



Thanksgiving Eve
November 24, 2021

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Making Christ Known to all Through Grace

2225 Washington Street, Lincoln NE 68502 + 402-474-1505 + www.egrace.org

Network: GLC-Balcony

Password: AlphaOmega

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 follow 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.

Masks are required for everyone during worship.

INTRODUCTION to worship

Today's readings reflect two of the strains that go into the celebration of a national day of thanksgiving: gratitude for abundant harvest (Joel) and civic prayer for a peaceable common life (1 Timothy). The core meaning of Thanksgiving for many of us—a home feast for extended family and friends—is not reflected in the readings; but it is reflected weekly in the church's meal of thanksgiving (eucharist). What we wish for both these thanksgiving meals is that they will go deeper than celebration of one another and our own blessings, to recognize in our true Host one who wants everyone brought to the table.

GATHERING

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

WELCOME

PRELUDE: "For The Beauty Of The Earth", *Dix*, arr. Sandra Eithun & Tammy Waldrop

STAND

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

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

Have mercy on us, O God.

We confess that we have sinned against you and against our neighbor. We have built walls instead of tables and have turned away the stranger. We have sought glory for ourselves and have treasured that which does not satisfy. Help us to love as you love, to welcome those you send, and to treasure mercy and justice. Turn us from our ways to your ways, and free us to serve those in need. Amen.

God, who makes all things new, forgives your sins for † Jesus' sake and remembers them no more. Lift up your heads and your hearts. Yours is the kingdom of God. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN

Now Thank We All Our God



1 Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices,
2 Oh, may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
3 All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given,



who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;
with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us,
the Son, and Spirit blest, who reign in highest heaven,



who, from our mothers' arms, has blest us on our way
and keep us all in grace, and guide us when perplexed,
the one eternal God, whom earth and heav'n adore;



with countless gifts of love, and still is ours to-day.
and free us from all harm in this world and the next.
for thus it was, is now, and shall be ever more.

Text: Martin Rinkhart, 1586–1649; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878
Music: NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT, Johann Crüger, 1598–1662

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 our Father, your generous goodness comes to us new every day. By the work of your Spirit lead us to acknowledge your goodness, give thanks for your benefits, and serve you in willing obedience, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture, preaching and song.

First Reading: Joel 2:21-24

The prophet Joel understood that a locust plague that ravaged the land of Judah was God's judgment on the people, whom he then called to repentance. Today's reading points beyond the judgment to a time when God will bless the land and cause it to produce food in abundance.

A reading from Joel:

- ²¹Do not fear, O soil;
be glad and rejoice,
for the LORD has done great things!
- ²²Do not fear, you animals of the field,
for the pastures of the wilderness are green;
the tree bears its fruit,
the fig tree and vine give their full yield.
- ²³O children of Zion, be glad
and rejoice in the LORD your God;
for he has given the early rain for your vindication,
he has poured down for you abundant rain,
the early and the later rain, as before.
- ²⁴The threshing floors shall be full of grain,
the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

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

Psalm: Psalm 126

A responsive reading from Psalm 126:

- ¹When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
then were we like those who dream.
- ²**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.
Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."**
- ³The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are glad indeed.
- ⁴**Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses of the Negeb.**
- ⁵Those who sowed with tears
will reap with songs of joy.
- ⁶**Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

Faithful God, like a grain of wheat falling into the earth your Son went into death, so that after three days the earth might bloom with the joy of his rising. Let the seeds of justice, which we plant with tears, bring forth the power of the resurrection in the places of death and despair, and gather us at last into the joyful harvest of the saints; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Second Reading: 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Christians are encouraged to offer prayers and thanks for all people, including rulers. We offer such inclusive, far-reaching prayers because God desires to save all people.

A reading from 1st Timothy:

¹First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone,
²for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. ³This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵For

there is one God;

there is also one mediator between God and humankind,

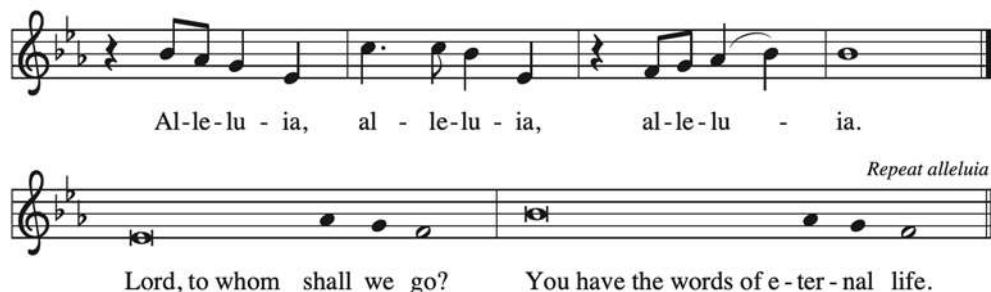
Christ Jesus, himself human,

⁶who gave himself a ransom for all

—this was attested at the right time. ⁷For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

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

STAND



Gospel: Matthew 6:25-33

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught his disciples about the providence of God so that they would regard life with thanksgiving and trust rather than anxiety.

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

[Jesus said,] ²⁵“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ ³²For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

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

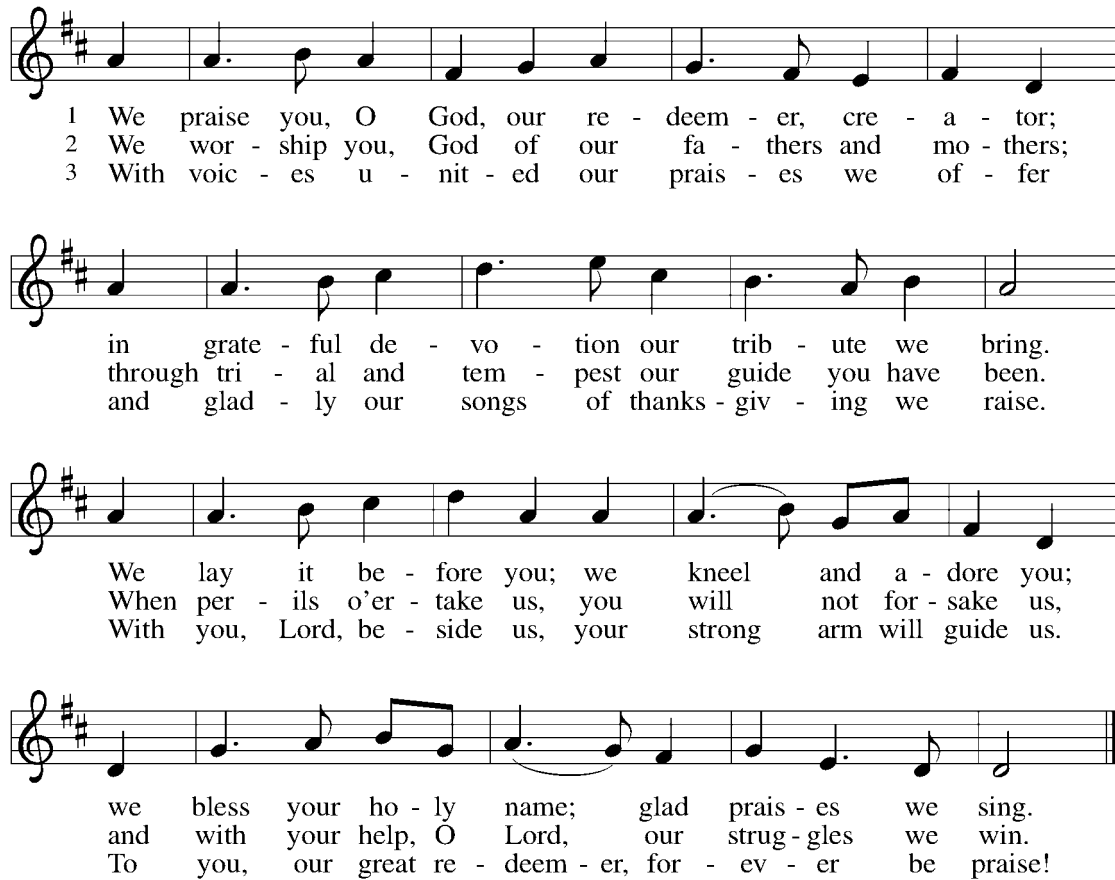
SIT

SERMON

STAND

HYMN OF THE DAY

We Praise You, O God



1 We praise you, O God, our re - deem - er, cre - a - tor;
2 We wor - ship you, God of our fa - thers and mo - thers;
3 With voic - es u - nit - ed our prais - es we of - fer
in grate - ful de - vo - tion our trib - ute we bring.
through tri - al and tem - pest our guide you have been.
and glad - ly our songs of thanks - giv - ing we raise.
We lay it be - fore you; we kneel and a - dore you;
When per - ils o'er - take us, you will not for - sake us,
With you, Lord, be - side us, your strong arm will guide us.
we bless your ho - ly name; glad prais - es we sing.
and with your help, O Lord, our strug - gles we win.
To you, our great re - deem - er, for - ev - er be praise!

Text: Julia C. Cory, 1882–1963

Music: KREMSER, A. Valerius, *Nederlandsch Gedenckclanck*, 1626

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 whose giving knows no ending, you invite the whole world to your table of mercy. Hear us as we pray for the church, the world, and everyone in need. *A brief silence.*

God, you give all people a place at the table. Nurture and encourage campus ministries, new congregations, and workplace chaplaincies. Support all parts of the church that meet people where they are and offer accompaniment through daily challenges and joys. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You give nourishment to the birds of the air and the lilies of the fields. Sustain all creatures who rely on the earth for sustenance. Water parched ground, dry flooded fields, temper heat waves and frosts, and give sunlight and shade. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, you give wisdom to your people. Enlighten all leaders. Inspire and guide our president, our governor, our local leaders, and all who represent us in our government. Give them patience and perspective to choose wisely for our common good. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, you give nourishment to those who hunger. Bring poverty and food insecurity to an end. Give dignity and adequate employment to those who are unemployed and underemployed. Sustain us all at your welcoming banquet of love and justice. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, you give community to those who are lonely. Be with our biological families, our chosen families, and our church family as we gather for the Thanksgiving holiday. Send your compassionate presence to those who are lonely, those who are separated or estranged from their families, and those whose loved ones have died. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, you give a feast of endless thanksgiving. We are grateful for the saints gathered at your table who have gone before us. Unite us with them whenever we give thanks to you. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, your welcome is wider than we can imagine. Receive our prayers for the sake of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us. **Amen.**

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Christ.

SIT

MUSIC OFFERING: Christ, Our Host, We Come Adoring", *Nutmegs and Ginger*, M. L. Bringle, arr. William Rowan, 2002

(Refrain)

Christ, our Host, we come adoring, friends to share your feasting.

God's own bounty here outpouring fills our hearts in feasting.

Sun and soil, sun and soil of harvest;

loving toil, toil for sowing grain and growing seeds,

the growing seeds of Christ: the life we share in feasting.

(refrain)

*Wheat and bread, wheat and bread of harvest;
hungers fed, fed by kneaded flour and risen loaf,
the risen loaf of Christ: the meal we share in feasting.
(refrain)*

*Fruit and vine, fruit and vine of harvest;
fragrant wine, wine of heady grace, a saving cup,
the saving cup of Christ: the joy we share in feasting.
(refrain)*

*Fertile lands, fertile lands of harvest;
willing hands, hands for sharing bread and spreading hope,
the righteous hope of Christ: the charge we take from feasting.
(refrain)*

STAND

OFFERING PRAYER

Holy God, the earth is yours and everything in it, yet you have chosen to dwell among your creatures. Come among us now in these gifts of bread and wine, and strengthen us to be your body for the world through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

DIALOG

The Lord be with you. And al - so 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; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. 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

A feast of love is offered here for you and for all the saints.

COMMUNION

All are welcome. Come forward by way of the center aisle to receive the wafer (Body of Christ). Gluten free is available upon request. Move to the next station to receive the cup (Blood of Christ). Red grape juice is available. Return to your pew by way of the side aisle. Please dispose your used cup into the basket at the head of the side aisle.

COMMUNION HYMN

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come



- 1 Come, ye thank-ful peo - ple, come; raise the song of har - vest home.
- 2 All the world is God's own field, fruit un - to his praise to yield;
- 3 For the Lord our God shall come and shall take his har - vest home;
- 4 E - ven so, Lord, quick - ly come to thy fi - nal har - vest home.



All be safe - ly gath - ered in ere the win - ter storms be - gin.
wheat and tares to - geth - er sown, un - to joy or sor - row grown.
from his field shall in that day all of - fens - es purge a - way;
Gath - er then thy peo - ple in, free from sor - row, free from sin,



God, our mak - er, doth pro - vide for our wants to be sup - plied.
First the blade, and then the ear, then the full corn shall ap - pear.
give his an - gels charge at last in the fire the tares to cast,
there, for - ev - er pu - ri - fied, in thy gar - ner to a - bide.



Come to God's own tem - ple, come, raise the song of har - vest home.
Lord of har - vest, grant that we whole - some grain and pure may be.
but the fruit - ful ears to store in his gar - ner ev - er - more.
Come, with all thine an - gels, come, raise the glo - rious har - vest home!

Text: Henry Alford, 1810–1871, alt.

Music: ST. GEORGE'S, WINDSOR, George J. Elvey, 1816–1893

STAND

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Blessed Jesus, at this table, you have been for us both host and meal. Now send us forth to extend our tables and to share your gifts until that day when all feast together at your heavenly banquet. **Amen.**

SENDING

God sends us in mission to the world.

SENDING HYMN

Let All Things Now Living

1 Let all things now liv - ing a song of thanks - giv - ing to
2 God rules all the forc - es: the stars in their cours-es and

God the cre - a - tor tri - um - phant - ly raise,
sun in its or - bit o - be - dient - ly shine;

who fash - ioned and made us, pro - tect - ed and stayed us, who
the hills and the moun - tains, the riv - ers and foun - tains, the

still guides us on to the end of our days.
deeps of the o - cean pro - claim God di - vine.

God's ban - ners are o'er us, God's light goes be -
We too should be voic - ing our love and re -

fore us, a pil - lar of fire shin - ing forth in the night,
joic - ing; with glad ad - o - ra - tion a song let us raise

till shad - ows have van - ished and dark - ness is ban - ished, as
till all things now liv - ing u - nite in thanks - giv - ing: "To

for - ward we trav - el from light in - to light.
God in the high - est, ho - san - na and praise!"

BLESSING

God, the beginning and the end, who has written your name in the book of life, ☩ bless and keep you in grace and peace from this time forth and forevermore. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Led on by the saints before us, go in peace to serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE: "Let All Things Now Living", arr. Sandra Eithun & Tammy Waldrop

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Bell Choirs:	Group A: Wendy & Chris Apple, Miles and Madeleine Melang-Thoren, Bev Madison, Jillian Jensen. Group B: Lisa Holmstrom, Dave Rathjen, Jillian Jensen, Wendy Apple.
Communion Assistants:	Roger Potts and Julene Lesher
Bread:	Chris and Wendy Apple
Altar Guild:	Doug and Sarah Krueger
Wine:	Kathy Remington, Larry and Sharon Genthe
Ushers:	Kurt and Cindy Eberspacher, Lori Drake

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.
- Masks are required for everyone during worship.
- We will enter the building through the North doors. These doors will be locked at ten minutes past the hour. All other doors will be locked.
- There will hand sanitizers in the narthex. If you wish you can sanitize your hands prior to entering the worship space.
- 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 acolyte.
- There will be no nursery available.

Every Perfect Gift

Thanksgiving Day is a day to recognize the blessings we share, no matter the simplicity of our table, or who is gathered or not gathered around it. Matthew's Gospel reminds us that no amount of regret or worry can add to our lives, today is not a day to enumerate unfulfilled wishes. It is a day to consider how God takes care of us. Jesus invites us to consider the sparrow, the grass, the lilies – all who live their lives giving glory to their Creator without anxiety about accumulating or adorning. We, like those lilies, grasses, and birds receive blessing out of proportion with our input. We are blessed because we are God's, created to love and to be loved

So, after the meal, as you contemplate a second slice of pie, you are invited to reflect on how you might love as abundantly as God does. How might you ease the anxiety of others, sharing from your abundance? How may you be a blessing to others as God has blessed you?

