



Grace Lutheran Church

Companion Congregation: Msindo Parish in Tanzania

Welcome to Worship

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2023

5:00 p.m. & 9:00 p.m.

Liturgical worship with organ

Setting 2

OUR STATEMENT OF MISSION

Grace Lutheran Church is a community of faith, centered in worship, held in grace, strengthened in love, sent forth in mission, in Jesus' name.

Welcome! *If this is your first time worshipping at Grace Lutheran, we're glad you are here!*

The following information pertains to how things normally work. Pandemic changes to worship and communion will be announced in worship, and/or in the margins of the bulletin. However our mission, the love we feel for all people, and the ways we care for each other will remain unchanged.

You can learn more about our congregation

- *on our website at www.gracedm.org*
- *by asking a greeter or other members of the congregation*
- *picking up one of our brief brochures from the Visitor Center in the Gathering Hall, or newsletters in the Entryway.*

Worship Online: During times when we are online-only, or when you cannot be with us in person, you can participate in worship on our website or Facebook page @gracelutherandm .

*We worship together in many ways: Standing, sitting, singing, speaking, listening. You are invited to worship in as many (or few) ways as you are comfortable and able. **When following along in the bulletin, the congregation is invited to read the items in bold (often marked with a C:) aloud.***

Large print bulletins are available from the ushers.

Children belong and are welcome in worship! *Children's bulletins are available from the ushers, and activity bags are available outside the doors to the sanctuary. If needed, the **Kids Corner** in the Gathering Hall has puzzles, books, coloring pages and Mega-blocks! This space is intended to offer a place for children to be and play if they need to step of out of worship and during fellowship times.*

Communion – We welcome all people to the Lord's table to receive Holy Communion. *Children ages 3 and above are welcome at the parents' discretion, after meeting for instruction with the pastor. Children not instructed are invited to come forward for a blessing. If you are not able to come forward to take communion, please notify an usher before the service. Then try to sit by the aisle and the pastor will commune you in your pew.*

If you are interested in finding out more about membership at Grace, please contact Pastor Mike at Mike@gracedm.org, 515-276-6873.

Prelude

A setting of “Still, Still, Still”
traditional German carol arranged by P. Manz

Welcome

Poetry Prayer

Please rise in body or in spirit

Christmas Litany

L: This year, we dreamed of world peace.

C: We dreamed of deep breaths and restful sleep.

L: We dreamed of love that lasts and suffering that passes.

C: We dreamed of doors open wide and a cure to disease.

L: We dreamed, because to dream is to believe.

C: For to dream is to hope; to dream is to see.

L: So make room in your being to dream yet again,

C: Of a world without fear, and a God that draws near.

L: For it is almost Christmas.

C: Love is almost here.

L: May we dream to see, and hope to believe. Let us worship
Holy God.

Confession and Forgiveness

L: Ever-present God, From time to time we dream radical dreams.

C: We dream of freedom for the imprisoned, Food for the hungry, and equality for all.

L: We dream bold, radical dreams, until the world tells us that these dreams are impossible.

C: And when that happens, we are tempted to tuck our dreams into coat pockets And let them collect dust on the shelves of our hearts. Forgive us for giving up so easily.

L: Forgive us for giving up so easily, for on this night we remember and celebrate a radical dream— That you dwelled among us.

C: Give us the courage to dust old dreams off the shelf With the confidence that with you, the impossible is possible.

L: With you, a light always shines in the darkness.

C: With you, even an unwed teenage couple and a band of shepherds Can bring joy to the world.

L: Thanks be to God for a dream like that. Amen.

Gathering Hymn

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

#283

Greeting

L: Today Christ is Born! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Lighting of the Wreath

Ambo side: In the beginning, God dreamed of a beautiful world.

Organ side: In Egypt, the Israelites dreamed of freedom.

Ambo side: In the wilderness, the people dreamed of safety.

Organ side: In Jerusalem, the people dreamed of a Messiah.

Ambo side: In Bethlehem, the shepherds and Wise Men dreamed of a new beginning.

Organ side: Then, several years later, Jesus walked this earth and dreams came true.

Ambo side: The sick were healed.

Organ side: The poor had food.

Ambo side: The forgotten and ignored were seen.

Organ side: The children were welcomed.

Ambo side: Everyone was invited to the table, and the world has never been the same.

Organ side: So tonight, we are those who dream.

Ambo side: Tonight, we dream the same dreams of our ancestors before us.

Organ side: Tonight, we dream of justice and mercy, of love and kindness, of peace and hope.

Ambo side: Tonight we dream of a God that draws near to us out of unfailing love.

Organ side: May this candle be a reminder that there will be a day when every dream will be fulfilled. And until then, we will be those who dream.

Ambo side: Let us worship Holy God.

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah



- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

L: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

L: Let us pray,

C: 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.

Please be seated

Anthem (5p.m.) "In The Bleak Midwinter" arr. G. Alan Smith
Chancel Choir

First Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For 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. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Second Reading: Titus 2:11-14

¹¹The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Reading Notes

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

Reading Notes

The appearance of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior's final appearance.

Gospel Acclamation
 Old Lutheran liturgies often call this verse the "Gradual" which is based upon a Latin word meaning "step". We step up, with the Gospel acclamation, to hear the words of eternal life.

Reading Notes
 God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.

Please rise in body or in spirit

Gospel Acclamation

C: Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
 al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. *Repeat alleluia*
 L: Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

L: The Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke, the Second Chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Luke 2:1-14

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

L: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated

Sermon

Please rise in body or in spirit

Hymn of the Day “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”

#282

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 the People

L: Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

L: Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

C: Amen.

All: God of love, have mercy on us. Pour out your Spirit upon us. Center us in worship. Hold us in grace. Strengthen us in love. Send us forth in mission. In Jesus' holy name. Amen.

Passing of the Peace

L: The peace of the Lord be with you all,

C: And also with you!

Please be seated

Announcements

Please rise in body or in spirit

Creed

The Apostles' Creed is in a way the

“Reader’s Digest Bible”. If you took the Bible and did to it what Southern chefs do to green beans (cook them for 24 hours), you would find the Apostles’ Creed at the bottom of the pot when you lifted the lid.

Prayers of the People

In the middle of worship, we pause to pray not only for ourselves and our loved ones and their needs, but for everyone: the whole church, the world, and its leaders, and the local community. This kind of all-inclusive prayer is at the heart of Christian worship precisely because Jesus Christ died and rose again, not just for a few but for all people.

Great Thanksgiving



Sanctus

As we draw close to God in this meal, we sing these words from the angels. The words harken back to Isaiah's vision in the temple, where he hears the seraphim singing "Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory."

Preface

Holy, Holy, Holy



Thanksgiving at the Table

L: In the night in which he was betrayed...

L: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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

L: Glory to God in the highest! Come to the table of peace.
Please be seated

Lamb of God



Distribution Hymns: #276, # 487, # 277, # 271

Please rise in body or in spirit

Prayer after Communion

L: God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of
grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us

Lord's Prayer

*We gather in prayer
in response to the
gospel heard in the
proclamation that this
meal is given "for you
and for all people for
the forgiveness of
sin." We find our-
selves at the very
heart of the gospel
message. Christ not
only speaks to us in
the supper, but gives
us what he is speak-
ing about: his body
and blood for the for-
giveness of sins*

Communion

*Today we will receive
Holy Communion
through wafers and
pouring chalice. The
lines form from the
front pews to the
back, with two lines.
Please use the hand
sanitizer provided be-
fore you receive the
gluten free wafer.
Then proceed to the
tray of cups. Both
wine and grape juice
will be available.
Please place your cup
in the basket by the
side aisle as you re-
turn to the pew.*

**Instructions: Lighting
of the Candles**

*Candles will be lit
from the center aisle.
Tip your unlit candle
over the flame to
light your candle.
Hold your lit candle
upright, and let your
neighbor tilt their
unlit candle over
yours until lit.
Continue until each
person in the pew
has a lit candle.*

Dismissal

*With the dismissal
from worship, we are
sent to serve the Lord
through the unique
gifts, talents, and
relationships of each
one of us. This is not
a conclusion of ser-
vice, but a start to
what the next week
will bring in our walk
with Christ. So it is
fitting that the re-
sponse is a resound-
ing "Thanks be to
God."*

forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen

Gospel of the Incarnation John 1:1-14

Hymn of Light

"Silent Night"

#281

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.

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!

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.

Blessing

L: The Lord bless you and keep you... give you peace, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Sending Hymn

"Joy To The World"
With Grace Bells (5p.m.)

#267

Dismissal

L: Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude A setting of "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen"
traditional English carol arranged by W. Held

Please join us for worship

Christmas Day at 10:00 a.m.

New Years Eve for Lessons and Carols at 10 a.m.

On Sunday, January 7

we will return to our usual 9 a.m. worship, followed by fellowship with coffee and donuts, and an all-ages service project.

We will meet in Grace Hall, where we will be putting together We Care kits for Hope Ministries Women's shelter. These kits contain essential toiletries and are given to women when they first come into the shelter, to help them make a fresh start. This project is funded by a grant from our Mission Action Fund.

Hope Ministries mission is to rescue those who are homeless, hungry, abused or addicted, providing opportunities for hope, recovery and restoration through the love of Jesus Christ.

Welcome to Grace!

Ministers —the people of Grace

Pastor –

The Rev. Michael Schmidtmike@gracedm.org

Vicar

Adam Bardenadam@gracedm.org

Organist –

Rich Snyder.....rich@gracedm.org

Minister for Communications –

Michelle Voelkermichelle@gracedm.org

Administrative Assistant –

Kami Chicas.....kami@gracedm.org

Bookkeeper

Mike Hilsabeck.....mike.h@gracedm.org

Office Assistant for Worship

Jessica Flannery.....jessica@gracedm.org

Custodian – Todd Haugen

Ushers – 5p.m. Carter Woodruff, 9p.m. Larry Cramer

Greeters – 5p.m. Jenie Schmidt, 9p.m.

Lectors – 5p.m. Carol Woodruff, 9p.m.

Poem Readers – 5p.m. Jenny Rehder, 9p.m. Pam Palmer

Communion Assistants – 5p.m. Tammy Denton, Cheryl Weatherington,
Cal Wilner, Julie Honsey
9p.m.

Altar Guild – Sue Anderson & Carol Woodruff

Tech Crew – Greg Boeschen, Jamie Briggs, Chuck Denton, Paul Nelson,
Jon Rissman, & Amy Schmelzer

Counters – Tom McCleary & Mark Stumme



Grace Lutheran Church

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Pastor Michael Schmidt

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www.gracedm.org