

*The Seventh Day of  
Christmas*



*December 31, 2023 - 10:00 am*

## I WILL MAKE

For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?  
I will make...

... a way in the wilderness.  
-Isaiah 43:19

...a joyful noise to the Lord!  
-Psalm 100:1

...a new heart and a new spirit!  
-Ezekiel 18:31

*The Seventh Day of Christmas  
December 31, 2023*

*Holy Silence is observed as we enter to worship.*

**Pre-Service Music**

*Angels We Have Heard on High*


arr. Phillip Keveren

**Welcome**

*Arise in body or spirit*

**CELEBRATION OF LIGHT ON THE CHRISTMAS WREATH  
THE CHRIST CANDLE & CHRISTMAS GOOD NEWS**


- A** The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people. To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”
- C** **And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill to all people.”**
- P** To us a child is born.
- C** **To us a son is given.**
- A** This morning Christ appears.
- C** **This morning salvation comes.**
- P** Today we proclaim together.
- C** **“Glory to God in the highest. Peace to God’s people on earth!”**
- A** Our God, the Lord Almighty, shows us gentle loving kindness in ways that are mysterious to us.
- C** **We are given a baby, but this child is indeed the Mighty God.**
- P** The grace of our Savior Jesus Christ, Word made flesh, born of Mary, be with you all.
- C** **And also with you.**



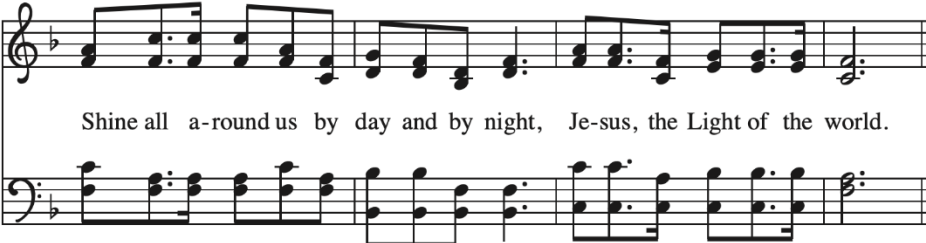
1 Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, Je-sus, the Light of the world;  
2 Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; Je-sus, the Light of the world;  
3 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Je-sus, the Light of the world;  
4 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace! Je-sus, the Light of the world;



"Glo - ry to the new-born king," Je-sus, the Light of the world.  
join the tri - umph of the skies; Je-sus, the Light of the world.  
Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord! Je-sus, the Light of the world.  
Hail the Sun of righ-teous-ness! Je-sus, the Light of the world.

*Refrain*

We'll walk in the light, beau-ti-ful light, come where the dew-drops of mer-cy are bright.



Shine all a-round us by day and by night, Je-sus, the Light of the world.

## Prayer of the Day

- Ⓐ Let us pray, Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it.
- ☞ **In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## Special Music

*'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime*

**French Folk Tune  
Vocal Duet, Cindy Olson & AnnaScheck**

*Reflection*

*Pastor Ken Scheck*

## First Reading

**Isaiah 62:6-12**

*The prophet invites the people to give God no rest until God reestablishes Jerusalem. In turn, they will receive names full of promise: The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD, A City Not Forsaken.*

Ⓐ A reading from **Isaiah**:

<sup>6</sup>Upon your walls, O Jerusalem,  
I have posted sentinels;  
all day and all night  
they shall never be silent.  
You who remind the LORD,  
take no rest,  
<sup>7</sup>and give him no rest  
until he establishes Jerusalem  
and makes it renowned throughout the earth.  
<sup>8</sup>The LORD has sworn by his right hand  
and by his mighty arm:  
I will not again give your grain  
to be food for your enemies,  
and foreigners shall not drink the wine  
for which you have labored;  
<sup>9</sup>but those who garner it shall eat it  
and praise the LORD,  
and those who gather it shall drink it  
in my holy courts.

<sup>10</sup>Go through, go through the gates,  
prepare the way for the people;  
build up, build up the highway,  
clear it of stones,  
lift up an ensign over the peoples.  
<sup>11</sup>The LORD has proclaimed  
to the end of the earth:  
Say to daughter Zion,  
“See, your salvation comes;  
his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.”  
<sup>12</sup>They shall be called,  
“The Holy People,  
The Redeemed of the LORD”;  
and you shall be called,  
“Sought Out,  
A City Not Forsaken.”

Ⓐ The Word of the Lord.

☞ **Thanks be to God.**

*Reflection*

*Pastor Ken Scheck*

# Psalm 96

1 Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to God, all you  
 2 Let earth and heav - en glo - ry; let o - cean depths re -

lands. Sing of sal - va - tion al - ways; God's  
 joyce. Let hills and plains and for - ests sing

glo - ry now at hand. God's love shall nev - er cease.  
 prais-es with one voice. God's love shall nev - er cease.

God comes to rule with jus - tice; God comes to rule with peace.  
 God comes to rule with jus - tice; God comes to rule with peace.

*Reflection*

*Pastor Ken Scheck*

## Second Reading

**Titus 3:4-7**

*God saves us not because of what we do. Rather, God is a God of mercy and salvation who graciously cleanses us in baptism and renews our lives through the Holy Spirit.*

📖 A reading from **Titus**:

<sup>4</sup>When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup>he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. <sup>6</sup>This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup>so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

📖 The Word of the Lord.

🙏 Thanks be to God.

*Reflection*

*Pastor Ken Scheck*

*Arise in body or spirit.*

**Gospel Acclamation**

*Emmanuel*

**W&P 36**

**Emmanuel. Emmanuel,  
his name is called Emmanuel:  
God with us, revealed in us;  
his name is called Emmanuel.**

## Gospel Reading

**Luke 2: 8-20**

*The world's deep night is shattered by the light of God's new day. The glory of God is revealed to poor shepherds, who share the good news with others.*

▮ The Nativity Gospel, according to **Luke**.

▮ **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

<sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

▮ The Nativity 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.*

*Reflection**Pastor Ken Scheck***Special Music***Coventry Carol***Traditional****Vocal Duet, Cindy Olson & Ken Scheck II***You may continue sitting or kneel for prayer.***Prayers**

*We pray the prayer response after each petition. You will hear, **God of our salvation.** The assembly prays, **thank you for hearing us.***

**A** Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

*A brief silence.*

**A** You inspire faith in our hearts and call us to rejoice with our whole selves at the salvation you bring. Make our churches places of belonging for all people in the fullness of their being. Raise up the gifts and the witness of people who are neurodivergent, living with disability, or bearing invisible illness. We lift up *Bishops Elizabeth and Craig, Assistants Chrisy and David; our synod companion churches Ascension Lutheran Church, Kentwood; Restoration Christian Reformed; Minister of Music Cindy and Pastor Ken.* God of our salvation,

**☞ thank you for hearing us.**

**A** Your praise is sung throughout creation in all times and seasons. As the new year turns, ground us in your changeless and sustaining love. Keep us attentive to the rhythms of the cosmos and inspire us to live in harmony with all the earth. God of our salvation,

**☞ thank you for hearing us.**

**A** Give hope and stamina to leaders who work tirelessly for the sake of the most vulnerable. We pray especially for organizations working on behalf of children to provide basic needs, to protect from abuse and neglect, to address trauma, and to rescue from trafficking. 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).* God of our salvation,

**☞ thank you for hearing us.**

**A** Sustain all people who, like Simeon and Anna, have been waiting for salvation and wholeness. We pray especially for anyone living with cancer or chronic illness, all people who are in physical



rehabilitation or addiction recovery, and those experiencing complications from long COVID. Provide healing and love especially to *Pastor Michael Anton, Veronica Baarson, Bob Bolton, Diana Brown, Chris Bush, Cherie Clements, Pat DePew, Lisa Golnek, Lorraine Handsbarger, Andy Lamb, Bill Miller and family, Martha Misak, Virginia Moomey, James Neiderheiser, Lisa Nurenberg, Corrina Palmer, Shirley Peterson, Annette Poholski, Jennifer Rohr, Mindy Shepler and family, Mike Shoemaker, Jeanette Ulrich, Al Throop, and Brenda Watson.* God of our salvation,

**☞ thank you for hearing us.**

**▲** Let this community of faith be a joyful and welcome place for all ages and generations. Teach us to honor the wisdom of children, the inquisitiveness of youth, the thoughtfulness of adults, and the knowledge of elders. God of our salvation,

**☞ thank you for hearing us.**

**▲** We give thanks for all the beloved who lived with expectation and departed this life in peace.

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Sustain us in joy until we join them around your throne. God of our salvation,

**☞ thank you for hearing us.**

**☐** Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

**☞ Amen.**

*Arise in body or spirit.*

**Offertory Song**

*In the Bleak Midwinter*

**ELW 294**

**Offering Prayer**

**▲** Let us pray....Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace.

**☞ As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Sharing the Peace of God**

**☐** The peace of the newborn Christ be with you always.

**☞ And also with you.**

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

**Great Thanksgiving**

Seventh Day of Christmas Page 9

☐ 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, 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 the church on earth, all creation and the host of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Je - sus, Je - sus, oh, what a won - der - ful child.

The first line of musical notation is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The treble staff contains the melody, and the bass staff provides harmonic support. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Je - sus, Je - sus, so ho - ly, meek, and

The second line of musical notation continues the melody and harmony. The lyrics are written below the notes.

mild; new life, new hope the child will bring.

The third line of musical notation concludes the phrase. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Lis-ten to the an - gels sing: "Glo-ry, glo-ry,

glo-ry," let the heav - ens ring!

### Table 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.**  
**Come, and give us life.**

- ☐ 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.

- ☑ **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.**  
**Come, and give us life.**



- ⒫ 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.
- Ⓖ **Come and give us life. 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

- ⒫ 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

- ⒫ Joy to the world! The Lord is come.
- Ⓖ **Thanks be to God.**

Communion

*Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

ELW 490

*Reflection*

*Pastor Ken Scheck*

### Prayer after Communion

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

### Mission Minutes

*Arise in body or spirit.*

### Blessing

- ⒫ 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.
- Ⓖ **Amen**

**Dismissal**

**☞** Glory to God in the highest!

**☞** Peace to God's people on earth!

**☞** Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

**☞** Thanks be to God.

**Postlude**

**Assisting Minister – Anna Scheck**

**Lector – Mark Anton**

**Musician – Cindy Olson**

**Pastor – Ken Scheck**

**Fellowship – Paul Kuhlman**

## **Affirmation and Expectation**

Imagine the baptism of an infant on a winter Sunday morning. Imagine the baby, dressed in a fragile heirloom, and family members and sponsors crowded around the font. Imagine the richness of the ritual—the pronouncement of ancient promises, wet hands and hair, an oily cross on soft skin, a freshly lit candle, laughter and applause.

Now, imagine that an elder in the congregation rises and, unprompted, takes the baby in his arms. As the people look on in stunned silence, he sings a hymn of heartfelt gratitude and wonder. Then another elder stands, turns to face the assembly, and testifies to God’s goodness on account of this child. Imagine the surprise. Imagine the indelible memory.

Something similar happens when Mary and Joseph bring the baby Jesus to the temple to present him to the Lord. Once they have done their part to mark Jesus as a member of God’s people, two strangers unexpectedly acknowledge him too. Simeon and Anna have each spent a lifetime on the lookout for a sign of God’s promised redemption. And stumbling upon him in the temple, they do not hesitate to say so: “My eyes have seen your salvation,” Simeon sings, “which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples.”

But it isn’t all good news. Peering into Mary’s eyes, the prophet also foresees that Jesus will uncover the thoughts of many a heart, and that the end result will feel like a blade to her soul. As if she did not already have plenty to ponder (Luke 2:19)!

There is perhaps nothing like the arrival of a child to inspire our hopes and fears for the future. And spoken words of affirmation and expectation have the power to illuminate the possibilities. Jesus is the child in whom God makes the greatest promises. So rejoice with prophets like Simeon and Anna, those who see him for who he is. And, come what may, hold tight to their testimony until God’s promises are fulfilled.

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**THANK YOU** for your generous support of our 2023 Christmas Adopt-A-Family program. With your good work we supplied 6 families with gifts, food, a Wal-Mart gift card and a gas gift card. We are blessed by your partnership.

**The January Series** Hastings Public Library will host a simulcast of Calvin University's January series. Look on the bulletin board in the Gathering Area for dates of the presentations. The presentations will begin at 12:30 p.m. For early access to more detail of each presentation, please visit [calvin.edu/January](http://calvin.edu/January).

**Giving Envelopes and Numbers** Giving envelopes are available in your mailboxes. If you requested "no envelopes" over the summer and now need them, please let Brenda know and she will give you some. Some people will be keeping their current numbers, but many will get new numbers for 2024. We will be sure to keep you updated as we get closer to the new year. It will be helpful to write your name on the outside of your envelope during the month of JANUARY in case there are changes we need to make. Thank you.

**Women of Faith** normally meets Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. They will begin again in the new year on January 9<sup>th</sup>. All ladies are welcome.

**Book Study** entitled Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist. The next study session is **January 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:30**.

**Hand2Hand Program** provides food over the weekend to students at Hastings schools. We are collecting donations of Yoo-Hoo Chocolate Milk, pudding cups, Slim Jims, granola bars, individual size instant oatmeal, ramen noodles, and ready-to-eat mac and cheese. In addition, December items are chicken noodle soup, saltine crackers, individual apple sauce cups, and individual snacks. **The deadline for this month is TODAY.**

**Women of Faith** will resume meeting on Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. All ladies are welcome.

**There is no Adult Forum** today with our combined service happening. See you in the New Year on January 7, 2024 at 9:30 a.m., when we continue our study of Galatians.

**Giving Tree.** The Giving Tree in the Gathering Area is up. This year we will be gathering items of donation to the **Alpha Women's Center** and **Family Promise of Barry County**. Tags with suggested donations will be hanging on the tree for you take with you as a reminder. Please do not wrap these donations so the organizations can easily identify each donation. **Donations can be received through January 7<sup>th</sup> (NEXT WEEK).**

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 and sing a NEW SONG to God.

### Stewardship Information

Please use this QR  
Code to access  
online giving.

Attendance: 120	Views: 288
Weekly Giving: \$12,102.00	Budget Amount: \$4,301.04
Hastings Food Pantry: \$25.00	Outreach: \$2,320.00

**Grace Projects** As you know, we have fully funded a new HVAC system for the Fellowship Hall. The Congregation Council has voted to have a fundraiser to replenish the funds we raised. Much like the roof deductible, we are seeking to make sure we have funds for any future property needs. The cost of the HVAC was \$25,252. We appreciate any contributions toward this future need of caring for our building.



**The Congregational Care Committee** will be meeting on Monday, January 15 at 3:00 p.m.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY THAT IS SHARED WITH GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH THROUGH YOUR contributions to the MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST.** As the year comes to a close, we would like to remind you that anything that is received beyond January 1, 2024, must be declared by the church for 2024.

**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.

**2023 Charitable Contributions** A reminder that donors must deliver, or mail (post-mark) checks on or before Sunday, December 31, in order to claim a charitable contribution deduction for 2023. Checks that are placed in the church offering during the first worship service in 2024 will not qualify for a charitable contribution deduction in 2023 even if the check is written in 2023.

**Please Pray for the Community Ministry of Diversity** The *Roundtable Companions for Racial Equity* are a local group of people dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusion in our community. Their fundamental belief is Every individual, regardless of their background, deserves to be valued, respected and included. In the month of February they are hosting a series of events at the Hastings Library called *Lift Every Voice*. These events will offer education and dialogue focused on diversity issues and will involve panel discussions, film, music and art. Please see the February GraceGram for additional information.