

Grace Lutheran Church

239 E North St

Hastings MI 49058



Website: www.grace-hastings.org

Facebook: Grace Lutheran Church-ELCA Hastings, MI

Phone: (269) 945-9414

(269) 945-2645

Fax: (269) 945-2698

Pastor Paul E. Kuhlman

E-mail: gracehastingspastor@gmail.com

The Real Thing

Advertisers regularly try to convince us that we should buy the newest gadgets on the market, especially those featuring the most recent advances in digital technology. We are told that they will transform our lives.

This is partly true. Recent innovations have indeed changed our ways of interacting: we can now make phone calls from almost anywhere on the planet, send text and picture messages in an instant, have live video conversations, and express ourselves with a seemingly limitless choice of apps and social media platforms. Our world has become faster, more convenient, and much, much smaller.

And yet, we know that there is no substitute for face-to-face, in-the-flesh relationship. Seeing a loved one's face on a screen may be a temporary comfort, but we still long to be reunited in person. In the end, nothing beats the real thing.

The same is true with God. We need the real thing. Trapped in sin, fear, and bitterness, it is not enough for us to merely read about God in books or talk about God in the abstract or try on our own to be a good person. We need to meet God face to face and in the flesh! That is why God has come to us in the birth of Jesus Christ, which we celebrate today. Touching, healing, and living with ordinary people like us, Jesus freed them and us from captivity to sin, death, fear, and oppression.

Christ's transformative presence continues in the community assembled for worship in his name. In the hearing of the word, in the water of baptism, in the bread and cup of communion, and in sharing our lives with one another, God in Christ is really, physically present with us. This cannot be bought, sold, or controlled. This can only be received as a free gift. And for this gift, there is no substitute.

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2016 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.
Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #23413.

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.

Christmas Day

December 25, 2016

During the Christmas season, the Lectionary readings invite us to reflect on the Incarnation of God: Jesus, God's Word made flesh. In the person of Christ, God enters human history and identifies with the human condition. Traditional colors of the season include white and gold, symbolizing joy in the light of day. The use of the color red is symbolizing God's love.

Holy Silence is observed as we enter to worship.

Pre- Service Music

Welcome/Worship Instructions

Proclamation of the Birth of Jesus

Stand as you are able.

Gathering Hymn

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

ELW 270 (red 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.**

Hymn of Praise

What Child is This

ELW 296

vs 1

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;

Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

Prayer of the Day

☐ All-powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace.

☑ **Call us out of darkness, and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Sit

First Reading

Isaiah 52:7-10

A messenger races home to Jerusalem with the marvelous words: "Your God reigns!" In comforting the people, God proves to be the best brother or sister (redeemer) they have ever known. Everyone will witness the victory (salvation) of God.

☐ A reading from **Isaiah**.

⁷How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." ⁸Listen! Your

sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the LORD to Zion. ⁹Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. ¹⁰The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

☒ God, we thank you for your Word,

☑ **the story of your grace.**

Psalm Song

Oh, Sing to the Lord

ELW 822 (red book)

Second Reading

Hebrews 1:1-12

This letter opens with a lofty declaration of Jesus' preeminent status as the Son through whom God created the world and through whom our sins are cleansed. God speaks to us now through the Son, who is exalted even above the angels.

☒ A reading from **Hebrews**.

¹Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"? ⁶And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." ⁷Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire." ⁸But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom. ⁹You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."

¹⁰And, "In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; ¹¹they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing; ¹²like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end."

☒ God, we thank you for your Word,

☑ **the story of your grace.**

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

What Child is This

ELW 296 (see insert)

vs 2

*Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!*

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:1-14

The prologue to the Gospel of John describes Jesus as the Word of God made flesh, the one who reveals God to be “full of grace and truth.”

☞ The Holy Gospel, according to **Luke**.

☞ **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

☞ The Gospel of the Lord.

☞ **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sit

Message

Silence for reflection

Song of the Day *To Shepherds As They Watched By Night*

- 1. To shepherds as they watched by night appeared a host of angels bright;
Behold the tender Babe, they said, in yonder lowly manger laid.*
- 2. At Bethlehem, in David's town, as Micah did of old make known;
'Tis Jesus Christ, your Lord and King, who does to all salvation bring.*
- 3. Oh, then rejoice that through His Son God is with sinners now at one;
Made like yourselves of flesh and blood, Your brother is the eternal God.*
- 4. What harm can sin and death then do? The true God now abides with you.
Let hell and Satan rage and chafe, Christ is your Brother--you are safe.*
- 5. Not one He will or can forsake who Him his confidence doth make.
Let all his wiles the Tempter try, You may his utmost powers defy.*
- 6. You shall and must at last prevail; God's own you are, you cannot fail.
To God forever sing your praise with joy and patience all your days.*

Nicene Creed

A We confess our faith as one body in Christ Jesus:

C We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Kneel or sit as able.

Prayers

A Rejoicing in the good news of Christ's birth and dwelling in hope, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

A Holy God, you raise up leaders throughout the church to proclaim your word of hope. Unite the church through the good news of salvation, so that all will know and experience your glory. Strengthen the faith of our bishops and congregations and all the servants of your church. Lord, in your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

A Holy God, you created mountains and hills, seas and rivers, and all creatures. Reveal to us the goodness of all you have made so that we live wisely with these your gifts. Lord, in your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

A Holy God, you desire that all people live in peace. Guide all in positions of authority to lead with equity, and give courage to advocates who speak for the voiceless. Protect the lives of those who serve in the military, especially Myrina Clements, Kayla Pohl, Joshua Wright, Tim Krewson and Tyler Van Houten. Lord, in your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

A Holy God, you sent your Son to be our physician and remedy. Strengthen medical professionals and counselors to care for the sick and grieving, so that all people experience healing and consolation. Comfort all in need in body, mind, or spirit, especially *Steve Kaiser, Rick Palmer, Victoria Steadman, John Burdick, Danny Gillons, Elsie Mellow, Ken & Kathy Plourde, Judy Hill, Abigail Kopf, David Hills, Doug Haddix, Oliver Cheeseman, and Joe Longcor.* Lord, in your mercy,

☞ hear our prayer.

A Holy God, you gather us together in community, blessing us with friends and family. Make yourself known to all who participate in worship today, and send us forth to serve our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy,

☞ hear our prayer.

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 Lord, in your mercy,

☞ hear our prayer.

A Holy God, you show your love and faithfulness in every generation. Through the witness of our ancestors in the faith, you have shown us how to testify to your grace and truth. Lord, in your mercy,

☞ hear our prayer.

P Hear the prayers of your people, glorious God, for the sake of the one who took on our nature and form to redeem the whole world, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

☞ Amen.

Stand as you are able

Sharing the Peace of God

P The peace of the Word made flesh be with you all.

☞ And also with you.

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

Sit

Offering of Gifts and Music

The offering is received as the table is prepared.

Stand as you are able.

Offering Song

What Child is This

ELW 296 (see insert)

vs 3

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him.

The King of Kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.

Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;

Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

Offering Prayer

A Let us pray . . . God with us: You came as a baby to a manger.

☞ You slept on straw and greeted shepherds. You come again in bread and wine. Remind us how good you are at blessing ordinary things. And then, through these gifts, help us to bless the lives of others in the strength of your holy name. Amen.

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 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. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven we praise your name.

Angels We Have Heard on High

ELW 289 (see insert)

vs 1 & 3

*Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.*

Refrain: Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;

Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king.

Refrain: Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Eucharistic Prayer

☞ Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your word brought light into the world.

☞ **In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our darkness and to make us your daughters and sons.**

☞ 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.

☞ **Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him.**

☞ By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Son.

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

Lord's Prayer

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

C **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

P Joy to the world! The Lord is come. Let every heart receive your Savior.

Sit

Sharing the Meal

The usher(s) will release you from the pew. Left side and right side will process forward simultaneously forming two lines, to receive holy communion. Let the usher know if you would like to receive communion in the pew.

Away in the Manger

Lo, How a Rose E're Blooming

Go Tell it on the Mountain

O Little Town of Bethlehem

ELW 278 (red book)

ELW 272

ELW 290

ELW 279

Stand

Prayer after Communion

A On this day, O God, you gave us Christ the Son to save us.

C **As you sent the one foretold, send us now with good news for all people. Let the gladness of this feast have no end as we share with others the joy that fills us; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

Blessing

P May Christ, who by his incarnation has filled us with grace and truth, give you peace this Christmas and always. Almighty God, Father, † Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Sending Song

Joy to the World

ELW 267 (red book)

Dismissal

A Glory to God in the highest!

C **Peace to God's people on earth!**

A Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Stewardship Information

Worshippers last week: 104

Weekly Giving: \$4,407.00

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.

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.

New Nametags are coming in January! Keep an eye on your mailbox for your new nametag. They will come with a new design and a new way of displaying them on your person.

Merry Christmas, everyone, and have a joy-filled Christmas season (through January 6, Epiphany Day).

Communications Team meeting – January 3 at 10:00 am, in Pastor Paul's office.

Lenten Devotional is being planned by the Community Outreach Committee with daily devotional messages written by our members. A display listing scriptural texts for the 40 days of Lent is posted in the gathering area where members can sign up and choose their devotional texts and dates. Information is also available on the sign-up board with instructions on how to write and submit your devotional(s). Please consider being a part of this meaningful Lenten tradition that will help us all focus on the meaning of the season of Lent. If you have questions please feel free to speak with Mike Kemper, chairperson of our Community Outreach Committee.

Today's Worship Leaders

	8:00 am	10:00 am
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	

Next Sunday's Worship Leaders, January 1, 2017

Assisting Ministers		Vickey Argo
Cantor		Jack Vos
Lector		Carol Vos
Communion Server		Diane Neeb
Acolyte/Crucifer		Katie Pohl
Usher		Gary/Lisa Golnek
		Doug/Diane Neeb
Greeter/Coffee Hr.		Eve Wright
Children's Church		Children's Church
Chancel Team	Cindy Beckwith	

THIS WEEK AT GRACE

Today, December 25	Worship at 10:00 am Children's Church 10:00 am
Wednesday, December 28	Prayer Group 6:00 pm The Gathering – HS Youth
Sunday, January 1	New Year's Day Service 10:00 am Children's Church 10:00 am