

Grace Lutheran Church

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Pastor Ken Scheck II
Ms. Cindy Olson, Minister of Music
December 11, 2022



Third Sunday of Advent

December 11, 2022

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

Arise in body or spirit.

Gathering Hymn

He Came Down

ELW 253

The CELEBRATION OF LIGHT ON THE ADVENT WREATH - Shepherds Candle

- Ⓟ Leap with love, flames of light,
- Ⓞ **we begin another week of patient preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ.**
- Ⓐ As candle flames bless us with brilliance on this winter tide,
- Ⓞ **may our gift-giving be part of our preparation for God's greatest gift, Emmanuel.**
- Ⓟ Let each present we prepare to give be a sign of God's gift of Life, Joy and Peace to our world.
- Ⓞ **Let us wrap every Christmas gift with love, so that our gifts become Advent prayers, awakening our hearts to the true mystery of Christmas.**

Advent Hymn

As We Make our Advent Journey

tune ELW #269

I

As we make our Advent journey,
let us walk as in the Lord.
Pilgrims with a holy calling
trav'ling, strengthened by God's word,
toward the stable, toward the manger,
toward the gift of God made flesh.

II

In the desert, blooms and blossoms
mark the Way of Holiness.
As we travel with rejoicing
strengthen, ransomed, undistressed.
Now restored by water springing,
in the Lord, we new begin.

The RESPONSIVE LITANY of SEEKING

- A** With feeble hands and fearful hearts we come into your presence, O Lord, seeking forgiveness.
- G** Like a parched desert we need your streams of joy.
- A** Come, Lord Jesus, into our desert world. Bring the joy and gladness of your forgiveness. Bring the joy and gladness of your presence.
- G** Come to us, Jesus, and strengthen us to do your work.

Prayer of the Day

- A** Let us pray, Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way;
- G** through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

First Reading

Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

- L** A reading from **Isaiah**:

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. ³Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you."

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; ⁷the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. ⁹No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

- L** The Word of the Lord.

G Thanks be to God.

PSALM - 146:5-10

⁵Happy are they who have the God of Jacob | for their help,
whose hope is in the | LORD their God;

⁶**who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that | is in them;
who keeps promis- | es forever;**

⁷who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to | those who hunger.
The LORD sets the | captive free.

⁸**The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who | are bowed down;
the LORD | loves the righteous. R**

⁹The LORD cares | for the stranger;
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way | of the wicked.

¹⁰**The LORD shall | reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. | Hallelujah! R**

Second Reading

James 5:7-10

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

☒ A reading from **James:**

⁷Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

☒ The Word of the Lord.

☑ **Thanks be to God.**

Arise in body or spirit.

Gospel Acclamation

*This Little Light of Mine
Stanza 1*

ELW 677

Gospel Reading

Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

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

☛ **Glory to you, O Lord.**

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

☞ The Gospel of the Lord.

☛ **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Children's Time

All children [including infants] and youth who desire to come forward for the children's sermon are welcomed and encouraged to do so. Parents/caregivers are welcome to accompany their child during the children's message. There may be a time of dance and celebration that is offered.

Message

*Silence for reflection. After reflection,
Arise in body or in spirit to sing the hymn.*

Hymn of the Day

Light Dawns on a Weary World

ELW 726

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Prayers

▣ As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

A brief silence.

▣ Gracious God, we rejoice in the gifts of your Spirit. Equip the global church to magnify your love and peace in every land. We pray for the work of the Lutheran World Federation and ELCA Global Mission, including *Bishops Elizabeth and Craig, Assistants David and Roseanne, our synod companion Augustana Lutheran Church, Tustin; Saint Andrew and Matthias Anglican Church, Hastings; Minister of Music Cindy and Pastor Ken.* We lift our hearts to you,

▣ **Come, Lord Jesus.**

▣ Abundant God, we rejoice in your creation. Revive lands we have squandered and depleted. Make gardens flourish in cities and neighborhoods. Cleanse polluted air and water so living things may breathe, drink, and praise you. We lift our hearts to you,

▣ **Come, Lord Jesus.**

▣ Righteous God, we rejoice in your justice. End racism and oppression. Deliver all who are unjustly imprisoned or persecuted. Reconcile nations and peoples in conflict. Be with those who safeguard the world, including *Parker Stancil (Freedlund), Cody and Myrina Crawford (Clements), Cynthia Rudesill (Hansen), Joel Taggart (Varkula), Julia Ehredt (Schreiner, Halstead), and Seth Domke (Domke).* We lift our hearts to you,

▣ **Come, Lord Jesus.**

▣ Healing God, we rejoice in your compassion. Comfort any in distress because of worry, illness, or loss. Strengthen and protect health care workers, rescue teams, crisis counselors, and all who risk themselves to keep others safe. We lift our hearts to you,

▣ **Come, Lord Jesus.**

▣ Abiding God, we rejoice in your company. Give us calm and patient hearts as we gather with family and friends. Keep us mindful of those for whom this season is not happy. Console the grieving and surround them with loving support. We pray especially for *Frances Ann, Veronica Baarson, Bob Bolton, Keith Busheé, John Charles, Cherie Clements, Victor Crowder, Bob & Bonnie Ehredt, Greg Franks, Bill Frutiger, Mike Gibbons, Amanda Haddix (pregnancy), Larry Hansen, Henry Heil, David Hills, Mike Kemper, Norma Ludlow, Alexis Markwart, Mattea Markwart, Terri Neeb, Ken Plourde, Annette Poholski, Cynthia Rudesill (pregnancy), Al Throop, Lindsay Varkula (pregnancy), and Maryellen Wammock.* We lift our hearts to you,

▣ **Come, Lord Jesus.**

A Faithful God, we rejoice with Mary, Mother of our Lord, and with all the saints, that your mercy endures for all generations. Look with favor on those who have died and lead us to joyfully sing of your everlasting promises. We lift our hearts to you,

G **Come, Lord Jesus.**

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.

Eternal God, we rejoice that all who die in Christ are raised to new life. We thank you for the lives of those who have prepared the way for us and have now joined the great cloud of witnesses. We lift our hearts to you,

G **Come, Lord Jesus.**

P You hear the cries of our hearts, O Lord. Fill us with hopeful expectation, that in each day and hour we may love and serve our neighbors, in Jesus' name.

G **Amen.**

Offering Prayer

A Let us pray . . . God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives.

G **Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. Amen**

Sharing the Peace of God

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

G **And also with you.**

(We share the peace of Christ 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 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 everliving 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:

Table Prayer

☐ Holy God, our Bread of life, our Table, and our Food, you created a world in which all might be satisfied by your abundance.

☑ **You dined with Abraham and Sarah, promising them life, and fed your people Israel with manna from heaven. You sent your Son to eat with sinners and to become food for the world.**

☐ 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, Christ's life given for us and his rising from the grave, we await his coming again to share with us the everlasting feast.

☑ **By your Spirit nurture and sustain us with this meal: strengthen us to serve all in hunger and want.**

- ☐ By this bread and cup make of us the body of your Son.
- ☑ **Through Christ all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both 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

- ☐ Taste and see that the Lord is good.
- ☑ **Thanks be to God.**

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 *pouring chalice*. Take an empty cup from the tray and have it filled by the Assisting Minister. Return the individual chalice/cup to the basket provided.

✠ If you need gluten free bread, please let the Pastor know when you come forward.

✠ **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 Pastor.

People, Look East! ELW 248
Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn ELW 242

Prayer after Communion

- ☐ O God, our life, our strength, our food, we give you thanks for sustaining us with the body and blood of your Son.
- ☑ **By your Holy Spirit, enliven us to be Christ's body in the world, that more and more we will give you praise and serve your earth and its many peoples, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

Mission Minutes

Arise in body or spirit.

Blessing

☞ God's blessing be with you, Christ's peace be with you, the Spirit's outpouring be with you all, now and always.

☞ **Amen.**

Sending Song

All Earth is Hopeful

ELW 266

Dismissal

☞ Surrounded by God's people of every time and place, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

☞ **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

Assisting Minister – Chris Bush

Lector – Tim Schoessel

Cantor – Cindy Olson

Musician – Cindy Olson

Pastor – Ken Scheck

Christmas Eve Service begins at 5:30 on Saturday, December 24th.

Christmas Day Service is at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 25th.

Christmas Family Adoptions. There is a signup sheet to help provide groceries. The grocery sign up is in the Gathering Area.

We need the following...

- 3 4-5 lb. Hams
- 2 Jugs of Laundry Soap
- 5 Packages of 6-roll pack of Toilet Paper
- 5 sets of kid-friendly Shampoo and Conditioner

*Please have grocery and gift donations to the church by Sunday, Dec. 18th. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP IN MINISTRY.***

Giving Tree for 2022 is up. Please come select a tag or two, or share a donation earmarked 2022 Giving Tree, and someone will shop for you. You may also call the church to find out what is still needed or check the Grace Facebook page for more ideas.

Managing Expectations

Last week John the Baptist was full of religious fervor, certain in his convictions, and bold in his proclamation about the role of the coming Messiah: “Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Matthew 3:10).

But there was no fire. There was no chopping down of anything or anyone. Jesus had arrived and his ministry had begun, but he did *not* come bearing the ax or winnowing fork that John had predicted. Instead, he began healing the sick, casting out demons, and spending a lot of time with the very people many thought were part of the problem. John asks on behalf of his community, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” (Matt. 11:3).

John’s hope (and ours) is not in vain. But this Messiah’s redemption will not come in the way we expect. This Messiah is not a victor in a battle scene or a political coup. Instead, this Messiah is one who shows that greatness and strength are actually found in gentleness and service. It isn’t through fire that God saves the world; it is through God’s own sacrificial love. And the road to this love is not a victory parade, but the one that leads us humbly to a cleansing bath and a laden table.

To those who trust in wealth and power to set things right, what we do each Sunday must sound silly: gathering around old stories, singing and praying, sharing a little meal. How could any of this change *anything*? But for us wilderness wanderers, it is water in the desert. It is the very presence of God in our midst. Thanks be to God!

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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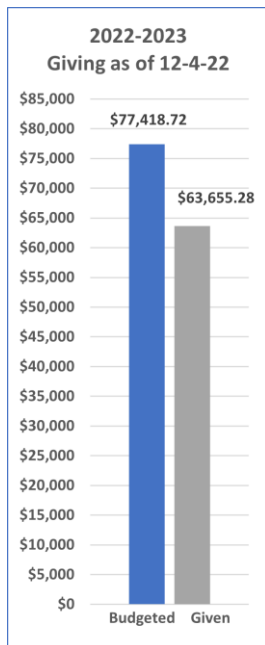
WELCOME TO ADVENT You are invited to join us for a special service on the first three Wednesdays. We gather for Frito pie, salad, rice, tortilla chips, salsa, dessert and more benefitting the ELCA National Youth Gathering at 6:30 followed by worship at 7:15 pm. This year we are having *Holden Evening Prayer with a Flare!* We hope you can join us for this unique worship and educational event. **This week we feature for our special music Barry County Flute Choir.**

Jesus Birthday Party after the 10:45 Worship Service is **TODAY**. Please join us for fun and fellowship.

Caroling for the Homebound Meet at the church **TODAY** at 1:00pm, as we set out to spread some cheer. Carpooling is available if it desired.

Outreach meets on Monday at **5:30 pm.**

Stewardship Information



Attendance: 55
 Weekly Giving: \$8,118.00
 Renew Campaign Needed \$1,100.00
 Renew Campaign Received \$ 100.00
 TOTAL Outstanding \$1,000.00

Views: 276
 Budget Amount: \$4,301.04

Pasty Sale \$1,687.00 and CPR \$110.00

Welcome to worship today! We hope you find what we have found - a loving Jesus who welcomes all. No matter your background or faith tradition, you will find that Grace Lutheran Church is a place that is full of love, care, and support. We are pleased that you come among us, as one who waits for the Messiah.

Replace, Repair, Renew Campaign. As you can tell by the above numbers, we have paid off all of these items. We are into the Renewal phase of the campaign which has a goal of raising \$4842.00 toward a new HVAC system for the Fellowship Hall. Thanks again for your continued generosity.

Christmas Food Baskets There is a sign-up sheet in the Gathering Area for those who wish to contribute the food basket campaign. Donations need to be dropped off at the church by Sunday, December 18. Monetary donations are also being accepted. Please place your donation in the collection plate and identify it by marking “Christmas Food Baskets” on the envelope.

Brothers of Grace will be having their annual Christmas Dinner Night Out Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. at Yankee Bills Wood Fired Saloon. We hope that all of you can make it for good food and fellowship.

Adopt-a-Family Great news! We have adopted all of the families this year! We would still like to collect money to buy these families gift cards. If you would like to help, please place your donation in the offering plate and mark “Adopt-A-Family” on the envelope. Please return your donations of gifts and grocery items to the designated Sunday School room by Sunday, Dec. 18.

The nursery is available during the 10:45 worship service. Aurora Collins is the Nursery Attendant. She would love to have some little ones visit her. Please spread the word that Grace provides childcare during this worship service.

Lakewood Area Choral Society Concert The Lakewood Area Choral Society cordially invites you to its annual Christmas Concert, Hosanna In the Highest!, at Lakewood High School on **Sunday, December 18 at 3:00 p.m.** In lieu of tickets, a freewill offering will be collected.