortress Press (admin. Augsburg Fortress). • "My Soul Cries out with a Joyful Shout (Canticle of the Turning)." Words and music arrangement by Rory Cooney © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc. • "People, Look East." Words by Eleanor Farjeon, 1928 © 1960 David Higham Associates, Ltd. • "Come, Come Emmanuel (Advent Gathering Song)." Words and music by James J. Chepponis © 1995 GIA Publications, Inc. • Music streamed under OneLicense A-737608.

WELCOME AND GREETING

To weary ones, Christ says: My grace is for you.
To anxious hearts, the Creator says: My love is for you.
The Spirit who makes community says: You belong here.
The Triune God welcomes you, too.

✠ HYMN

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

#272

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

*We light candles to mark our days of preparation for Christ's advent,
when ancient promises will find fresh meaning in God's reign of peace.*



Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra-el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.

Hear these words from the prophet Isaiah:

“God will establish justice between the nations;
then they will beat their swords into iron plows
and their spears into pruning tools.

Nation will not take up sword against nation;
they will no longer learn how to make war.”

Isaiah 2:4

O God, fire of justice, kindle in us your light.
Make us shine bright in a war-shadowed world.
In every land where violence holds sway—
especially in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank—
beat weapons in farming tools
and teach all people your ways of peace;
in the name of our messiah, Jesus. **Amen.**

**Light one candle to watch for messiah:
let the light banish darkness.**

**He shall bring salvation to Israel,
God fulfills the promise.**

✠ PEACE

Our Redeemer proclaims: Comfort, comfort, my people.
The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Please share a sign of peace with others as you are comfortable. When the hymn of praise begins, you may return to your seats and remain standing.

✠ HYMN OF PRAISE

inspired by Mary's song, Luke 1:46-55

My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
Refrain
My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.
Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

OBJECT LESSON

Any children who are interested and comfortable are invited to come forward for a reflection and short prayer. Parents and guardians are welcome too!

CHORAL OFFERING

As we prepare to hear the Word, music opens our hearts to receive God's blessing.

FIRST READING

Psalm 80

Shepherd of Israel, listen! You, the one who leads Joseph as if he were a sheep! You, who are enthroned upon the winged heavenly creatures! Show yourself! Wake up your power! Come to save us! Restore us, God! Make your face shine so that we can be saved!

LORD God of heavenly forces, how long will you fume against your people's prayer? You've fed them bread made of tears; you've given them tears to drink three times over! You've put us at odds with our neighbors; our enemies make fun of us. Restore us, God of heavenly forces! Make your face shine so that we can be saved!

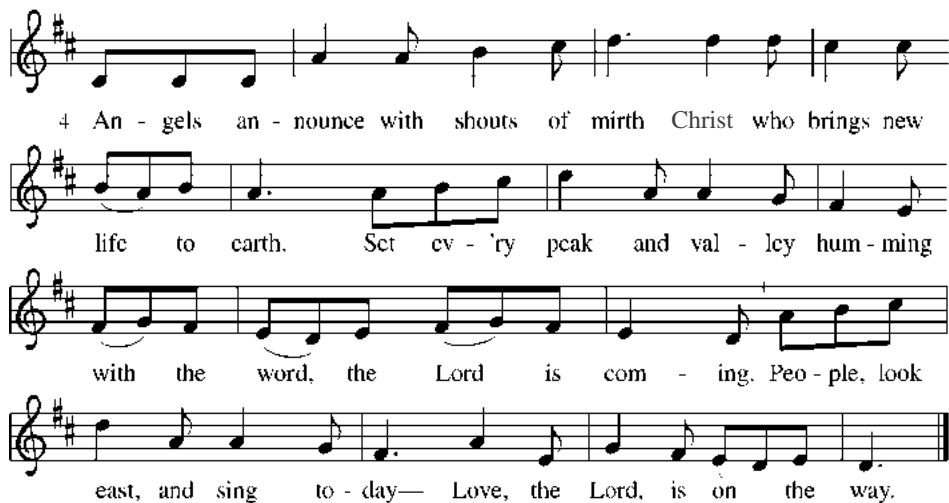
You brought a vine out of Egypt. You drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it; then it planted its roots deep, filling the land. The mountains were covered by its shade; the mighty cedars were covered by its branches. It sent its branches all the way to the sea; its shoots went all the way to the Euphrates River. So why have you now torn down its walls so that all who come along can pluck its fruit, so that any boar from the forest can tear it up, so that the bugs can feed on it?

Please come back, God of heavenly forces! Look down from heaven and perceive it! Attend to this vine, this root that you planted with your strong hand, this son whom you secured as your very own. It is burned with fire. It is chopped down. They die at the rebuke coming from you. Let your hand be with the one on your right side, with the one whom you secured as your own—then we will not turn away from you! Revive us so that we can call on your name. Restore us, LORD God of heavenly forces! Make your face shine so that we can be saved!

This is the word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

✠ GOSPEL CHANT

Let us rise with glad expectation, for the Savior is near at hand!



4 An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth Christ who brings new
life to earth. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming
with the word, the Lord is com - ing. Peo - ple, look
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Lord, is on the way.

✠ GOSPEL READING

Luke 1:5-25

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

During the rule of King Herod of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah. His wife Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron. They were both righteous before God, blameless in their observance of all the Lord's commandments and regulations. They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to become pregnant and they both were very old.

One day Zechariah was serving as a priest before God because his priestly division was on duty. Following the customs of priestly service, he was chosen by lottery to go into the Lord's sanctuary and burn incense. All the people who gathered to worship were praying outside during this hour of incense offering. An angel from the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw the angel, he was startled and overcome with fear.

The angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayers have been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will give birth to your son and you must name him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many people will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the Lord’s eyes. He must not drink wine and liquor. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before his birth. He will bring many Israelites back to the Lord their God. He will go forth before the Lord, equipped with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will turn the hearts of fathers back to their children, and he will turn the disobedient to righteous patterns of thinking. He will make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I be sure of this? My wife and I are very old.”

The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in God’s presence. I was sent to speak to you and to bring this good news to you. Know this: What I have spoken will come true at the proper time. But because you didn’t believe, you will remain silent, unable to speak until the day when these things happen.”

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they wondered why he was in the sanctuary for such a long time. When he came out, he was unable to speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he gestured to them and couldn’t speak. When he completed the days of his priestly service, he returned home.

Afterward, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant. She kept to herself for five months, saying, “This is the Lord’s doing. God has shown his favor to me by removing my disgrace among other people.”

This is the Good News. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

✠ HYMN

Come Now, O God

Bm G A7 D

1 Come now, O God, when our love is for - sak - en;
 2 Come when we squand - er the free - dom you gave us;
 3 Come, lead us out of our self - serv - ing mad - ness;

A D Em7 D

come when our bed - rock of faith has been shak - en;
 come, break the sys - tems of sin that en - slave us;
 come, while the world is still shroud - ed in sad - ness;

Bm G A7 D

come when our deep - est of hopes are mis - tak - en:
 come, though we won - der if you can still save us:
 come, turn the tears of our mourn - ing to glad - ness:

Em7 F# F#7 Bm

come, Em - man - u - el. Come, Em - man - u - el.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*As we wait and watch for Emmanuel's new day,
let us pray for the earth and all in need of healing and hope.*

Musical score for "Prayers of the People" in G major, 3/4 time. The score consists of two systems. The first system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Come, come Em - man - u - el. Come, Em -". The second system includes a "For repeat" section and a "Final ending" section. The vocal line continues with "man - u - el." in the repeat and "man - u - el." in the final ending. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support throughout.

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

Let us offer our lives to God. You can give financially online at gracenempls.org/give or scan the code at the right. You can also place your offering in the plate as you come up for communion.



COMMUNION: SINGING THE STORY

Musical score for "Communion: Singing the Story" in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of five systems of vocal melody. The lyrics are: "I O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem; come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels: O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!". The melody is simple and hymn-like, suitable for congregational singing.

Sharing a table, Jesus and disciples,
blessing and breaking bread he said to them:

“This is my body. Take it and remember.”

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

Knowing his time on earth would soon be ending,
Christ took the wine, raised it, blessed it and said:

“For you and all, this is my new covenant.”

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

✠ COMMUNION: PRAYER

Holy One, the beginning and the end...

Echo each acclamation of praise as you are invited:

Blessed are you! **Blessed are you!**
Come, Lord Jesus! **Come, Lord Jesus!**
Come, Holy Spirit! **Come, Holy Spirit!**

Even now, you draw near in love,
and so we offer all glory and honor and praise to you:
covenanting Creator,
incarnate Word,
surprising Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

With the boldness of the children of God, let us pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

COMMUNION: SHARING THE MEAL

God comes among us, close enough to cradle.
Come and receive the gift of Christ. **Amen.**

All are welcome at the Lord's table. If you wish to receive, ushers will invite you forward. The pastor will place a piece of bread or a gluten-free cracker in your cupped hand as you hear "Body of Christ, given for you." In the brass trays are cups of red wine or golden grape juice. Take a small cup as you hear, "Cup of Christ, given for you." You may respond with "Amen," "Thank you," or with quiet acceptance.

If you cannot come forward but wish to receive communion or a blessing, please let an usher know and the servers will come to you. If for any reason you do not wish to receive, you are welcome to come forward for a blessing with your arms crossed over your chest.

As we celebrate Communion, you may join in singing:

In the Bleak Midwinter verses 1 & 3



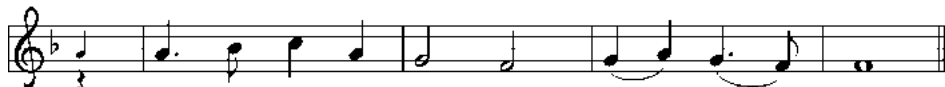
1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,
2 Heav - en can - not hold him, nor . . . earth sus - tain;
3 What . . . can I give him, poor . . . as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
heav'n and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign;
If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed
if I were a wise . . . man I would do my part;



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
the Lord . . . God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.
yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

✠ POST-COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER

Now may the body and blood of our Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace. **Amen.**

Let us pray:

Holy God, in whom ancient hungers are satisfied, we thank you for feeding us at this table.

By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, showing compassion to all; through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest. Amen.

✠ BENEDICTION

based on Philippians 4:4-5, 7

May the Spirit of gentleness fill your hearts to overflowing, and may the God of surpassing peace gladden and guard your lives, for Christ is near and the weary world rejoices! **Amen.**

✠ HYMN

All Earth Is Hopeful

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✠ SENDING

Go in peace. Carry joy to the world.
We will. Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

