



Christmas Eve  
December 24, 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

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

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## GATHERING

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

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**PRELUDE:** "Hark the Herald Angels Sing", Felix Mendelssohn, arr. Bonnie Heidenreich

### 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 made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our 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 9:2, 6**

A reading from Isaiah:

<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>6</sup>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.

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

*STAND*

**Gospel: Luke 2:1-7**

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

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

<sup>7</sup>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.

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

*SIT*

**SPECIAL MUSIC** (Bell Quartet, Group A)

“‘Twas in the Moon of Wintertime”, *Une Jeune Pucelle*, French folk tune, 16th century, setting Anne Krentz Organ, 2020

"Good Christian Friends Rejoice", *In Dulci Jubilo*, German folk tune, 14th century, arr. Albert Zabel, 2008

## **SERMON**

**HYMN OF THE DAY** (sung by Men's Virtual Choir)

- 1 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.
- 2 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!
- 3 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.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820-1885

*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.*

The shepherds sing, "Jesus Christ is born!" Let the church throughout the world proclaim this good news, over the hills and everywhere. Unite the voices of all your faithful people in songs of praise and rejoicing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Heaven and nature sing, "Joy to the world!" Give respite to flocks, fields, and those who tend them. Come near to us in the beauty of nighttime, the shining of the stars, and the hush of a world at rest. May our wonder at your creation rouse our care for all the earth. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The angels sing, "Peace on earth!" Come quickly to still the strife of this world. Hush the noise of war and violence in places of unrest. Inspire leaders of nations to seek lasting peace and sustainable provision for all in their care. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Mary sings melodies of comfort to her newborn child. Bring rest and reassurance to those facing struggles this night. Shelter travelers and those without homes. Console those who lie awake due to pain or anxiety. Heal those who are sick or hurting. Especially those we name before you now... Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The heavenly chorus sings, "Glory to God in the highest!" We give you thanks for all the saints who have proclaimed your glory in word and deed. Let us join them this night in joyful praise around your eternal throne. 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.**

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#### MEAL

*God feeds us with the presence of Christ.*

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SIT

**MUSIC OFFERING:** "Wexford Carol", traditional Irish melody, 12th century, arr. Elaine Hagenberg, 2019 (sung by Virtual Choir)

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

Gracious God, you came to us as one unknown, bringing joy and salvation to the earth. Nourish us at your banquet table, that with all who welcome your birth we may proclaim your peace, revealed in Jesus Christ, our Savior. **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

## **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.**

**SPECIAL MUSIC:** (Bell Quartet, Group B)

"How Great Our Joy", traditional German melody, arr. Hugo Jungst, 1853-1923, setting Anne Krentz Organ, 2020

"Still, Still, Still", Austrian carol, Anne Krentz Organ, 2020

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## SENDING

*God sends us in mission to the world.*

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*STAND*

### BLESSING

Almighty God, who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary, proclaimed joy through the angels, sent the shepherds with good news, and led the magi by a star, bless you this day ☩ through the Word made flesh. **Amen.**

### DISMISSAL

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

**POSTLUDE** “Love has Come”, Un Flambeau, French carol, F. Seguin, 1856, arr. Paul Bliss

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### WORSHIP SERVANTS:

Worship leader: Rev. Eric Leshar

Organist/Pianist: Anne Melang-Thoren

Jennifer Aliwarga-Carlson

Bell Quartets: (A) Chris and Wendy Apple, Bev Madison, Dave Ripa

(B) Wendy Apple, Lisa Holmstrom, Jillian Jensen and Julene Leshar

## COVID 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**. 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.