

# Grace Lutheran Church

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## What You Hear and See

Messengers of John the Baptist ask Jesus, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” (Matt. 11:3). John, who thrived outdoors, is confined to a prison cell, awaiting violent death. Perhaps he wonders: Was I wrong about Jesus? Has my own life’s calling been in vain, or can it bear fruit? John’s question is the sort we ask when we are hemmed in and it’s hardest to see, hear, or move. In our darkest hours of pain, injustice, and loss, we too may wonder: does it make sense to trust, to hope?

Jesus asks the crowds who had followed John, “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at?” (Matt. 11:7). The wilderness is empty and rough, yet it can also be a wide open space for gaining perspective and connecting or reconnecting with God. As we continue through the wilderness season of Advent, what do we ourselves long to discover and see?

A desert is a vast reach of rock and sand. When rare and welcome rain soaks into its thirsty ground, color and life spring forth; the very earth rejoices! Neither Solomon in all his glory nor Herod’s soft-robed courtiers were clothed like this. Our Advent readings from Isaiah present visions of the whole creation blossoming—flowering—flourishing—not elsewhere, but on the climate-stressed, war-torn planet where we live. Today, images of healing and wholeness intensify promises of gladness and singing even in a hostile desert environment.

Jesus responds to the messengers and to us, “Go and tell . . . what you hear and see” (Matt. 11:4). Evil would confine us in cynicism and fear, and hope is no small virtue. We strengthen one another’s hearts by sharing where we have sensed God’s presence: in beauty, in acts of healing and liberation, in people of integrity who have held to the truth. As we tell, we answer both questions. Yes, this is the one for whom we have waited—whose coming is certain, and whose day draws near.

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## Third Sunday of Advent

December 11, 2016

*The season of Advent is a time of preparation for the expected Messiah, who came in an unexpected way, as the baby Jesus. The color of the season is blue (like the night sky), representing the Christ who is called Dayspring (source of day).*

***Holy Silence is observed as we enter to worship.***

**Pre-service Music**

*O Come Little Children*  
10:45 *Away in a Manger/ Still, Still*

**Grace Notes**  
**Clipper Kids**

### **Welcome/Worship Instructions**

*Stand as you are able.*

**Gathering Music**

*Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*

**ELW 836** (red book)

### **Greeting**

**P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**C** **And also with you.**

### **Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

**P** Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. Your prophets spoke of a day when the desert would blossom and waters would break forth in the wilderness. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath.

**C** **Strengthen our hearts as we prepare for the coming of the Lord. May he give water to all who thirst, for he is our light and our salvation.**

**P** Bless be God forever.

**C** **Amen.**

### **Advent Singing**

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;  
O Sun of justice, now draw near  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadow put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

## Prayer of the Day

**A** Let us pray . . . Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God.

**G** Strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way. Through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

*Sit*

## Special Music

*He is Born*

Bell Choir

## First Reading:

**Isaiah 35:1-10**

*The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.*

**L** A reading from **Isaiah:**

<sup>1</sup>The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus <sup>2</sup>it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. <sup>3</sup>Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. <sup>4</sup>Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you."

<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; <sup>6</sup>then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; <sup>7</sup>the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. <sup>8</sup>A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. <sup>9</sup>No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. <sup>10</sup>And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

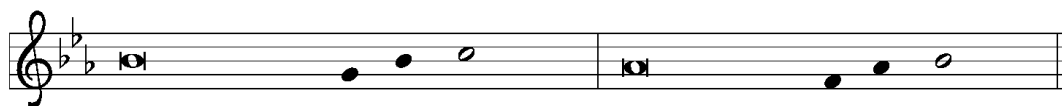
**A** The word of the Lord.

**G** Thanks be to God.

## Psalm 146:5-10



The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down.




<sup>5</sup>Happy are they who have the God of Jacob | for their help,  
whose hope is in the | LORD their God;

<sup>6</sup>**who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that | is in them;**  
**who keeps promis- | es forever;**

<sup>7</sup>who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to | those who hunger.  
The LORD sets the | captive 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 cares | for the stranger;  
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way | of the wicked.

<sup>10</sup>**The LORD shall | reign forever,**  
**your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. | Hallelujah! **


### Second Reading:

**James 5:7-10**

*In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.*

 A reading from **Romans**:

<sup>7</sup>Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup>You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. <sup>9</sup>Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! <sup>10</sup>As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

 The word of the Lord.

 **Thanks be to God.**

*Stand as you are able.*

### Gospel Acclamation



### Gospel Reading:

**Matthew 11:2-11**

*John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth. From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this.*

 The Gospel according to **Matthew**.

 **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>2</sup>When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup>and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” <sup>4</sup>Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup>the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. <sup>6</sup>And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

<sup>7</sup>As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup>What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup>What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup>This is the one about whom it is written, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ <sup>11</sup>Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

☞ The Gospel of the Lord.

☞ **Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Sit*

## Children’s Message/Children’s Church

### Message

*Stand as you are able.*

**Song of the Day**

*People Look East*

**ELW 248** (red book)

*Kneel or sit as you are able.*

### The Prayers

☞ As we anticipate the fullness of the presence of Christ, we join with the church throughout the world, praying for all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

☞ For the church and all messengers of the gospel, for all who call upon the name of the Lord, and for congregations throughout the world; that God work through us to bring harmony and reconciliation. Empower and guide the faith of our bishops and congregations and all the servants of your church, especially Bishops Elizabeth and Craig, Assistants David, Chrysanne and Sarah; our synod companion churches, St Peter Lutheran Church in Battle Creek, First Presbyterian Church in Hastings; Minister of Music Cindy and Pastor Paul. Let us pray,

☞ **Have mercy, O God.**

☞ For rain forests and deserts, for wilderness and developed land, and for plants blossoming and dormant; that the splendor and diversity of creation proclaim the glory of the Lord. Let us pray,

☞ **Have mercy, O God.**

☞ For our government, for the military and international relief workers, and for those who care for the stranger, widow, and orphan; that God raise up leaders who work for the protection of all. Protect those who serve in the military, especially Myrina Clements, Kayla Pohl, Joshua Wright, Tim Krewson and Tyler Van Houten. Let us pray,

☞ **Have mercy, O God.**

☞ For the hungry and homeless, for those in captivity, for the fearful and sorrowful, for those living with HIV/AIDS, and for the sick; that those who help others serve with patience and grace.

Comfort all in need in body, mind, or spirit, especially *Rick Palmer, Victoria Steadman, John Burdick, Elsie Merrow, Hope and Corrina Palmer, Butch Tossava, Doug Haddix, Vicky Kruithof, Debra Wood, George Ulrich Jr, Jennifer Anderson, Bonnie Ehredt, Dave Hills and Linda Maupin*. Let us pray,

**☞ Have mercy, O God.**

**Ⓐ** For all who call this community home, for those visiting from near and far, and for those preparing for the holiday season, that the advent of Christ make our hearts and minds rejoice. Let us pray,

**☞ Have mercy, O God.**

**Ⓐ** Gracious God, hear the individual petitions we lift to you in loud voice or in the silence of our hearts.

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

**Ⓐ** Let us pray,

**☞ Have mercy, O God.**

**Ⓐ** In thanksgiving for the departed who were faithful to God's word; that their words and actions direct us to the one who prepares a way for us. Let us pray,

**☞ Have mercy, O God.**

**Ⓟ** Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, those spoken aloud and those known only to you, and grant us peace through Jesus Christ, our coming Savior.

**☞ Amen.**

*Stand as you are able.*

### **Sharing the Peace**

**Ⓟ** The peace of Christ be with you always.

**☞ And also with you.**

*(We share the peace of the risen Lord with one another.)*

*Sit*

### **Offering of Gifts & Music      8:00 Carol of the Bells**

*Everyone at worship is encouraged to fill out a Participation Card and place it in the offering plate every Sunday morning.*

*Stand as you are able.*

### **Offertory Hymn**

*What Child is This*


**ELW 296** (red book)

### **Offertory Prayer**

**Ⓐ** Let us pray . . . Savior of the nation, come.

**☞ Make your home here in us. Feed us with your love, that our faith shine ever new and our lives reveal your light. Amen.**

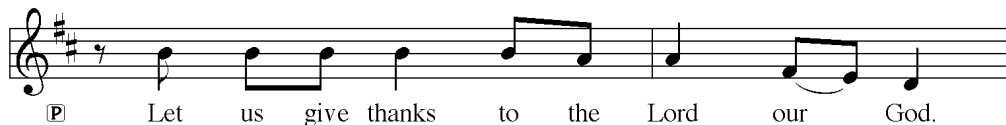
## Great Thanksgiving



♩ The Lord be with you. ♪ And al - so 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.

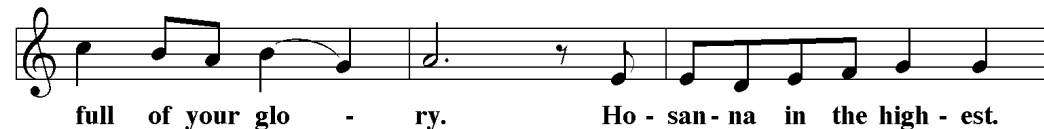
♩ It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and ever living God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes again to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



♪ Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord,



Lord God of pow'r and might, heav-en and earth are



full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed, bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the





Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

### **Eucharistic Prayer**

☐ Holy God, the Beginning and the End, our Salvation and our Hope, we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty. When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair, you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy. At this end of the ages your Son Jesus came to bring us your love and to heal all the suffering world.

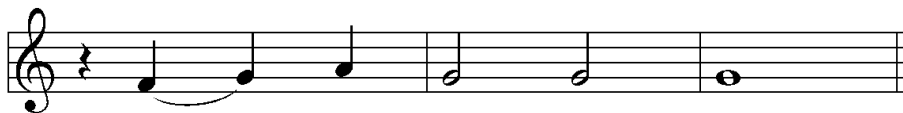
In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; He broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.



☐ Christ has died. Christ is ris - en.



Christ will come a - gain.

☐ Remembering, therefore, his life, death and resurrection, we await his coming again in righteousness and peace.



☐ A - men. Come, Lord Je - sus.

☐ Send your Spirit on us and on this bread and wine we share: strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.



☞ Through him all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.



### Lord's Prayer

☞ Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us always to 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.**

### Invitation to Communion:

☞ Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you. Share in the feast of salvation.

#### *Communion at Grace*

*All who are present are invited to receive Holy Communion. This sacrament is a gift to all who come with open hands and open hearts to the presence of Jesus.*

✠ **Bread** is served by the Pastor. **Wine** is served from a *common cup* by the Assisting Minister.

✠ If you need gluten free bread, please let the Pastor know when you come forward.

✠ If you prefer wine from the *pouring chalice* in an **individual cup**, take an empty cup from the tray and have it filled by the Worship Assistant. Return the individual chalice/cup to the basket provided.

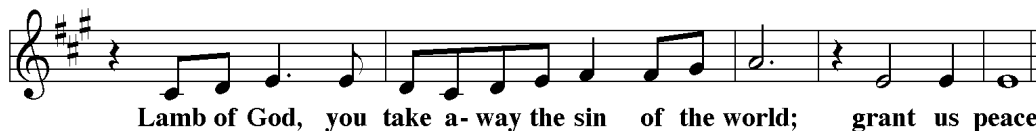
✠ **Grape Juice** is provided in the pre-filled cups in the center of the serving tray.

✠ A **Verbal Blessing** may be given by the Pastor, if you do not wish to commune.

✠ If you wish **communion brought to you** in the pew, please notify the usher.

Sit

## Lamb of God



*You Are Holy*

ELW 525 (red book)

*Canticle of the Turning*

ELW 723

*Stand as you are able.*

### Prayer after Communion

☐ Let us pray . . . God for whom we wait, you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share.

☑ Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts, and send us forth to be your people in the world, announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Sit*

### Announcements

*Stand as you are able*

### Blessing

☐ May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path. Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

☑ Amen.

*All children and youth, as well as the young at heart and playful spirits, are invited to come forward to make music and dance during the Sending Hymn. Please choose one instrument to play or one scarf to use for waving and dancing.*

**Sending Hymn**

*Arise, Your Light Has Come*

**ELW 314** (red book)

**Sending**

**A** Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

**G** **Thanks be to God.**

If you forgot to place your Participation Card in the offering plate, you can still drop it off in the basket outside the sanctuary.

## Stewardship Information

The local **Food Pantry** located at the Methodist Church on Green Street is currently in need of cereal, instant potatoes, elbow macaroni and canned pasta, ie, spaghetti-o's, etc.

Worshippers last week: 103

Weekly Giving: \$4,532.00

Budget

Amount: \$4,226.98

**Brothers of Grace** - Calling all men 18 years of age and older to our annual BOG Christmas Dinner Night Out. This year we will meet at the Waldorf Brew Pub & Bistro on Tuesday **December 13**, at 6:00 p.m. Please sign the sign-up sheet located on bulletin board by Pastor Paul's office.

**Bell Choir Outreach** on **Thursday, Dec. 15** beginning at 4:00 pm, come join the handbells at Thornapple Manor in the Whispering Way living room. The Clapper Kids will be ringing for the staff and residents. Having extra Grace family there to sing and visit with residents would be a great way to help us spread the message of Christ's saving love.

**Children's breakout sessions during Advent** will be offered each Wednesday during Advent services at 7:00 pm.

**Greeting Cards** - The MS and HS youth are selling greeting cards to raise funds for their activities.. These are nice quality, thick cards! There are 12 cards per package, each with an inspirational message and a scripture verse. They make great gifts too! The cards are 1 pkg of 12 for \$8.00 or 2 pkgs for \$15.00. The cards will be available after services or you can contact Jana Bishop, Jenn Rosenberger or Victoria, our Parish Administrator.

**Calling all painters!** If you would like to help paint at Grace to help us complete 'phase 1', please sign up on the sheet outside Pastor Paul's office, in the Gathering Space. You can come as you have availability and follow the directions posted on the walls, or meet others Saturday morning.

**Advent Wednesday Services** at 7:00 pm, following the Advent Dinner at 6:00 pm. Bring a friend or relative.

**Time to clean up Grace!** Let's clean up the dust and stuff that has accumulated throughout the Renovation Project on Saturday, **December 17** at 9:00 am. Bring your vacuum cleaners with furniture attachments, Swiffers, dust rags and Pledge, to get this building back to a pristine and useable condition again. We need everyone's help!

## Today's Worship Leaders

	8:00 am	10:45am
<b>Assisting Ministers</b>	Barry Wood	Mark Anton
<b>Cantor</b>	Jack Vos	Myrina Clements
<b>Lector</b>	Carl Schoessel	Gwen Hansen
<b>Communion Server</b>	Jana Bishop	Diane Neeb
<b>Acolyte/Crucifer</b>	Grayson Patton	Hope Peck
<b>Usher</b>	Mark/Jana Bishop	Gary/Lisa Golnek
	Tom/Cheryl Drumm	Doug/Diane Neeb
<b>Greeter/Coffee Hr.</b>	Jack/Carol Vos	John/Mary Kleinbrink
<b>Children's Church</b>	Volunteers	Children's Church
		Tom/Cheryl
<b>Drumm</b>		
<b>Chancel Team</b>	Lisa Golnek	

### Next Sunday's Worship Leaders, December 18, 2016

<b>Assisting Ministers</b>	Steve Kaiser	Vickey Argo
<b>Cantor</b>	Mark Anton	Kate Watson
<b>Lector</b>	Mary Kuhlman	Joyce Daugherty
<b>Communion Server</b>	Melissa Patton	Phyllis Lietz
<b>Acolyte/Crucifer</b>	Katie Pohl	Clyde N Watson
<b>Usher</b>	Dan, Melissa	Ed Domke, Mark Anton
	Gavin & Grayson Patton	Dave Neeb
<b>Greeter/Coffee Hr.</b>	Tom/Cheryl Drumm	Doug/Diane Neeb
<b>Children's Church</b>	Volunteers	Children's Church
		Doug/Diane Neeb
<b>Chancel Team</b>	Lisa Golnek	

### THIS WEEK AT GRACE

<b>Today, December 11</b>	Adult Forum – Psalms 9:30 am Children's Church 10:45 am Noisy Offering Bell Worship Barry County Jail Worship High School/Middle School Youth Group 6:00-7:30 pm
<b>Monday, December 12</b>	Adult Forum 6:00 pm
<b>Tuesday, December 13</b>	Brothers of Grace 7:00-8:30 pm
<b>Wednesday, December 14</b>	Prayer Group 6:00 pm Advent dinner 6:00 pm Advent Service 7:00 pm
<b>Thursday, December 15</b>	Bell outing Grace Choir 7:15 pm
<b>Saturday, December 17</b>	Renovation Project Clean-up Day 9:00 am