



The First Sunday of Advent

Grace Lutheran Church ~ ELCA

November 29, 2020

Service of Holy Communion & Order for Healing

Good morning & Welcome to Grace!

*Our mission is to invite and welcome all
to the fellowship of Christ in service to our community.*

***We are glad you are with us for worship today, on the First Sunday of Advent,
the beginning of a new Church Year, as we come together to hear the Word,
to celebrate the coming of Emmanuel, God with us, and to share the Meal.***

***We offer a special welcome to our guests, and to all those
who are joining us remotely through Facebook Live or on YouTube.***

THIS IS A HOUSE OF PRAISE AND PRAYER, OF WORSHIP AND REJOICING. If you have a prayer request or a thanksgiving, you may send it to the Church Office, and it will be added to the published list (if you desire) and also forwarded to our Prayer Team. Contact info for the office is at the back of the bulletin. Thanks!

CHILDREN ARE WELCOME IN WORSHIP AT GRACE! Each week, prior to the reading of scripture, a special Children's Message is offered for our young ones. While we are not having the children come forward at this time, we will still include it in the service.

YOUR BULLETIN contains the worship service in its entirety. You will notice that we currently do not have any hymns included in the service. There is still a Prelude and Postlude, as well as instrumental music. For the time being, we will not be singing as a congregation. However, as much as possible, we will try to have at least one pre-recorded vocal performance each week. We kindly ask that, if you know the song, you refrain from singing along. We realize many among you love music, and it is something you miss from worship. However, we ask this for the health and safety of everyone in attendance. Thank you.

ONCE AGAIN TODAY, WE ARE PLEASED TO CELEBRATE THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION. For those with us in person, you will see that each chair has a small, plastic container of wine or juice (as you selected when you registered) and there is a plastic bag on one of the seats with a wafer inside for each person in your group. If you asked for a gluten free wafer, it will be in its own bag and will be marked as "GF". For those participating from home, please have a small glass of wine or juice and a small piece of bread available for all who are planning to commune. When we come to the Meal portion of the service, please follow along on the screen or in the bulletin. We will go through the Great Thanksgiving and the prayers and, after the Lord's Prayer, all will be invited to commune in unison – at Grace, and at home. We will review this process again as we get to that portion of the service. Please be patient as we attempt to bring back this very important part of our Christian worship service.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS about our worship service - generally or specifically in this time of pandemic - about Baptism or Communion, about what Lutherans believe, or even about Grace Lutheran Church, please do not hesitate to reach out to our pastor.

Again, welcome to worship!

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

Bold type = Assembly

PRELUDE

'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel'

ELW 257

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

We praise you, O God, for this evergreen crown that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.

As we light the first candle on this wreath, rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes with all the saints and angels. Enlighten us with your grace, and prepare our hearts to welcome him with joy. Grant this through Christ, our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. Amen

The first candle is lit.

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

Let us pray,

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

MUSICAL OFFERING

'Rejoice, Rejoice Believers'

ELW 244

WORD ~ God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

FIRST READING

ISAIAH 64:1-9

This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.

¹O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence – ²as when fire kindles brushwood, and the fire causes water to boil – to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. ⁴From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. ⁵You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. ⁶We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. ⁷There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. ⁸Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. ⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19 (Read responsively: *Odd Verses: Men, Even Verses: Women*)

¹Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
²**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and come to help us.**
³Restore us, O God; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
⁴**O LORD God of hosts, how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**
⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have given them bowls of tears to drink.
⁶**You have made us the derision of our neighbors, and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**
⁷Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
¹⁷**Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
the one you have made so strong for yourself.**
¹⁸And so will we never turn away from you; give us life, that we may call upon your name.
¹⁹**Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

SECOND READING

FIRST CORINTHIANS 1:3-9

As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of

every kind—⁶just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (Spoken in unison) *Those moved to do so may stand.*

Alleluia. Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

MARK 13:24-37

The holy gospel according to Saint Mark, the 13th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

[Jesus said:] ²⁴“In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON ~ *We encounter the living word of God in preaching.*

SERVICE OF HEALING (*Those moved to do so may stand.*)

The presiding minister may address the assembly with these or similar words.

Our Lord Jesus healed many as a sign of the reign of God come near and sent the disciples to continue this work of healing—with prayer, the laying on of hands, and anointing. In the name of Christ, the great healer and reconciler of the world, we now entrust to God all who are in need of healing.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

Each petition ends: Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Sisters and brothers, I invite you to receive a sign of healing and wholeness in the name of the triune God: (*people at home and people sitting together in worship at Grace, may choose to make the sign of the cross on one another's foreheads where indicated below.*)

In the name of our Savior ✝ Jesus Christ, be strengthened and filled with God's grace, that you may know the healing power of the Spirit. **Amen**

PRAYER

Let us pray.

Living God, grant comfort in suffering to all who are in need of healing. When they are afraid, give them courage; when afflicted, give them patience; when dejected, give them hope; and when alone, assure them of the support of your holy people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

BLESSING

Almighty God, who is a strong tower to all, to whom all things in heaven and on earth bow and obey, be now and evermore your sure defense, and help you to know that the name given to us for health and salvation is the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen**

MEAL ~ God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

MUSICAL OFFERING

'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty'

Arr. Bill Wolaver

OFFERING

This is normally the place in the service where we would collect the offering. We give thanks for your spirit of generosity during these trying times. It has allowed us to remain faithful in our support of the local community, as well as the work of the wider Church. We humbly and prayerfully ask that – if at all possible – you continue to be faithful to your financial commitment to Grace. Thank you again.

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

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING *(Those moved to do so may stand.)*

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.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times 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. 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:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Amen

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE & THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Holy God, the Beginning and the End, our Salvation and our Hope, we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty. When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair, you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy. At this end of the ages your Son Jesus came to bring us your love and to heal all the suffering world.

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 life, death, and resurrection, we await his coming again in righteousness and peace. Send your Spirit on us and on this bread and wine we share: strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Even as we watch and wait, Christ is here.

This is the Body and Blood of Christ, given and shed for you. **Amen**

COMMUNION

At this time, all are invited to partake of the Bread and Cup in place. Please hang on to your cup and the bag – there will be a bin for you to dispose of these items as you leave the service.

MUSICAL OFFERING

'Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying'

ELW 436

During this short musical offering, you are invited to observe a moment of silent reflection on the gift of the Sacrament. Please remain in your seats. Thank you.

Once all have received the meal:

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**

SENDING ~ God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

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 ~ *Please wait for an usher to dismiss you from your seats. Thank you!*

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord. **We will. Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

'There's a Song in the Air'

Arr. Hugh S. Livingston, Jr.



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MINISTERS: All the people of God

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ORGANIST / PIANIST: Johnny Shaw, IV

USHERS: Bob Becker, George Ohlin, Frank Piepmeier

A/V MANAGER: Joy Becker

ALTAR FLOWERS: Given to the Glory of God, as we anticipate the coming of Emmanuel.

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THE CHURCH OFFICE IS CONTINUING TO OPERATE; however, we ask that you not enter the office itself as the building continues to remain closed and will remain closed, although in-person worship has resumed. Calling 850-877-5423 or emailing graceluthch@earthlink.net are the best ways to reach out. In case of a pastoral care emergency, please contact Pastor Jenn on her cell at 850-800-7197.

WE DO RELY UPON YOUR CONTINUED BENEVOLENCE during this time - for us and for our community outreach programs. Our expenses continue just as yours do and your benevolence allows us to continue to operate from day to day. We truly appreciate your generosity.

THE WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS DEADLINE IS by 9:00 a.m. on Tuesdays. Please try to keep to three lines or less or we may need to condense for space. Email the announcements to Lisa in the church office at graceluthch@earthlink.net.

2021 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPE NUMBERS REASSIGNED, effective January 1, in order to save on printing costs. The new envelopes will be distributed in December. Please note that your envelope number may have changed. Your current envelope number remains in effect until the end of December. After that, please discard or recycle any old ones you have on hand and begin using your new envelopes/number. **Please note: To avoid accounting errors, it is important that you do not use the 2021 envelopes and numbers until January 1.** Remember to always write your name on your contribution envelope, to ensure that your donation is credited properly.

CHRISTMAS CONNECTION UPDATE. GLC has looked forward to adopting families through the Christmas Connection for many years. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we will not be able to coordinate adopting families as a church this year. To continue in the giving spirit of the season, we encourage you to adopt a family on your own, or donate items, or donate financially to Christmas Connection or to your favorite non-profit organization or charity. Information for Christmas Connection can be found here: <http://www.thechristmasconnection.org/>

GRACE NOTES NEWSLETTER DEADLINE is the 20th of the month prior to the publication month. If you have a topic to share, please send to Grace Notes Editor, Nick Gandy, at ngandyman@yahoo.com.

PLEASE DO NOT DROP ITEMS OFF AT THE CHURCH that you are finding as you declutter your closets. We suggest that you contact area charities to see if they are currently accepting clothing / books / crafts / household items / etc. for donation.

SAVE THESE DATES! While the corona virus has certainly put the kibosh on fellowship activities for a while, the following activities have been tentatively scheduled. Please mark your calendar and share any other ideas with Fellowship Committee Chair, Mary Grant, at grantmlic@hotmail.com.

February 7: Chili Cook-off / Super Bowl Party

February 14: Valentine's Day Spaghetti Supper

Mardi Gras Party TBA: - (Ash Wednesday is Feb. 17)

PICTURE DIRECTORY UPDATE. The church directory was mailed out this past week to all who had their picture taken for the directory, or who purchased a copy. Thank you for your patience. There are copies available for purchase for \$6. If interested, please contact Mary Grant at grantmlcic@hotmail.com or 609-602-0155.

SHUTTERFLY STOREFRONT FUNDRAISER. Shop the Shutterfly collection, a partnership created between Shutterfly and Lifetouch, that includes photo books, gifts, premium stationery, keepsakes, home décor and so much more—and for every purchase made, Shutterfly will donate 8% of the proceeds to Grace.

Visit our Shutterfly Storefront at: <http://gracelutheran32308.shutterflystorefront.com/>. If you have any questions, contact Mary Grant - (609) 602-0155 or grantmlcic@hotmail.com.

IF YOU HAVE A NEED - any kind of need (even just to talk) - or if you know someone else who does, please reach out for help. Many direct-service organizations are not open, but 211 has information and resources for those who are in need at this time (just dial “211” from your phone). In addition, please let the church know. Pastor Jenn and our Church Council are here to listen and share, and maybe do a little of that of our own. We want to hear from you. And we promise that you will continue to hear from us. We are a community in Christ, and we are here to support, love and serve one another. Please let us know if you need anything.

WE ARE STILL TAKING DONATIONS IN SUPPORT OF MANNA ON MERIDIAN -- and they are still supporting those in need in our community. If you wish to drop off tuna, please do so by placing it in the plastic bin outside the door to the church office. You can do that any time. If you prefer, you may also support Manna by sending a monetary donation through the mail to us. Simply make the check out to Grace Lutheran Church and be sure to put "Manna" in the memo line, and we'll make certain your donation gets to them. **Please note that due to COVID-19, clothing donations for Manna are not being accepted until further notice.**

IMPORTANT PRAYER LIST UPDATE. As of today, we are ‘resetting’ the prayer list. If you would like to have someone included on the prayer list, please contact Lisa in the Church Office (graceluthch@earthlink.net or 850-877-5423), or our prayer team coordinators, Tina Frese - freset@comcast.net or Erik Robinson - robinsoe@flcourts.org.

This week at Grace, please remember in prayer:

The people of Grace Lutheran church and our Congregational Council; St. Stephen Lutheran Church and Pastor Tom Holdcraft; the Florida-Bahamas Synod and our Bishop, Pedro Suarez; the ELCA and our Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton.

Please also lift up:

All those suffering due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and all those working on vaccines and a cure; all those whose needs are known only to God.

If you submitted a name in the last week to be added to / continued on the prayer list, please know it will be included next week.