

Grace Lutheran Church

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Pastor Ken Scheck
Ms. Cindy Olson, Minister of Music

Tender Branch, Hidden Life

Advent begins with urgent cries for help. From Isaiah: “O that you would tear open the heavens and come down” (Isa. 64:1). And from the prayer of the day: “Stir up your power”—stir up your strength—and come to help us.

Our gospel today refers to suffering that will darken sun and moon and cast stars into freefall. The psalmist and Isaiah cry that God’s people have drunk bowls of tears and feel as frail as dead, wind-tossed leaves. God’s face is hidden. The desperation of a cry for help reflects the intensity of a trauma. So do the calls to God for action: Tear open! Stir up! Strike as forcefully as earthquake or fire! But any cry for help is also a sign of hope: we expect someone to hear and to respond.

In the gospel Jesus tells of his future coming with power and glory. But then, surprisingly, he shifts his focus from the clouds of heaven to a single fig tree whose branch will become tender so it can put forth new leaves. Even if everything in our world is shaken and falls, in God’s time there is promise of new life and a future season. Power exists not only in one hundred billion galaxies, but in tough bark that softens to allow fresh growth.

In October 2001 workers at Ground Zero uncovered a charred, twisted, pear tree. Astonishingly, the tree was still alive. It has been nurtured and given a place of honor at the 9/11 Memorial as “The Survivor Tree.” Its seedlings are sent as encouragement to communities that have experienced tragedy.

When God seems absent or silent, Jesus awakens us to the hidden life that courses through us as through the branches of a tree. “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away”—and here we are, two thousand years later, gathered around those very words (Mark 13:31). Jesus alerts us to God’s nearness in ordinary leaves, words, responses to our cries.

First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 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

Fling Wide the Door

ELW 259 (red book)

Greeting

P 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.

C Amen.

Celebration of Light on the Advent Wreath – Prophecy Candle

L In the darkness we light the flame of hope.

C **May it dance not only upon our Advent Wreath but within each of our hearts.**

L Hope is the flower that blooms from the ground of faith.

C **With joy we celebrate the light on this Advent Candle in prayerful expectation.**

L This dancing flame sings out that the reign of God, that pure light is slowly dawning in our world.

C **Let this Advent season, now beginning, bring us a new birth of hope in the ancient promise of God.**

The first candle is lit

Advent Singing

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

WOV 630(blue book)

Light one candle to watch for Messiah:

let the light banish darkness.

He shall bring salvation to Israel,

God fulfills the promise.

Responsive Litany of Hope

L With open hearts we await you.

C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

L With open arms we beckon you.

C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

L With open mouths we greet you.

C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Prayer of the Day

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

■ **By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Sit

First Reading:

Isaiah 64:1-9

This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.

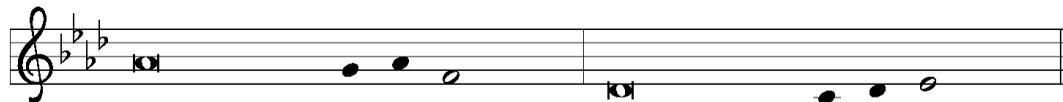
▣ A reading from **Isaiah**:

¹O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence—²as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! ³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. ⁴From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. ⁵You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. ⁶We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. ⁷There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. ⁸Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. ⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

▲ The word of the Lord.

■ **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.

²**In 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.

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

⁵You have fed them with the | bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of | tears to drink.

⁶**You 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.

¹⁷**Let 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.

¹⁹**Restore us, O LORD| God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.** 

Second Reading:

Corinthians 1:3-9

As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.

 A reading from **Corinthians:**

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—⁶just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

 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:

Mark 13:24-37

In today's reading, Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

☞ The Gospel according to **Mark**.

☞ **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] ²⁴“In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

☞ 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

My Lord, What a Morning

ELW 438 (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.

☞ Give light to your people, Lord. As the darkness grows and we await the return of daylight, give new life to your church. Shape our communities to be faithful vessels of the gospel for the sake of the world. Empower and guide the faith of our bishops and congregations and all the servants of your church, including Bishops Elizabeth and Craig, Assistants David and Sarah; our synod companion churches, *Bethany Lutheran Church in Ludington, Quimby United Methodist Church*; Minister of Music Cindy and Pastor Ken. Let us pray,

☞ **Have mercy, O God.**

Ⓐ Restore your creation, Lord. You give the earth opportunities for both sleep and awakening. Thank you for the gift of restful seasons so new life may grow according to your appointed time. Let us pray,

☞ **Have mercy, O God.**

Ⓐ Bring peace to the nations, Lord. Keep us alert to injustice and oppression, give us courage to cry out for what is right, and guide world leaders toward fairness and peace for all. Protect those who serve in the military, including *Myrina Clements, Lance and Kayla Champaco, Joshua Wright, Parker Stancil, Tim Krewson and Tyler Van Houten*. Let us pray,

☞ **Have mercy, O God.**

Ⓐ Stir up compassion in us for all who wait for you. Be near to those whose lives are shaken, those who are experiencing loss, those who long for healing and wholeness, those who live with HIV and AIDS, and those who are in any kind of need. Comfort all in need in body, mind, or spirit, including *Gale Morway, Laura Miller, Magnus Zethelius, Nathan Allen, Abbie Kopf, Mary Golnek, Tim Lowe, John Glasgow, Zeus Duites, Barbara Macaully, Kris Gilbert and Kelly*.. Let us pray,

☞ **Have mercy, O God.**

Ⓐ We pray for child care workers, teachers, Sunday school leaders, and all who nurture and educate children. We give you thanks for their diligence and devotion. Thank you for sending us Pastor Ken. Be with his family while they are separated, and continue to bless this congregation with renewed energy for mission and ministry. 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.**

Ⓐ From ages past, your faithfulness has never failed. Shine your face upon us and bring us into the company of all your saints in light. Let us pray,

☞ **Have mercy, O God.**

Ⓟ 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.

☞ **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.

Offertory Hymn

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ

ELW 674 (red book)

Offertory Prayer

Ⓐ Let us pray . . . Savior of the nations, 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.

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.)

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, whose coming the prophets and John the Baptist announced with great joy. 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.

Stand as you are able.

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.

Come, Now, O Prince of Peace

ELW 247 (red book)

The King Shall Come

ELW 260

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

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

ELW 244 (red book)

Sending

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

C Thanks be to God.

Stewardship Information

The local **Food Pantry** located at the Methodist Church on Green Street is currently in need of saltine crackers, boxed instant mashed potatoes and cake frosting.

Worshippers last week: 94

Weekly Giving: \$2,778.00

Budget

Amount: \$4,181.22

Daily Devotionals for the season of Advent are available on the literature table at the back of the sanctuary.

Christmas Family Adoptions – information for children’s gifts and Christmas dinner donations are posted in the gathering area. If you would like specific gift giving ideas, please speak with Mike Kemper or phone him at 269-664-3599. If you would like to make a monetary donation for the perishable items we will purchase, checks may be written to Grace Lutheran Church, with the memo line of “Christmas Food Baskets”. Cash donations should be in an envelope marked “Christmas Food Baskets”.

Wednesday Advent Services - ADVENTure..... A Journey of Hope “As we walk in times that are not certain, we know that God is with us guiding and directing our days. This Advent you are invited to come on Wednesday nights to experience an adventure, as we explore some of the ways God has given our ancestors hope. Come join us, as we experience our living God who gives each of us hope on our faith journey,” Pastor Ken.

The ADVENTure begins at 6:00pm with dinner (free will offering), special music beginning each Wednesday at 6:50pm. Holden Evening Prayer Service and children’s activities begin at 7:00pm

December 6 soup and sandwiches ~ piano and vocal offerings

December 13 lasagna and salad ~ bell choir

December 20 tacos and taco salad ~ flute ensemble

American Red Cross will be holding a blood drive at Grace on Thursday, **December 7** from 1:00 – 6:45 pm. If you are interested in volunteering to pass out snacks/drinks or help with registration/greeting donors, please let Victoria, our Parish Admin, know.

Holly Trolley – Saturday, **December 9th**, from 6:00 – 9:00 pm. See the sign-up sheets posted in the gathering space for donations of cookies and other opportunities to be involved.

Brothers of Grace - Calling all men 18 years of age and older to come and join us for the annual Brothers of Grace Christmas Dinner Outing at Kloosterman’s Sports Bar Tuesday **December 12**, at 6:00 p.m. We are looking for a good turnout, so be sure and sign up on the sign up sheet located in the Gathering Area and try to invite others for a night of good food and fellowship.

Youth Program - December 17 will be one service at 10:00am. The youth will lead the service with music, Bible verses, hymns, readings, and a drama. Pastor Paul Nuechterlein will preside over the service and distribute communion. A Birthday Party for Jesus celebration will take place immediately following the service.

THIS WEEK AT GRACE

Today, December 3	Worship at 8:00 & 10:45 am Children's Church 10:45 am
Tuesday, December 5	Women's Bible Study 12:30 pm Communication team 10:00 am
Wednesday, December 6	Advent dinner 6:00 pm Advent services 7:00 pm
Thursday, December 7	Red Cross blood drive 11 am – 7 pm Clapper Kids 3:45 – 5:00 pm Grace Notes 5:45 – 7:00 pm
Saturday, December 9	Youth program practice 10:00 am – 12 noon Holley Trolley 6:00 – 9:00 pm

Today's Worship Leaders

	8:00 am	10:45 am
Assisting Ministers	Chris Bush	Vickey Argo
Cantor	Jack Vos	Mark Anton
Lector	Chris Bush	Kristi Winick
Communion Server	Melissa Patton	Diane Neeb
Acolyte/Crucifer	Gavin Patton	Lance Ogden
Usher	Dan & Grayson Patton	Doug/Diane Neeb Gary/Lisa Golnek
Greeter/Coffee Hr.	Lyle/Joyce Proksch	Eve Wright
Children's Church		
Chancel Team	Lisa Golnek	

Next Sunday's Worship Leaders, December 10, 2017

Assisting Ministers	Chris Bush	Mark Anton
Cantor	Mark Anton	Vickey Argo
Lector	Jack Vos	Carla Neil
Communion Server	Brenda Teegardin	Phyllis Lietz
Acolyte/Crucifer	Mark Anton	Emmalee Peck
Usher	Mark/Jana Bishop	Joe Longcor, Gwen Hansen Sandy Mosteller,
Greeter/Coffee Hr.	Jack/Carol Vos	John/Mary Kleinbrink
Children's Church		
Chancel Team	Lisa Golnek	

