

Grace Lutheran Church

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Righteousness Fulfilled

There are still places where teenage girls and women are tortured or murdered for actual or suspected infidelity, which is seen as an insult to family honor. Likewise, Mary's pregnancy posed danger to her and shame to Joseph. As a righteous man faithful to God's law, Joseph "planned to dismiss her quietly" (Matt. 1:19). It was the lenient alternative to stoning.

But then Joseph, like his namesake ancestor, had a dream. An angel's words opened up righteousness to an unthinkable wide and loving sweep: "Do not be afraid" (Matt. 1:20).

Welcome Mary home as your wife. The child is to be called Jesus ("The Lord saves").

Emmanuel, God-with-us. And he will save his people from their sins. Righteousness combined with unexpected action: at the beginning, as Jesus was being knit together in Mary's womb, Joseph embraced both mother and child as family.

How much sin and violence comes from trying to avoid shame? Shame walls us off and tells us we don't belong. Even if we don't face honor killing, we know what it is to feel alone, despised, helpless. Jesus saves by coming to be with us not where we wish we were, but exactly where we don't want to be. We are no longer alone but loved. Shame's power is destroyed.

Jesus persistently gathered to himself the shunned and condemned, endangered and afraid.

Crucified outside city walls, he was one with them from the beginning to the end. He took their part—our part—by the very way he was conceived and born.

Righteousness that is cherished yet open to dreams and messengers from God may look like it is overturned when it is really being fulfilled. Saved in the womb by a mother and earthly father who accepted God's unlikely call to a different kind of righteousness, Jesus' own living out of this righteousness eventually sent him to the cross, where death itself was destroyed.

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BEFORE WORSHIP

Our Participation Card has two sides to complete. Please fill it out and place it in the offering plate every Sunday. This card helps the ministry of both the Congregational Care and Community Outreach Committees.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 18, 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.

Welcome/Worship Instructions

Stand as you are able.

Gathering Music *Awake, Awake and Greet the New Morn* **WOV 633** (blue book)

Greeting

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

☑ **And also with you.**

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

☐ Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. In your Son, Emmanuel, you have shown us your light and saved us from the power of sin. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath.

☑ **Increase our longing for your presence, that at the celebration of your Son's birth his Spirit might dwell anew in our midst, for he is our light and our salvation.**

☐ Bless be God forever.

☑ **Amen.**

Acolyte lights four candles

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 King of nations, come,
O Cornerstone that binds in one:
Refresh the hearts that long for you;
Restore the broken, make us new.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Prayer of the Day

A Let us pray . . . Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come.

G With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Sit

First Reading:

Isaiah 7:10-16

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking refuge in Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign of Immanuel that is the only source of true safety: God is with us!

L A reading from **Isaiah**:

¹⁰The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. ¹²But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. ¹³Then Isaiah said: “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

A The word of the Lord.

G Thanks be to God.

Psalm 80:1-7,17-19




¹Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph | like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- | on the cherubim.

²In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, | and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and | come to help us.

³Restore | us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.


⁴O LORD| God of hosts,
how long will your anger fume when your | people pray? **R**

⁵You have fed them with the | bread of tears;
 you have given them bowls of | tears to drink.
⁶You have made us the derision | of our neighbors,
 and our enemies laugh | us to scorn.
⁷Restore us, O | God of hosts;
 let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.
¹⁷Let your hand be upon the one at | your right hand,
 the one you have made so strong | for yourself.
¹⁸And so will we never turn a- | way from you;
 give us life, that we may call up- | on your name.
¹⁹Restore us, O LORD| God of hosts;
 let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved. 


Second Reading:

Romans 1:1-7

Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.

 A reading from **Romans:**

¹Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ²which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

 The word of the Lord.

 **Thanks be to God.**

Stand as you are able.

Gospel Acclamation



 Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al-le-lu - ia.

Gospel Reading:

Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

▮ The Gospel according to **Matthew**.

☩ **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹⁸Now 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. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But 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. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

▮ 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

Savior of the Nations, Come

ELW 263 (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 universal and all servants of the gospel, for poets and artists, for musicians and preachers, and for theologians and teachers; that all proclaim that God is with us in Christ.

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, Trinity Lutheran Church in Battle Creek, First United Methodist Church in Hastings; Minister of Music Cindy and Pastor Paul. Let us pray,

☩ **Have mercy, O God.**

▮ For all plants and animals, seas and skies, snow and rain, and all of God's marvels; that all of creation grow and thrive as we bless, protect, and use with care what God has made. Let us pray,

☩ **Have mercy, O God.**

▮ For the nations and those in authority, for peace and justice throughout the whole world, and for those who advocate on behalf of others; that all in positions of leadership choose what is good

for the community. 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 thirsty and hungry, the weak and fearful, those in childbirth, those who mourn, and the sick; that they know Christ the Anointed One who dries up every tear and comforts those who suffer. Comfort all in need in body, mind, or spirit, especially *Steve Kaiser, Rick Palmer, Victoria Steadman, John Burdick, Elsie Merrow, Dave Hills, Jennifer Andersen, Bonnie Ehredt, Debra Wood and George Ulrich Jr.* Let us pray,

☩ Have mercy, O God.

Ⓐ For those who travel near and far, for those who prepare our congregation for worship and celebration, and for those who gather around word and sacrament; that all experience welcome and refreshment. 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 saints who have died and are now at rest; that the witness of their faith point us to the promises of grace and resurrection in Christ. 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

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

Let the Vineyards

WOV pg 21 (blue 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.

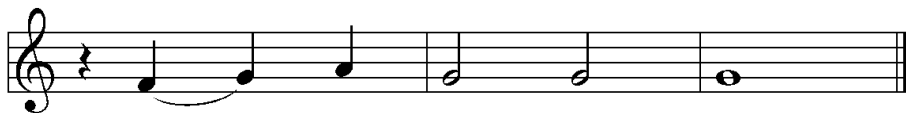
In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; He broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

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.

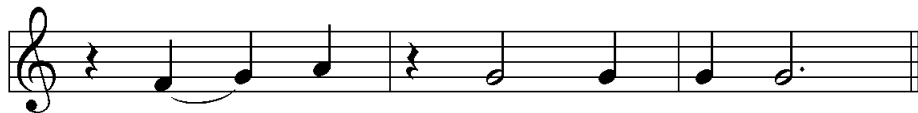


☐ Christ has died. Christ is ris - en.



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.

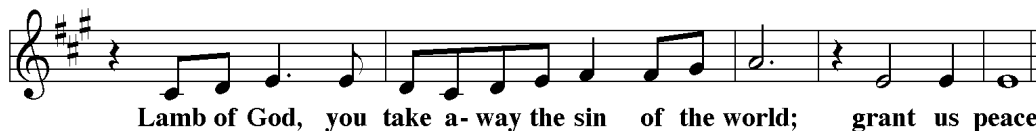
✠ **Grape Juice** is provided in the pre-filled cups in the center of the serving tray.

✠ 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



The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

ELW 265 (red book)

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

ELW 490

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

Canticle of the Turning

ELW 723 (red book)

Sending

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

G **Thanks be to God.**

Stewardship Information

The local **Food Pantry** located at the Methodist Church on Green Street is currently in need of sugar, elbow macaroni and saltine crackers.

Worshippers last week: 111

Weekly Giving: \$2,329.00

Budget

Amount: \$4,226.98

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.

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

Hat/Mitten/Glove/Sock Tree - the Outreach Committee is again gathering donations of hats, mittens/gloves, and socks for area school children. The need for hats is less than the need for mittens/gloves and socks. A donation tree has been set-up in the gathering area. We plan to distribute the items collected to area schools the second week of January.

Community Outreach meetings have been changed to the second Monday of each month. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, **January 9th** at 5:00 pm.

Today's Worship Leaders

	8:00 am	10:45am
Assisting Ministers	Steve Kaiser	Vickey Argo
Cantor	Mark Anton	Kate Watson
Lector	Mary Kuhlman	Joyce Daugherty
Communion Server	Melissa Patton	Phyllis Lietz
Acolyte/Crucifer	Katie Pohl	Clyde N Watson
Usher	Dan, Melissa Gavin & Grayson Patton	Ed Domke, Mark Anton Dave Neeb
Greeter/Coffee Hr.	Tom\Cheryl Drumm	Doug/Diane Neeb
Children's Church	Volunteers	Children's Church Doug/Diane Neeb
Chancel Team	Lisa Golnek	

Next Sunday's Worship Leaders, December 25, 2016

Assisting Ministers		Mark Anton
Cantor		Mark Anton
Lector		Sandy Mosteller
Communion Server		<i>Volunteer</i>
Acolyte/Crucifer		<i>Volunteer</i>
Usher		<i>Volunteers</i>
Greeter/Coffee Hr.		<i>Volunteers</i>
Children's Church	Volunteers	Children's Church Kim, Matt & Jeanette Markwart
Chancel Team	Lisa Golnek	

THIS WEEK AT GRACE

Today, December 18	Adult Forum – Psalms 9:30 am Children's Church 10:45 am
Tuesday, December 20	Council meeting 6:00-8:30 pm
Wednesday, December 21	Prayer Group 6:00 pm Advent dinner 6:00 pm Advent Service 7:00 pm
Saturday, December 24	Christmas Eve Service 7:00 pm
Sunday, December 25	Christmas Day Service 10:00 am