



Christmas 2
January 3, 2021

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Making Christ Known to all Through Grace

2225 Washington Street, Lincoln NE 68502 + 402-474-1505 + 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."

GATHERING

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

PRELUDE: O Little Town of Bethlehem - Music by Lewis Redner, Arr. Linda Hartman

WELCOME

STAND

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who was in the beginning, who makes a dwelling among us, who covers us with justice and mercy. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of goodness and lovingkindness,
we confess that we have sinned against you and our neighbors. We have turned away from your invitation to new life. We have turned away from the lowly and downtrodden. In your abundant mercy, forgive us our sins, those we know and those known only to you, for the sake of the one who came to live among us, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Hear the good news of peace and salvation! God forgives us all our sins, not through our own work, but through ✠ Jesus Christ, made known to all people. With all who come to the manger, rejoice in this amazing gift of grace. **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

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture, preaching and song.

SIT

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:10-11

A reading from Jeremiah:

¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him,
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock."

¹¹For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

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

Psalm: Psalm 147:12-15

Let us read responsively from Psalm 147:

¹²Worship the LORD, O Jerusalem;
praise your God, O Zion,
¹³**who has strengthened the bars of your gates
and has blessed your children within you.**
¹⁴God has established peace on your borders
and satisfies you with the finest wheat.
¹⁵**God sends out a command to the earth,
a word that runs very swiftly.**

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:3-6

A reading from Ephesians:

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

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

STAND

Gospel: John 1:10-18

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

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'")

¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

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:)

"Word of God, Come Down to Earth" is a skillful commentary on John 1:14, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory." Father James Quinn, SJ, wrote the hymn. He was one of the most important hymn writers in the Roman Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council. Fr. Quinn said, said, "Hymns fundamentally declare the Christian faith. They are our source book for teaching and preaching."

Word of God, Come Down on Earth



1 Word of God, come down on earth, liv - ing rain from
2 Word e - ter - nal, throned on high, Word that brought to
3 Word that speaks God's ten - der love, one with God be -



heav'n de - scend - ing; touch our hearts and bring to birth
life cre - a - tion, Word that came from heav'n to die,
yond all tell - ing, Word that sends us from a - bove



faith and hope and love un - end - ing. Word al - might - y,
cru - ci - fied for our sal - va - tion, sav - ing Word, the
God the Spir - it, with us dwell - ing, Word of truth, to



we re - vere you; Word made flesh, we long to hear you.
world re - stor - ing, speak to us, your love out - pour - ing.
all truth lead us; Word of life, with one bread feed us.

Text: James Quinn, SJ, b. 1919

Music: LIEBSTER JESU, WIR SIND HIER, Johann R. Ahle, 1625–1673

Text © James Quinn, SJ, admin. Selah Publishing Co., Inc., North American Agent.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

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

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.*

Redeeming God, you gather together your people from the farthest parts of the earth. Protect your church from stumbling. Let it not be overcome by sorrow, division, or despair. Make us radiant with goodness, that we might live always to the praise of your glory. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You bring together heaven and earth. All creation testifies to your splendor. Hold the ecosystems of this earth in delicate balance, from coastlands to farmlands, forests to wetlands, deserts to rainforests. Show us new ways to live in harmony with the world around us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You overflow with grace upon grace. Expand the imaginations of those who serve in positions of authority. Open their hearts to the needs of their nations and communities. Protect all those in harm's way and those risking danger for the sake of others. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You bring consolation to those who weep. Embrace those who feel far-off, excluded, or defeated. Accompany those living with chronic and invisible illness. Sustain the weak and weary. Refresh those who labor under the weight of pain or sickness. We pray especially for all those we now name before you.... Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You come to us in the beauty of darkness and of light. Bring justice and reconciliation to communities divided by oppressions and misuse of power. Guide us to speak holy words of advocacy and truth. Help us to honor your image in one another. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You turn our mourning into joy. We give thanks for those who have died in faith. With all the saints, give us our inheritance in Christ. In the fullness of time, gather us all together in your mercy. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Christ.

SIT

MUSIC OFFERING: It Came Upon the Midnight Clear - Richard S. Ellis, Arr. Bonnie Heidenreich

OFFERING PRAYER

All-powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness, and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. 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

The Word is revealed in a manger, in simple bread and wine. Come meet Christ in this meal.

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

We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us from your very self with the body and blood of Christ. Through this mystery, send us forth to proclaim your promise to a world in need, through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

SENDING

God sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us from your very self with the body and blood of Christ. Through this mystery, send us forth to proclaim your promise to a world in need, through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE: Angels We Have Heard on High - Gloria, Setting by Hugo Gehrke

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg License #32714.

WORSHIP SERVANTS:

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

WORSHIP SPACE:

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

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.

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS**Thought for the Day**

Christmas might look and feel a little different this year than in other years. But that doesn't mean anything has changed about God. God is here. God is with us. God is for us. And God loves us. This has always been true, and especially so in this hard year.

As we move through these twelve days and enter a new year, let us lean into the peace, hope, love, and joy of this season. Let us glean moments of wonder like that of a newborn or toddler staring at Christmas lights. Let us take time to be with one another through the wonders of technology; to pray, to recommit, and to yet again affirm the promises we made and were made for us in baptism.

Deacon Timothy Siburg
Director for Stewardship
Nebraska Synod

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

January 4:

WELCA Board Meeting 9:00 am

January 5:

Al-Anon 9:30 am

Committee Meetings 7:00 pm

January 6:

WELCA Unit 1:00 pm

Confirmation 7:00 pm

January 7:

Quilting 9:00 am

Bell Quartet B 7:00 pm

January 8:

Respite Care 5:45 p

January 9:

Danish Sisterhood 1 pm

January 10:

Worship 9 am

Bell Quartet A 9:45 am

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!

WORSHIP OVERVIEW

Reflecting the Grace of God

In sharp contrast to the image of Jacob, who wrestles with an angel and prevails, in today's first reading the Lord redeems Jacob from hands too strong for him. Jacob does not always prevail. We too are reminded this day that it is not our own strength but God's power that blesses, strengthens, fills, gives, and grants peace.

God has the power to bring together and to scatter. God creates family not because we are God's blood relatives but through adoption. In baptism we are claimed, redeemed, and forgiven. We receive wisdom and are lavished with grace. We are marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit. We receive an inheritance. Through God's powerful gift, we are gathered up, become children of God, and receive grace upon grace.

Receiving this gift of grace, we are called to live as children of the light. In this holy calling we have John the Baptist as our guide. You can tell the story of Jesus leaving out all sorts of important details. In John's gospel the shepherds, angels, and manger are all absent. But the gospel writers agree, you cannot tell the story of Jesus without John the Baptist. You simply must have the one who comes solely to point others to Jesus.

This is our calling as well. We who are forgiven and redeemed, we who are claimed and called, are the ones who point to Jesus. We do this with our lives; we do this with our words. We point to Jesus when we feed the hungry, when we invite those we know and love to know the gift of grace we see in Jesus. We point to Jesus when we allow the holy light of the season to shine through all we do and all are.