



Advent 2  
December 6, 2020

## **GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

*Making Christ Known to all Through Grace*

2225 Washington Street, Lincoln NE 68502 + 402-474-1505 + [www.egrace.org](http://www.egrace.org)

### **WELCOME to worship**

Grace Lutheran Church, a church of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, has been at the heart of the faith community in Lincoln since 1889.

- We are committed to our mission: "Making Christ known to all through Grace."
- We celebrate our purpose: "That by God's grace we have been gathered to worship, called to witness, and sent to serve."
- We seek our vision: "To become a church with a passion for fostering a welcoming community that strives for peace and a sense of belonging."

Thank you for worshipping with us today and join our community at any time!

### **WORSHIP notes**

Remember your response is marked in **BOLD** font.

**Hearing enhancement devices** are available in the entry space. Ask an usher to assist you.

**Restrooms** are located next to our chapel on the other side of the courtyard.

### **INTRODUCTION to worship**

John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.

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## **GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

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**PRELUDE** Nearer My God to Thee - Music by Sarah Flower Adams (1805-1848), arr. Michael Bailey

### **LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH**

We praise you, O God, for this circle of light that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, kindle within us the fire of your Spirit, that we may be light shining in the darkness. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may welcome others as you have welcomed us. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. Amen.

### **WELCOME**

STAND

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever. **Amen.**

Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

Loving and forgiving God,

**we confess that we are held captive by sin. Despite our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free—free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, ☩ comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## 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.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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## WORD

God speaks to us in scripture, preaching and song.

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SIT

## First Reading: Isaiah 40:3-5

A reading from Isaiah:

<sup>3</sup>A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,

and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### **Psalm: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13**

Let us read responsively from Psalm 85:

<sup>1</sup>You have been gracious to your land, O LORD;  
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

<sup>2</sup>**You have forgiven the iniquity of your people  
and blotted out all their sins.**

<sup>8</sup>I will listen to what the LORD God is saying;  
for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to you.

<sup>9</sup>**Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,  
that your glory may dwell in our land.**

### **Second Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-10, 14-15a**

A reading from 2 Peter:

<sup>8</sup>Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.

<sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. 14Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; 15and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*STAND*

### **Gospel: Mark 1:1-8**

The holy gospel according to St. Mark. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

<sup>2</sup>As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way;  
<sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight,’”

<sup>4</sup>John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

*SIT*

## **SERMON**

**HYMN OF THE DAY** (please remain seated and listen, hum or sing the hymn to yourself or reflect on the following:)

The hymn "Comfort, Comfort Now My People," written by Johannes Olearius in 1641, is a paraphrase of Isaiah 40:1-5. It captures the Advent theme, of looking forward to and preparing for the coming of the Messiah. Especially striking is the personification used to conclude the second verse: "Let the valleys rise to meet him and the hills bow down to greet him."

Where do you see God’s salvation at work in the creation around you?

## Comfort, Comfort Now My People



- 1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
- 2 For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
- 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.  
call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.  
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be-fits God's ho - ly reign.



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!  
Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.  
For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for-ev - er.  
Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.  
and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Text: Johann G. Olearius, 1635–1711; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.  
Music: FREU DICH SEHR, *Trente quatre pseauxes de David*, Geneva, 1551

### STAND

#### APOSTLE'S CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended to the living,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

God of power and might, comfort your people and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need. *A brief silence.*

Faithful God, you teach us to wait for you with faithfulness and patience. Sustain and support us in our doubts and questions. Nurture our faith as we discern and enact your mission. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Loving God, you set the stars in the sky and breathe life into the earth. Renew the face of creation where it needs your healing touch. Mend the wounds of environmental damage and restore balance to ecosystems so that all creation can declare your praise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Steadfast God, you never tire of seeking justice. Where people suffer from discrimination, judgment, and injustice, speak words of truth and comfort. Lead us toward a world where faithfulness will sprout underfoot and righteousness rain down from above. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Leading God, you ask us to make uneven ground smooth. Make even the disparities between your people. Sustain and support people with physical and intellectual disabilities. Accompany disability advocates who work for a world accessible to all. Teach us to celebrate the great diversity in our midst. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Tender God, you know sorrow and joy alike. We pray for those in our families and congregation who are not joyful in this holiday season. Comfort those who grieve, be a companion to all who are lonely, tend those who are sick or struggling with depression, and gather all people in your healing embrace. We pray especially for those we name before you now.... Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way in the wilderness and taught us to continue their faithful work. Make their generous lives an example for all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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## MEAL

*God feeds us with the presence of Christ.*

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*SIT*

**MUSIC OFFERING:** “Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning”, arr. Lloyd Larson (Virtual Choir).

Keep your lamps trimmed and burning, keep your lamps trimmed and burning,  
keep your lamps trimmed and burning, the time is drawing nigh.

Children don't grow weary, children don't grow weary,  
children don't grow weary, for the time is drawing nigh.

Darker midnight lies before us, darker midnight lies before us,  
darker midnight lies before us, the time is drawing nigh.

See the Morning Star arising, see the Morning Star arising,  
see the Morning Star arising, the time is drawing nigh.

Children don't grow weary, children don't grow weary,  
children don't grow weary, for the time is drawing nigh.

Now our night will soon be over, our night will soon be over,  
yes, our night will soon be over, the time is drawing nigh.

Keep your lamps trimmed and burning, keep your lamps trimmed and burning,  
keep your lamps trimmed and burning, the time is drawing nigh!

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season. Bless all that we offer, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing. In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray. **Amen.**

### **DIALOG**

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.**



## **PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should always and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

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.

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

**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.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Even as we watch and wait, Christ is here as we eat and drink.

**COMMUNION** (remove the plastic tab to access the wafer and grape juice seals.)

(pull back top seal) The Body of Christ

(pull back bottom seal) The Blood of Christ

## **STAND**

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Gracious and abundant God, you have done great things for us, and we rejoice.

In this bread and cup, you give us life forever. In your boundless mercy, strengthen us and open our hearts to the world's needs, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

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## **SENDING**

*God sends us in mission to the world.*

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## **BLESSING**

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, ☩ now and forever. **Amen.**

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE Be Thou My Vision - Traditional Irish hymn, arr. Marsha Sisco

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### WORSHIP SERVANTS:

Worship leader: Rev. Eric Lesher  
Organist/Pianist: Anne Melang-Thoren  
Jennifer Aliwarga-Carlson

### WORSHIP SPACE:

After worship we will need four volunteers to sanitize the nave. Remain up front for further instructions.

### PRAYER CONCERN(S):

All victims of the Covid-19 virus, sick and suffering, refugees, natural disaster victims, climate change, social injustice, our nation and all of creation.

Please remember **Glen and Bonnie Drohman's family** as they mourn their death, **Doug Allen** as he recovers from blood clot surgery, **William Abbott** as his family mourns the death of his father Eugene to Covid-19 and watches over the Covid-19 recovery of his mother Barb, and **Mark Billings** who has moved his mother Mabel into hospice care.

### WORSHIP RESTRICTIONS:

The following *temporary* changes will occur for the foreseeable future:

- As always, if you are ill or at risk, **please stay at home** and watch the service online.
- Wearing a **face covering that covers the mouth and nose is required** while you are in the building. A disposable mask will be provided if you do not have one.
- We will enter the building through the **North doors**. The doors will be locked at 9:10. All other doors will be locked.
- At the north door you will be given a **bulletin**. You will **take this home with you** after worship. Do not leave it in the building.
- There will hand sanitizers at the entrance door to the sanctuary. **Sanitize your hands** prior to entering the worship space.
- **Sit** only with persons from **your own household**.
- During worship we ask you to **refrain from physical contact** especially as you greet one another. Practice good "physical distancing". Use a wave in place of a hand shake. 6 feet is the minimum. 12 feet is recommended.
- There will be **no offering**. There will be an offering basket located at the entrance door to the sanctuary.

- There will be **no sharing** of the peace.
- There will be **no singing**. You can hum or sing quietly to yourself.
- The presiding minister will **not greet** you after worship.
- There will be **no** assisting minister, reader, or acolyte
- There will be **no nursery** available.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Prescott Christmas Boxes

The Social Ministry Committee will be filling 30 Christmas boxes again this year and would very much appreciate your help. We appreciate your generous support of Prescott School. The last day for donations is December 14th.

Items needed:

- Canned corn and green beans
- Gravy
- Instant mashed potatoes
- Dressing
- Sweet Potatoes {large cans}
- Fruit
- Jell-O
- Cooking Oil
- Jellied Cranberry sauce
- Cake mixes
- Frosting

There will be a box at the north entrance of the church to collect your items and at the east entrance if you drop items off during the week. Thanking you in advance of your continued support of Prescott School.

### Offering Envelope Boxes

Offering envelope boxes are in the narthex for one more Sunday. The rest will be mailed on Monday. Pick up your box today. Thanks.

**Advent Midweek Services** will be held **in-person and online** on December 9 and 16 starting at 7:00 pm in the nave. This year's theme is "Prepare the Royal Highway"

**Christmas Eve** service will be held in-person and online beginning at 6:00 pm in the nave. Due to health restrictions the attendance will be limited to 50. You will need to make a reservation for this service. Contact Pr. Eric via voicemail at **402-474-1505 ext. 3** or email at **pr.eric@egrace.org** with your name and number attending.

**Christmas Day** service will be held in-person and online beginning at 10:00 am in the nave.

**Lessons and Carols** service will be held in-person and online on December 27 at 9:00 am in the nave.

**Janice Walker** would like to thank everyone for their support as her family grieves the loss of a grandson, Justin Stotts. She also would like to thank the Social Ministry committee for the Thanksgiving Box.

### **Masks**

If you need to be in the church building please contact the office ahead of time so we know you are in the building and/or need access to the building. When you are here and within six feet of others then please wear a mask. Thanks!

### **CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK**

#### **December 7:**

Lincoln Literacy	9 am
Boy Scouts	7 pm

#### **December 8:**

Al-Anon	9:30 am
Wildlife Rescue	7:00 pm
Council	7:00 pm

#### **December 9:**

Worship	7 pm
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#### **December 10:**

Quilting	9:00 am
Lincoln Literacy	9:00 am
NA	7:00 pm
Bell Quartet B	7:00 pm

#### **December 11:**

YWCA	5:45 pm
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#### **November 13:**

Worship	9 pm
Bell Quartet A	9:45 am