

Epiphany 3
January 26, 2020

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 deeply 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 are excited about 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!

INTRODUCTION to worship

The Presentation of Our Lord is referred to in some corners of the church as Candlemas because of an ancient tradition of blessing all the candles to be used in the church in the coming year at the mass celebrated on that day. It was a way of underscoring the truth of Simeon's confession that this baby Jesus was "a light for revelation to the Gentiles" and a light for glory to Israel. Let the light of every candle in church be a little epiphany of the love of God for all people in the person of God's son, Jesus, the light of the world.

GATHERING

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

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stand

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
who creates us and forms us,
who redeems us and calls us,
who unites us and sends us.

Amen.

Gathered in God's presence, let us confess our sin.

Silence

Mighty and loving God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin
and cannot free ourselves.**

We seek our own way.

We divide the body of Christ.

In your mercy, cleanse us and heal us.

**Let the words of our mouths,
the thoughts of our hearts,**

and everything that we do

be filled with faith, hope, and love. Amen.

Hear the voice of Jesus:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me
to proclaim release to the captives."

In the name of ☩ Jesus Christ,
I proclaim to you
that your sins are forgiven and you are released.
The joy of the Lord is your strength,
and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are yours forever.
Amen.

GATHERING HYMN ELW 417 In His Temple Now Behold Him

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you. **And also with you.**

KYRIE

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **A - men.**

HYMN OF PRAISE

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb

who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and

strength, and hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of

God, and join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or,

glo - ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 4 For the Lamb who was

slain has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

Final refrain

This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty and ever-living God, your only-begotten Son was presented this day in the temple. May we be presented to you with clean and pure hearts by the same Jesus Christ, our great high priest, 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

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE with noisy offering

First Reading: Malachi 3:1-4

This reading concludes a larger section (2:17—3:5) in which the prophet speaks of the coming of the God of justice. Malachi looks for that day when the wondrous power of God will purify the priestly descendants of Levi who minister in the temple at Jerusalem.

¹See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

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

Psalm: Psalm 84:1-5, 6



Psalm 84:1
Psalm refrain reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year C* © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.
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¹How dear to me | is your dwelling,
O | LORD of hosts!

²**My soul has a desire and longing for the courts | of the LORD;
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the | living God.**

³Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest where she may | lay her young,
by the side of your altars, O LORD of hosts, my king | and my God.

⁴**Happy are they who dwell | in your house!
They will always be | praising you. R**

⁵Happy are the people whose strength | is in you,
whose hearts are set on the | pilgrims' way.

¹²**O | LORD of hosts,
happy are they who put their | trust in you! R**

Second Reading: Hebrews 2:14-18

Jesus shared human nature fully so that his death might be for all humans a liberation from slavery to death's power. Here the writer uses the image of priestly service in the temple as a way of describing the life and saving death of the Lord Jesus. He is the high priest who offers his life on behalf of his brothers and sisters.

¹⁴Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, [Jesus] himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶For he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he can help those who are being tested.

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

Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAIMATION



The Holy Gospel according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

This story is a study in contrasts: the infant Jesus with the aged prophets; the joy of birth with the ominous words of Simeon to Mary; the faithful fulfilling of the law with the presentation of the one who will release its hold over us. Through it all, we see the light of God's salvation revealed to the world.

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Mary and Joseph] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel."

³³And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed

them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

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

SERMON

Stand

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW 815 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

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 into heaven,
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

Called together through water and the Word, we boldly pray for the church, the world, and all who long to hear God’s voice. *Silence.*

Almighty God, you grant wisdom to our elders in every land and generation. Give senior citizens boldness to share the faith and a spirit of curiosity and joy to continue learning as your disciples. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Everlasting God, you provide beauty and warmth in sun, moon, stars, and fire, and you give us abundant gifts of water, land, and air. Break our patterns of overusing resources across the world so that all experience your beautiful creation. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Creating God, thank you for your daily presence in our community and throughout the world. Inspire leaders with your strength and wisdom, that all communities may be safe places for children, adults, seniors, infants, and youth. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Incarnate God, thank you for being born among us and experiencing human pain and sorrow. Bring wholeness to all who live with chronic illness, and rest your Spirit on those who are near death. Strengthen the sick, especially those we name before you silently or aloud.... Bless those who care for them. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, you encourage us through strong communities of faith. Open our hearts and minds to new people and ideas. Bless our vibrant traditions that bring life and hope. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of hope, thank you for the saints who have gone before us. Keep us faithful in service to you until we are one with all the faithful departed. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We place our prayers before you, God, united in your Spirit; through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And with you.**

The Sharing of the Peace is a way of demonstrating hospitality and grace with others. Please understand if some people choose not to shake hands while sharing the Peace for health reasons, but simply greet you with a smile.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

Sit

OFFERING with Special Music:

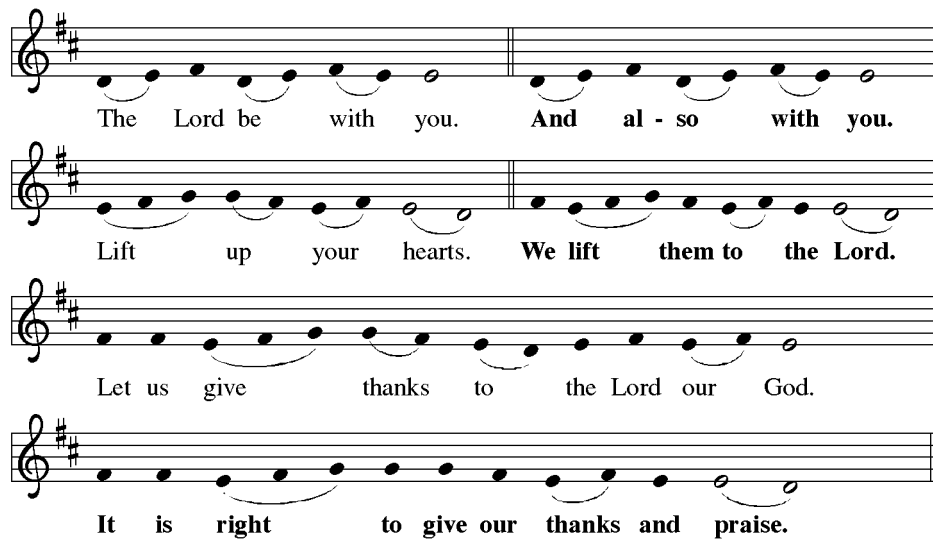
Stand

OFFERING SONG ELW 182

OFFERING PRAYER

God of all creation, all you have made is good, and your love endures forever. You bring forth bread from the earth and fruit from the vine. Nourish us with these gifts, that we might be for the world signs of your gracious presence in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

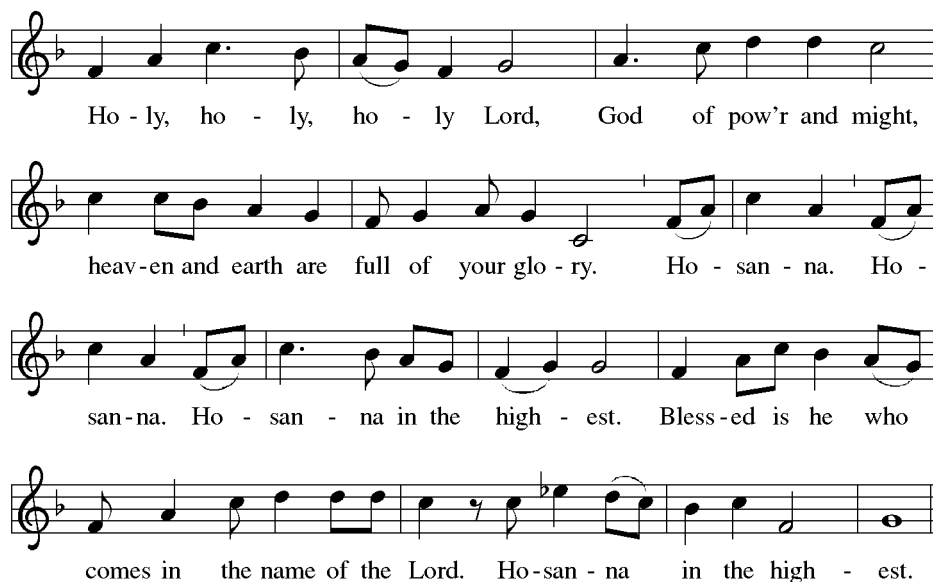
DIALOG



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. By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations; in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son; and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Blessed are you, O holy God: you are the Life and Light of all. By your powerful word you created all things. Through the prophets you called your people to be a light to the nations. Blessed are you for Jesus, your Son. He is your Light, shining in our darkness and revealing to us your mercy and might.

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 preaching and healing, his dying and rising, and his promise to come again, we await that day when all the universe will rejoice in your holy and life-giving light.

By your Spirit bless us and this meal, that, refreshed with this heavenly food, we may be light for the world, revealing the brilliance of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor are yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen**

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

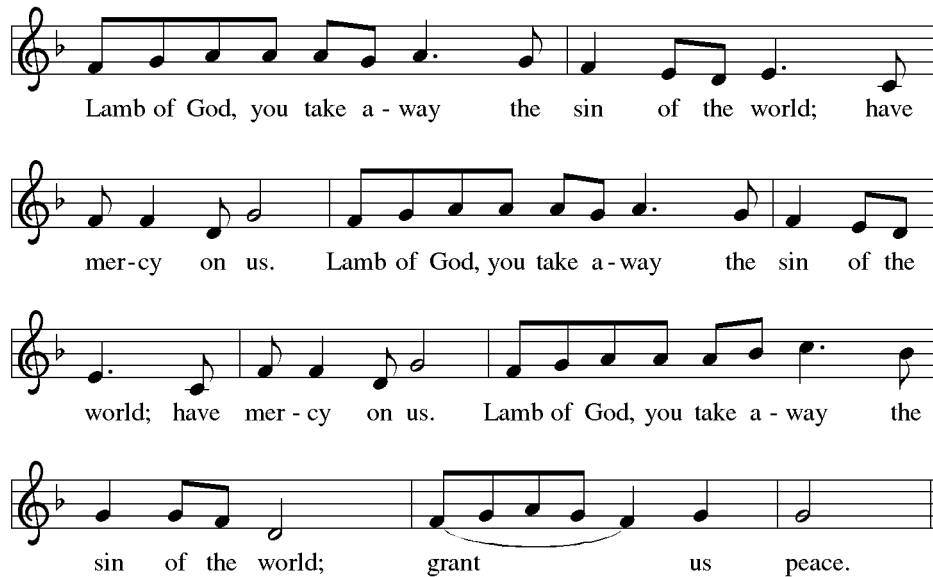
Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! Come to the table of mercy and joy.

Sit

COMMUNION

We receive Holy Communion kneeling at the communion rails. You may receive the wine either by Common Cup, or by individual glass. If you wish to receive wine in an individual glass, please take one from the stacked trays. To receive communion without coming forward, please notify an usher, and be seated near an aisle. There is grape juice in the center circle of each silver communion tray of glasses. Gluten free wafers are available from the bread distributor. Please ask.

COMMUNION HYMNS



ELW 296 What Child is This

Stand

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We thank you, O God, that you have fed us at your banqueting table with bread and wine beyond compare, the very life of Christ for us. Send your Spirit with us now, that we may set the captive free, use your gifts to build one another up, and in everything reflect your glory revealed in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

God sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

The God of glory dwell in you richly, name you beloved, and shine brightly on your path; and the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the ☩ Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN ELW 313 Lord, Now Let Your Servant

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is our light. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

SERVANTS OF WORSHIP TODAY:

Presiding Minister: Pr. Eric Lesher

Assisting Minister: Charlene Berens

Acolyte:

Cantor/Choir: Adult Choir

Organist/Pianist: Anne Melang-Thoren, Jennifer Aliwarga-Carlson

Reader: Wendy Apple

Communion Assistants: Denny Berens, Julene Lesher, Bruce Petersen, Cheryl Petersen

Altar Guild: Carla Ingersoll and Ginny Potts

Communion Bread: Cheryl Petersen

Communion Wine: Karen & Mark Billings, Rod & Debbie Basler, John & Joyce Lunde

Greeters: Denny Berens, Bruce and Cheryl Petersen

Ushers: Robert Stimbert, Neil Larson, Ron Holtgrewe, Mark Billings

Nursery Care: Judi Schroeder, Elizabeth Krueger

Transportation: Alex Chapman, Duane Mischnick

Staff:

Rev. Eric Lesher, Senior Pastor

David Sage, Office Administrator

Anne Melang-Thoren, Director of Music

Jennifer Aliwarga-Carlson, Organist\pianist

Robert Stimbert, Custodian

Judi Schroeder, Nursery Coordinator

Elizabeth Krueger, Nursery Assistant

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