

Grace Lutheran Church

239 E North St
Hastings MI 49058



Website: www.grace-hastings.org

Facebook: Grace Lutheran Church-ELCA Hastings, MI
Worship Committee e-mail: gracelutheranworshipcommittee@gmail.com

Phone: (269) 945-9414
(269) 945-2645

Pastor Ken Scheck II
Ms. Cindy Olson, Minister of Music

Fastest. Pregnancy. Ever.

Usually a human pregnancy lasts nine months—and it's a few days, not a few hours, between our gospels announcing Mary's pregnancy on the fourth Sunday of Advent and the birth of Jesus on Christmas Eve. But nothing will be impossible with the church calendar! Today, annunciation and delivery touch like folded segments of an accordion, or a wrinkle in time.

Once a child was reading a book about where babies come from. It explained that a human egg was smaller "than the dot at the end of this sentence." The child stopped reading, caught up in wonder, staring at the dot. How could something invisible be transformed into . . . me? You? Every one of us?

One thing we can say with confidence about each pregnancy, whether it originates the old-fashioned way, is helped along by modern science, or follows from a young woman's perplexing conversation with an angel: we don't know exactly when it starts. After a baby is born we can count backwards and make some guesses, but in the moment we cannot feel precisely when that new life blossoms.

In the darkness, where we can't perceive them, everyday miracles take shape. In Advent night as we long for peace on earth, and in our midwinters of the spirit when hope is far away, we are reminded that new life develops within us before we're consciously aware of it. Even now. Today. For nothing will be impossible with God.

Pondering, we move with Mary from "How can this be?" to "Let it be." Time wrinkles, a dot expands, and the Word becomes flesh to pitch a tent among us. For the power of the Most High, whisking away the offer of a cedar palace, loves to travel light and takes joy in surprising those who were said to be barren. The Spirit overshadows, and we ourselves become God's house, a moving tabernacle, a holy dwelling—dancing in darkness at the wonder of a child.

4th Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2017

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

Welcome/Worship Instructions

Stand as you are able.

Gathering Music *Awake, Awake and Greet the New Moon* **ELW 242** (red book)

Greeting

☐ Blessed be the Holy Trinity; one God; the only sovereign, who dwells in light; Christ Jesus, who came to save sinners; the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

☑ **Amen.**

Celebration of Light on the Advent Wreath – Angels’ Candle

☐ Wrapped in Winter’s darkness, many circles of Christmas lights point the way to the birthplace of Emmanuel.

☑ **Those circles of light that shine everywhere are holy symbols of unity more brilliant than any galaxy.**

☐ For when we are with each other,

☑ **then Emmanuel is among us.**

☐ Let us treasure beyond all gifts and all riches the sacred circle of unity that is always the mystic manger for the birth of God-among-us.

☑ **In the busy days of Christmas, let us not break the circle of communion that was Jesus’ great wish for us disciples.**

The second candle is lit

Advent Singing *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* **ELW 240** (red book)

Light four candles to watch for Messiah:

let the light banish darkness.

He is coming, tell the glad tidings.

Let your lights be shining!

Responsive Litany of Seeking

☐ Sing to the Lord a new song.

☑ **Sing to the Lord, all the earth.**

☐ Sing to the Lord and bless God’s name.

☑ **Proclaim the Good News of God’s salvation from day to day.**

☐ Let us come before God’s presence with thanksgiving,

☑ **and raise a loud shout with psalms.**

- ℒ For the Lord is a great God,
- ☛ **and a great king above all gods.**
- ℒ Declare God's glory among the nations,
- ☛ **and God's wonders among all people.**
- ℒ Shout with joy to the Lord, all you lands.
- ☛ **Lift up your voice, rejoice and sing.**
- ℒ Sing to the Lord a new song,
- ☛ **for God has done marvelous things.**

Prayer of the Day

- Ⓐ Let us pray . . . Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come.
- ☛ **With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Sit

First Reading:

Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Instead of David building a house (temple) for the Lord, the Lord promises to establish David's house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the messiah, the Lord's anointed.

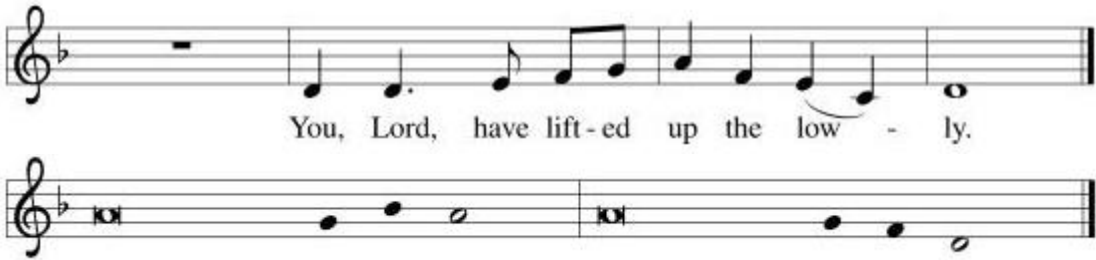
- ℒ A reading from **Samuel:**



¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" ⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

- Ⓐ The word of the Lord.
- ☛ **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm Luke 1:46b-55



- ^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness | of the Lord,
⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in | God my Savior,
⁴⁸**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your | lowly servant.**
From this day all generations will | call me blessed:
⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great | things for me
and holy | is your name.
⁵⁰**You have mercy on | those who fear you,**
from generation to | generation. 
⁵¹You have shown strength | with your arm
and scattered the proud in | their conceit,
⁵²**casting down the mighty | from their thrones**
and lifting | up the lowly.
⁵³You have filled the hungry | with good things
and sent the rich | away empty.
⁵⁴**You have come to the aid of your | servant Israel,**
to remember the prom- | ise of mercy,
⁵⁵the promise made | to our forbears,
to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever. 


Second Reading:

Romans 16:25-27

Paul closes his letter to the Romans by praising God because in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ God has revealed the promised, divine plan of salvation for all humanity. Paul proclaims this gospel of Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.

A reading from **Romans 16:25-27:**

²⁵Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

 The word of the Lord.

 **Thanks be to God.**

Stand as you are able.

Gospel Acclamation



- 1 O - pen your ears, O faith-ful peo-ple, o - pen your ears and hear God's word.
- 2 They who have ears to hear the mes-sage, they who have ears, now let them hear;



O - pen your hearts, O roy - al priest-hood, God has come to you.
they who would learn the way of wis - dom, let them hear God's word.

Refrain



To - rah o - ra, To - rah o - ra, hal - le - lu - jah!
God has spo - ken to the peo - ple, hal - le - lu - jah!



To - rah o - ra, To - rah o - ra, hal - le - lu - jah!
God has spo - ken words of wis - dom, hal - le - lu - jah!



To - rah o - ra, To - rah o - ra, hal - le - lu - jah!
God has spo - ken to the peo - ple, hal - le - lu - jah!



To - rah o - ra, To - rah o - ra, hal - le - lu - jah!
God has spo - ken words of wis - dom, hal - le - lu - jah!

Gospel Reading:

Luke 1:26-38

In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people (Mary) from little known places (Nazareth). This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in his gospel.

☐ The Gospel according to **Luke**.

☑ **Glory to you, O Lord.**

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

☐ 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

Canticle of the Turning

ELW 815 (red book)

Kneel or sit as you are able

The Prayers

☑ Guided by the light of Christ, let us pray for the coming dawn of joy, healing, and comfort for all God's people.

A brief silence.

☑ Your eternal reign has come into the world. Give us ears to hear your call to serve your kingdom, and send us out to those who are hurting and in need of good news. Empower and guide the faith of our bishops and congregations and all the servants of your church, including Bishops Elizabeth, and Craig, Assistants David, Sarah and Chrysanne; our synod companion churches, *Trinity Lutheran Church in Manton, St Ambrose Catholic Church in Delton*; Minister of Music Cindy and Pastor Ken. Lord, in your mercy,

☑ **hear our prayer.**

A You created the mystery and beauty of the earth. Replenish rivers, lakes, seas, and all bodies of water, so that plants, animals, and humans can have life and be refreshed. Lord, in your mercy,

G hear our prayer.

A You bring down the powerful and raise up the lowly. Where war rages, shatter hatred with forgiveness and peace. Where fear rules, make your all-powerful and eternal presence known. Protect those who serve in the military, including *Myrina Clements, Lance and Kayla Champaco, Joshua Wright, Parker Stancil, Tim Krewson and Tyler Van Houten*. Lord, in your mercy,

G hear our prayer.

A You remember us with mercy, Lord, as you have done for all generations. Fill us, comfort us, strengthen us, and enlighten us. Make your will known to all in need. Comfort all in need in body, mind, or spirit, including *Steve Kaiser, Mary Golnek, Aliane Haddix, Wanda Clark, Vicky Garrison, Barbara Macaully, Kris Gilbert, Corrina Palmer, Dennis Wilke Sr, Greg Kemper, Laura Miller, Magnus Zethelius, Dawn Henion, Caleb, the family of Debra Wood and the family of Lynnze*. Lord, in your mercy,

G hear our prayer.

A You called Mary to bear your Son. We pray for pregnant women, for mothers and fathers of infants and small children, and especially for couples who bear the pain of infertility, miscarriage, or stillbirth. Lord, in your mercy,

G Have mercy, O God.

A 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.

A Lord, in your mercy,

G hear our prayer.

A Your kingdom has no end. With your servants throughout time, women and men, old and young, unite us forever in your reign of peace and joy. Lord, in your mercy,

G hear our prayer.

P We raise our prayers to you, O God, in the name of the one who is, who was, and who is to come, Jesus Christ our Lord.

G Amen.

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 Us Talents and Tongues Employ

ELW 674 (red book)

Offertory Prayer

A Let us pray . . . Savior of the nations, come. Make your home here in us.

G Feed us with your love, that our faith shine ever new and our lives reveal your light.

Amen.

Sharing the Peace

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

G And also with you.

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

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 God thanks and praise.**

☞ It is indeed right and salutary that we should everywhere and always offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, through Jesus Christ, who is your promised light which no night can overcome, 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, God of pow-er and might,



heav'n 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, 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.**

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

☒ **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.**

Sit

Invitation to Communion:

☐ Share in the inheritance of all the saints. Come to the table prepared for you.

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.

Lamb of God

Je - sus, Lamb of God: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, bear-er of our sins: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, re-deem-er of the world: give us your peace.

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

ELW 272 (red book)

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

ELW 265

That Boy-Child of Mary

ELW 293

Stand as you are able.

Prayer after Communion

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

C 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

P 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.

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 Hymn

Joy to the World

ELW 267 (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, saltine crackers, boxed instant mashed potatoes and cake frosting.

Worshippers last week: 113 Weekly Giving: \$ 2,897.00 Budget Amount:
\$4,181.22

December 31 – Sunday worship service is at 10:00 am, and pre-service will be a hymn sing starting at 9:40 am.

Women's Bible Study will **NOT** meet the first Tuesday in January. Our next meeting will be **January 9th** at 12:30pm.

Votive Candles – as the Epiphany season is approaching, Pastor Ken is inviting each family to bring a votive candle during the season of light. We will be using them and lighting them on **January 31, 2018.**

Renovation Update - Being good stewards of God, there was a decision to go ahead with the purchase of carpet that was needed for the church. The price for the carpet has risen steadily during our fundraising efforts and the church was faced with another price increase in the near future. We have a current debt of \$16,258.38 for this purchase. We would be blessed if you would be willing to help pay down this debt we owe to ourselves. Thanks for your consideration. If you would like to write a check, please remember to write 'carpet fund' in the memo line.

Calendars - All committees and groups are responsible for adding their meetings and events on the large calendar outside the church office. If you would like your items included on the calendar that is distributed with the GraceGram, they must be placed on the calendar (for February meetings/ events, place the item on the calendar by January 17th)

Worship Committee would love to get your input about our worship here at Grace. Their email address is gracelutheranworshipcommittee@gmail.com

THIS WEEK AT GRACE

Today, December 24

Worship at 10:00 am

Christmas Eve service at 7:00 pm

Monday, December 25

Christmas Day – Office Closed

Wednesday, Dec 27

Youth at The Gathering - Lansing

Sunday, December 31

Worship at 10:00 am

Today's Worship Leaders

10:00 am

Assisting Ministers

Traci Wales

Cantor

Volunteer

Lector

Gwen Hansen

Communion Server

Phyllis Lietz

Acolyte/Crucifer

Hope Peck

Usher

Gary/Lisa Golnek, *volunteers*

Greeter/Coffee Hr.

Volunteers

Children's Church

Doug/Diane Neeb

Chancel Team

Lisa Golnek

Next Sunday's Worship Leaders, December 31, 2017 - 10:00 am

Assisting Ministers

Vickey Argo

Cantor

Mark Anton

Lector

Joyce Daugherty

Communion Server

Sandy Mosteller

Acolyte/Crucifer

Mark Anton

Usher

Joe Longcor, Gwen Hansen

Greeter/Coffee Hr.

Sandy Mosteller

Children's Church

Doug/Diane Neeb

Chancel Team

Lisa Golnek

Phil/Amy Poholski