

Grace Lutheran Church
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“Reflecting and Sharing Jesus Christ”



If you would like a visit from Pastor Fred, to share a prayer concern, or have any questions about today's service please contact the church office.

Ministers

Pastor
Office Coordinator
Caretaker
Treasurer
Council Chairperson

Members & Friends of Grace

Fred Schneider	Home: 780-312-1776
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Grace Lutheran Church
December 24th, 2023, 6:30 pm.

CHRISTMAS EVE



Guiding Principles

Jesus is Lord
We Welcome Everyone
We Value God's Creation
We Are Open to the Power of God
We share God's love
Through Worship and Service
We Offer Forgiveness for All

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service
December 24th 2023, 6:30 p.m.**

WELCOME

Some of us have heard this story many times. Some of us have acted it out, read it, or seen it portrayed through the years. For some, it may be a new story of God coming into the world. Our challenge tonight is to engage in this story in a new way, become part of God's story, incarnate in Jesus, and bring the good news into the world

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL ELW #283

O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him,
born the king of angels:

Refrain

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

The highest, most holy,
light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father
now in flesh appearing! Refrain

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God...
in... the... highest: *Refrain*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing: *Refrain*

CHRISTMAS DIALOGUE: Pastor Fred

Leader: On a night long ago, the world changed.

All: Glory to God in the highest!

Leader: The God who created the universe came to dwell in it, and chose to make an entrance in a dark, humble barn, surrounded by animals and their humble caretakers.

All: Glory to God in the highest!

Leader: Suddenly, the stars did not seem so far away.

All: Glory to God in the highest!

Leader: Suddenly, the angels did not seem so distant.

All: Glory to God in the highest!

Leader: Suddenly, it was possible for God in heaven to become God with us.

All: Glory to God in the highest!

Leader: Suddenly, God has become one of us and one with us.

All: Glory to God in the highest!

Leader: And now, we can sing with the angels...

All: Glory to God in the highest!

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING ELW 270

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king;
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations, rise;
join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"

Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel! Refrain

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace!
Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
ris'n with healing in his wings.

**Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth,
born to give us second birth. Refrain**

GREETING AND PRAYER: Pastor Fred

P. May the grace and truth of Christ be with you.

C. And also with you.

Let us pray:

Emmanuel, today we celebrate your coming and rejoice in your promises. We joyfully welcome you to this world and celebrate your presence in our lives. Amen.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Ring the bell of hope!

Hear ye! Hear ye! This is the good news.

Jesus was born to bring us hope.

C. Jesus is born. Thanks be to God.

Ring the bell of love!

Hear ye! Hear ye! This is the good news.

Jesus was born to bring us love.

C. Jesus is born. Thanks be to God.

Ring the bell of joy!

Hear ye! Hear ye! This is the good news.

Jesus was born to bring us love.

C. Jesus is born. Thanks be to God.

Ring the bell of peace!

Hear ye! Hear ye! This is the good news.

Jesus was born to bring us peace

C. Jesus is born. Thanks be to God.

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 9:2-7

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real bases for faith lies in God's passion for the people. The zeal of the Lord of host will do this!

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

PSALM READING: Luke 1:46-55

When Mary hears that she will bear the Christ child, her soul exults in joyful song. This song has been called the Magnificat.

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name; indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

GOSPEL: Luke 2: 1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" 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." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR ELW 282

**It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.**

**Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heav'nly music floats
o'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hov'ring wing,
and ever o'er its babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.**

**And you, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow:
look now, for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing;
oh, rest beside the weary road
and hear the angels sing!**

**For lo! The days are hast'ning on,
by prophets seen of old,**

**when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and all the world give back the song
which now the angels sing.**

MEDITATION: Pastor Fred

CHRISTMAS CONFESSION: (by Walter Russell Bowie: A Christmas Creed)

P: The peace of the Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: I believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.

C: I believe in the one whose spirit glorified a little town; and whose spirit still brings music to people all over the world in towns both large and small.

P: I believe in the one for whom the crowded inn could find no room, and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life today.

C: I believe in the one who the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts.

P: I believe in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible:

C: I believe in the one whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, who looked at persons and made them see what God's love saw in them, who by love brought sinners back to purity, and lifted human weaknesses up to meet the strength of God.

P: I confess our ever-lasting need of God:

C: The need of forgiveness for our selfishness and greed, the need of new life for empty souls, the heed of love for hearts grown cold.

ALL: I believe in Jesus, the Son of the living God, born in Bethlehem this night, for me and for the world.

OFFERING:

P: We have heard the good news. Now let us offer gifts of our hearts, hands and lives in celebration of the news that Jesus Christ is born.

C: Thanks be to God.

WHAT CHILD IS THIS ELW 296

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!

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!

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!

CHRISTMAS PRAYERS:

P: Wonderful Counselor, increase our joy as the church gathers on this holy night to sing of our dear Savior's birth. May the story of salvation live in the hearts of all who sing of its wonders. God of grace,

C: Hear our Prayer.

P: Mighty God you have broken the yoke of sin's burden through the birth of your Son. Comfort those whose burdens distract them from the deeper peace of this holy night and grant them a restful mind. God of peace,

C: Hear our Prayer.

P: Everlasting Father, uphold all who are in sorrow or need of your divine goodness and mercy. We remember with thanksgiving all who have died and who now rest in your peaceful light. God of love,

C. Hear our Prayer.

P: Gracious God, bathe us always in the light of your Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen

LORD'S PRAYER Pg. 221 (on the left)

Our Father, in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and 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.

Lights will be turned off as the Congregation lights their candles.

SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT! ELW 281

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht
Alles schläft; einsam wacht
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from your holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

CHRISTMAS BLESSING:

P: May God, who has called you out of darkness to be servants of light grant you the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, and the peace of the Christ Child. Almighty Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen

Candles may now be extinguished.

JOY TO THE WORLD ELW 267

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

December 25th – Christmas Day Worship at 10:30 a.m.
December 31st – Sunday Worship at 10:30 a.m.



A Blessed Christmas to all members and friends of Grace Lutheran from the staff at Grace Lutheran! Pastor Fred Schneider, Kathy Coroluick, Betty Grayson, Kirby Spurrell, Dorothy Schmidt and their families; and from our Church Council members as well.



A PRAYER BEFORE BED ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

(after the kids are in bed, as you finish your eggnog, and take one last look at the tree before turning out the lights.....)

“O God, bless me and all to whom I have drawn close on this night of nights. As I sleep quietly and as softly as snowfall, flake by flake, let your peace settle over this tired, broken world. Then with the coming of the light in the birth of Jesus, wake me with a shout, and set my heart singing with unspeakable joy. So may Christmas come to me and to my house and to your world. Amen.” (Robert D. Hershey 1901-1993)



Worship Participants

Pastor:	Pastor Fred Schneider
Accompanist:	Tammy Kennedy
Lector:	Marilyn Zielke
Ushers:	Ron and Denice Monaghan
Sound Booth:	Jack Jensen
Projector:	Connie Maygard