



Advent 4  
December 20, 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

God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

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## GATHERING

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

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**PRELUDE:** "O, Come, O, Come, Emmanuel", *Veni, Emmanuel*, French processional, 15th century, arr. A. Melang-Thoren, 2019

### LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, open our eyes to see your presence in the lowly ones of this earth. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may sing of your advent among us in the Word made flesh. 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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father 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: 2 Samuel 7:1-5,11, 16**

A reading from 2 Samuel:

<sup>1</sup>Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup>the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." <sup>3</sup>Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you."

<sup>4</sup>But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: <sup>5</sup>Go and tell my servant David:

Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? <sup>11</sup>...Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. <sup>16</sup>Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

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

Psalm: Luke 1:46b-55 (The Magnificat)

Let us read responsively from Luke 1:

<sup>46b</sup>My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
<sup>47</sup>my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
<sup>48</sup>**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.**  
**From this day all generations will call me blessed:**  
<sup>49</sup>you, the Almighty, have done great things for me  
and holy is your name.  
<sup>50</sup>**You have mercy on those who fear you,**  
**from generation to generation.**  
<sup>51</sup>You have shown strength with your arm  
and scattered the proud in their conceit,  
<sup>52</sup>**casting down the mighty from their thrones**  
**and lifting up the lowly.**  
<sup>53</sup>You have filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty.  
<sup>54</sup>**You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,**  
**to remember the promise of mercy,**  
<sup>55</sup>the promise made to our forebears,  
to Abraham and his children forever.

**Second Reading: Romans 16:25-27**

A reading from Romans:

<sup>25</sup>Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup>but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—<sup>27</sup>to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

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

*STAND*

**Gospel: Luke 1:26-38**

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

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup>Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

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

*SIT*

**SERMON**

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

"Joy to the world" is perhaps an unlikely popular Christmas hymn. First of all, it is based on a psalm, and, second, it celebrates Christ's second coming much more than the first. This favorite Christmas hymn is the result of a collaboration of at least three people and draws its initial inspiration not from the Christmas narrative in Luke 2, but from Psalm 98.

The hymn has three separate collaborators. English pastor Isaac Watts, German composer George Frederic Handel and American musician Lowell Mason

The result is a favorite Christmas hymn based on an Old Testament psalm, set to musical fragments composed in England and Germany, and pieced together across the Atlantic in the United States!

# Joy to the World



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -  
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their  
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -  
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him  
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings  
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture  
 plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing  
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748

Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

## 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, fulfill your promise and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need. *A brief silence.*

Gracious God, all generations call you blessed. In this holy season we pray for our neighbors of other denominations and faiths. Inspire the faith of their people. Cultivate understanding among us and strengthen us in love and service to our community. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creator God, you scatter the proud. Everything we have belongs first to you. Bless and protect the seas, mountains, plains, forests, skies, and soils that surround us. Give us humility as we tend them. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Righteous God, you humble the powerful and lift the lowly. We pray for the leaders of all nations, that they amplify the voices of people in need. Guide all people entrusted with leadership, to create societies in which everyone can flourish. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Compassionate God, you fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty. Nourish those who lack access to adequate food and nutrition. Bless the work of advocates, community organizers, and food pantries. Encourage others to provide for their neighbors in need. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Healing God, you pour out mercy to all who cry out to you. Surround everyone in need of healing in body, mind, or spirit with your tender presence, especially those we now name before you.... 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:** “My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness”, The Magnificat, *Kingsfold*,  
(Bell Quartet.) Read through the reading from Luke used as our Psalm for today as you listen  
to this piece.

### **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** "All Earth is Hopeful", *Toda la Tierra*, Alberto Taule, b. 1932, arr. A. Melang-Thoren, 2018

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### WORSHIP SERVANTS:

Worship leader:	Rev. Eric Leshner
Organist/Pianist:	Anne Melang-Thoren Jennifer Aliwarga-Carlson
Bell Quartet:	Chris and Wendy Apple, Bev Madison, Dave Ripa

### 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.

Sarah Krueger as she recovers from Covid-19.

## 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

### **A Nebraska Brass Christmas**

Traditional Holiday Favorites

Sunday, December 20, 3:00 PM

Livestreaming on Facebook only from St. Paul UMC

<https://www.facebook.com/nebraskabrass/>

**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.

**2021 Offering Envelope boxes** are available in the atrium after worship today or during the week.

**The Lutheran** magazine and **Daily Devotionals** are available in the narthex after worship or in the main entrance during the week.

## CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

**December 21:**

Lincoln Literacy 9 am  
Gathering Place 5:00 pm

**December 22:**

Al-Anon 9:30 am

**December 24:**

Office Closed  
Worship 6 pm

**December 25:**

Office Closed  
Worship 10 am

**November 27:**

Worship 9 pm

**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!