

Grace Lutheran Church

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Blessings and the Blessed

Not that long ago, many of us sat around the Thanksgiving table and named our blessings with gratitude: food, family, friends, home, health. It is good to give God thanks. In the Beatitudes, however, Jesus teaches a countercultural lesson: God's gifts (blessings) should not be confused with God's favor (the blessed).

It's understandable to be confused. When counting blessings, we don't include being broke or heartbroken. We don't thank God for feeling like a loser or being full of doubt. We don't note a terminal diagnosis in our gratitude journal. God's blessings, God's gifts, we learn over a lifetime, are not all hoped-for or sweet. In a hospital room, for example, emptied of personal power and control after a difficult diagnosis, we can still be blessed with the fullness of God's presence.

So, hear the good news: God blesses each and every one of us. God gifts the deserving and undeserving. Those who have permanent disabilities and those who are temporarily abled. Happy, sad, sick, well. God favors the poor, those who mourn, the meek, those who search for righteousness, the merciful, the peacemakers, and those persecuted, hated, and slandered because of their belief in Jesus (Matt. 5:3-12).

In this good news, also hear God's invitation to show favor to God's blessed. To help neighbors known and unknown enjoy God's abundant life on earth as well as in heaven. To be merciful.

Spirit-led, we are merciful with acts of compassion, hospitality, and advocacy for justice. We bring meals, make quilts, organize letter-writing campaigns, offer respite, remember, notice, invite, comfort, reach out, and draw in. And, when we are open to receiving as well as giving, being merciful can turn into a mutual relationship. An "other" becomes a friend, reciprocally blessed and a blessing. Loving God leads to loving our neighbor as ourselves.

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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.

4th Sunday after the Epiphany

January 29, 2017

The season of Epiphany begins January 6th (the 12th day after Christmas) and marks the revelation of the baby Jesus as the Son of God. The Epiphany season, therefore, celebrates the spread of the Good News from its source in the Jewish community to all nations on earth. The color is green, for growth, as Scripture texts explore the mission of the church in the world.

Holy Silence is observed as we enter to worship.

Pre- Service Music

Grace Bell Choir

Welcome/Worship Instructions

Stand as you are able.

Gathering Hymn

Bind Up Together

WOV 748 (blue book)

Greeting

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

☞ **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day

☞ Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart.

☞ **Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

Sit

First Reading

Micah 6:1-8

With the mountains and the foundations of the earth as the jury, God brings a lawsuit against Israel. God has "wearied" Israel with a long history of saving acts. God does not want or expect lavish sacrifices to attempt to earn divine favor. Rather God empowers the people to do justice, to love loyalty to God, and to walk shrewdly in God's service.

☞ A reading from **Micah:**

¹Hear what the LORD says: Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. ²Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the LORD, and you enduring foundations of the earth; for the LORD has a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel.

³"O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me! ⁴For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and redeemed you from the house of slavery; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. ⁵O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised, what Balaam son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the LORD."

⁶“With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” ⁸He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

God, we thank you for your Word,

the story of your grace.

Special Music

Grace Bell Choir

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 5:1-12

Jesus opens the Sermon on the Mount by naming those who are blessed in the reign of God.

The Holy Gospel, according to **Matthew**.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: ³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ⁵“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. ⁶“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. ⁷“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. ⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. ⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. ¹⁰“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Introduction of Guest Speaker - Stephen Larghi, Family Promise of Barry County

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

According to the world's standards of power and might, the message of the cross seems stupid and offensive. Yet this word reveals the paradoxical way God has chosen to work power and salvation through weakness, rejection, and suffering. Hence the message of the cross becomes true wisdom and power for believers.

A A reading from **1 Corinthians:**

¹⁸The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." ²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

²⁶Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no one might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

L God, we thank you for your Word,

G the story of your grace.

Grace Puppet Ministry

Song of the Day

When Love is Found

WOV 749 (blue book)

Kneel or sit as able.

Prayers

A Called to be a light to the nations, let us pray for God's justice, peace, and healing.

A brief silence.

A We pray for wholeness in the body of Christ. Bind up fractures within the church. Humble the proud and lift up the lowly. Make us one at your table. 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 Thoas Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cheboygan, First United Methodist Church in Hastings; Minister of Music Cindy and Pastor Paul.* Hear us, O God.

G Your mercy is great.

A We praise you for the beauty of the universe. For the light of the stars, for the majesty of the mountains, we thank you. Mold us into stewards of your creation. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A We pray for peacemakers around the world. End violence. Restore communities. Stop bribery within political systems. Reign with justice and peace and commit us to this act of discipleship. Protect the lives of those who serve in the military, especially Myrina Clements, Kayla Pohl, Joshua Wright, Tim Krewson and Tyler Van Houten. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A We pray for our neighbors who mourn, who have no clean water, who hunger. Provide their daily bread. Heal the forgotten, the lost, and our enemies, family, and friends. Comfort the sick and their caregivers, especially *Danny Gillons, Jennifer Andersen, Kris Gilbert, Barb Rathbauer, Debra Wood, George Ulrich Jr, Greg & Tina Kemper, Lilli & Lauren Borkawski, and the family of Sue Schau.* Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A We praise you for this congregation. Bless the work and play of young and old. Deepen our faith. Expand our discipleship. Equip us to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A Be attentive, gracious God, to the individual petitions we lift to you in loud voice or in the silence of our hearts.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A Hear us, O God,

C **Your mercy is great.**

A We praise you for all the saints who died proclaiming the gospel. Strengthen us through their witness. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

P Receive these prayers in the name of Christ, the light of the world, who is one with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Stand as you are able

Sharing the Peace of God

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

(We share the peace of Christ with one another.)

Sit

Offering of Gifts and 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.

Offering Song

Create in Me

ELW 187 (red book)



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -



new a right spir - it with - in me.



Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take not your



Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -



store to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,



and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

Offering Prayer

A Let us pray . . . Merciful God, receive the gifts we bring, our selves, our time, and our possessions.

C Through this meal unite us as your body, shining with the light of your justice and mercy; for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Great Thanksgiving

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

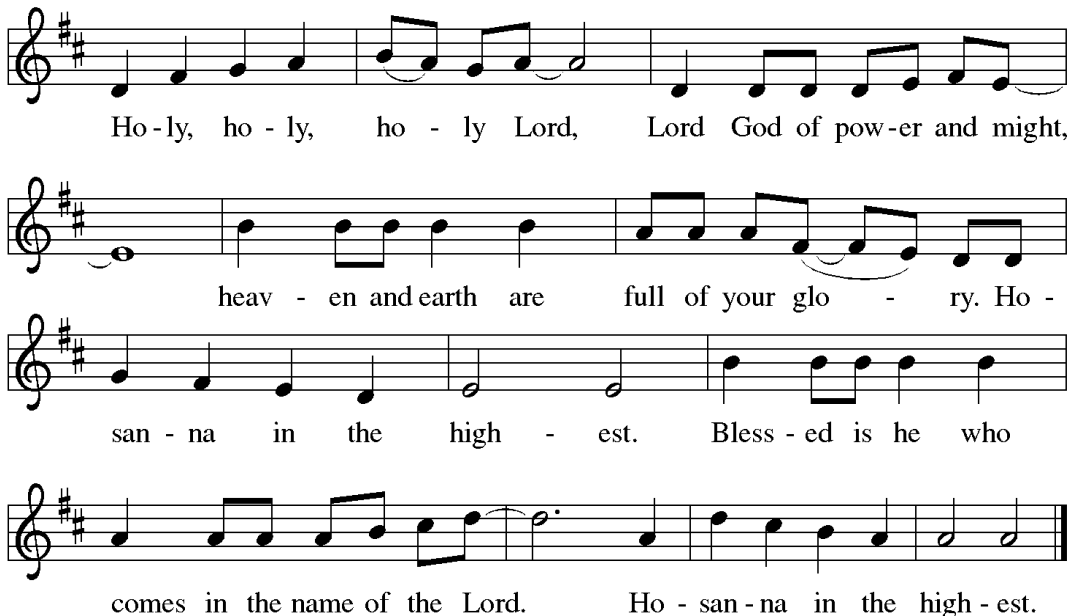
P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

☑ It is right to give our thanks and praise.

☐ It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations; in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son; and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory. And so, with all the choirs of angels, 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 - er and might,
heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Eucharistic Prayer

☐ You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God. You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory. You so loved the world that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.

☑ We give you thanks for his coming into the world to fulfill for us your holy will and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

☐ In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; 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 risen. Christ will come again.

☐ Remembering, therefore, his salutary command, his life-giving passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension, and the promise of his coming again, we give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty, not as we ought but as we are able.

☑ **We ask you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving and with your Word and Holy Spirit to bless us, your servants, and these your own gifts of bread and wine.**

☐ May we and all who share in the body and blood of Christ be filled with heavenly blessing and grace, and, receiving the forgiveness of sin, be formed to live as your holy people and be given our inheritance with all your saints.

☑ **To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever. Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

☐ Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

☑ **Our Father in heaven, holy 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

☐ We who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Come. Be filled with light and life.

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

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Blest Are They

ELW 728 (red book)

Canticle of the Turning

ELW 723

In Christ There is No East or West

ELW 650

Stand

Prayer after Communion

A O Morning Star, fair and bright, you have refreshed us again with heavenly food. You are our dearest treasure.

C Go with us now—today, tomorrow, every day—that we tell the story of your never-ending love and sing your praise both now and forever. Amen.

Congregational Announcements

Blessing

P The God of glory dwell in you richly, name you beloved, and shine brightly on your path; and the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

C 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 Song

Christ, Be Our Light

ELW 715

Dismissal

A Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.

G **Thanks be to God.**

Today's Worship Leaders

	8:00 am	10:00am
Assisting Ministers		Steve Kaiser
Cantor		Mark Anton
Lector		Carla Neil
Communion Server		Phyllis Lietz
Acolyte/Crucifer		Jack Barnaart
Usher		Mark Anton, Gwen Hansen Volunteers
Greeter/Coffee Hr. Children's Church		Ingrid Morgan, Carla Neil Children's Church Tom/Cheryl Drumm
Chancel Team	Vickey Argo	

Next Sunday's Worship Leaders, February 5, 2017

Assisting Ministers	Randy Teegardin	Mark Anton
Cantor	Steve Kaiser	Vickey Argo
Lector	Mary Kuhlman	Kristi Winick
Communion Server	Jan Schreiner	Sandy Mosteller
Acolyte/Crucifer	Katie Pohl	Gabe Barnaart
Usher	Tom/Cheryl Drumm	Ed Domke, Gwen Hansen Sandy Mosteller, Joe Longcor
Greeter/Coffee Hr. Children's Church	Steve/Peg Kaiser Volunteers	Eve Wright Children's Church Tom, Hope, Emma Peck
Chancel Team	Chris Bush, Lisa Golnek	

THIS WEEK AT GRACE

Today, January 29

Worship at 10:00 am
Adult Forum 8:45 am
Children's Church 10:00 am
Family Promise Sunday

Monday, January 30

Congregational Care 3:00-4:30 pm

Wednesday, February 1

Prayer Group 6:00 pm

Thursday, February 2

Clapper Kids bell choir 3:45-5:00 pm
Grace Notes adult bell choir 5:45-7:00 pm

Stewardship Information

Worshippers last week: 75

Weekly Giving: \$5,499.00

Budget Amount: \$4,226.98

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

Today is Family Promise of Barry County Sunday. Stephen Larghi, Director and developer of this inter-faith ministry, is visiting us to inform us of the nature of this mission in our county. We will also have a special offering today to help support this ministry.

Red Cross First Aid & CPR training on Feb 24 & 25. See the foyer board for specifics and to sign up. Contact Kim Domke, 269-908-0024, with questions.

Building Renovation – Phase II – begins February 18th. If you are available to help in any capacity, please contact Doug Neeb, 269-685-7831. There are jobs for all capabilities. We would also like to have several volunteers who are willing to prepare and bring in lunch for the work crew.

Congregational Care – is in need of an additional shepherd to make phone calls to members to keep them informed of funerals, cancelled worship services, one service Sundays, etc. If you are interested, please contact Margaret Wood, 269-948-4307.

Community Outreach has planned a Lenten devotional written by members of Grace. If you would like to participate, check the display in the Gathering Area for details. Dates and texts are listed which you can choose and directions for the devotional are also posted. Pastor Mike Kemper is the editor.

Vacation Bible Experience - It is never too early to begin making plans for VBE... Our first organizational meeting will be coming up soon. We are looking for a new Coordinator this year. Please prayerfully consider if God is calling you to this ministry opportunity. Grace has LOTS of folks willing to help and support the coordinator so no fears that you will be left alone. If this is your calling, please contact Jana Bishop at 269-838-3348 or mark.jana.bishop@gmail.com.

Youth Committee - We are looking for people interested in serving on the Youth Committee. The Committee is tasked with overseeing youth and family ministry activities at Grace. Being a member of this committee is not a commitment to lead a youth group, teach Sunday school, head up events such as VBE or the Christmas Program but rather a commitment to participate in committee meetings, brainstorm on how we can provide ministry to the youth of Grace and those beyond our doors and to pray for those who are “boots on the ground” doing the work of ministry. If God is calling you to be a part of this committee please contact Jana Bishop by February 15th at 269-838-3348 or mark.jana.bishop@gmail.com

Thanks to Pastor Mike Kemper for attending to some pastoral duties during Pastor Paul's vacation.