

## **Grace Lutheran Church**

Companion Congregation: Msindo Parish in Tanzania

## Welcome to Worship

Third Sunday in Lent

March 23, 2025 9:00 a.m. Liturgical worship with organ Setting 1

## 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 worshiping at Grace Lutheran, we're glad you are here!

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 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 Megablocks! 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 Choral prelude on the hymn "Lamb of God, Pure and Sinless" - N. Decius arranged by G. Telemann

#### Welcome

#### Poetry Prayer — Slow Growth

There's a vine in the South that covers everything. It chokes out the light. Grows up to twelve inches per day. In a matter of years, it will blanket a forest. If you saw it from space, you'd marvel at its reach. If you saw it from the passenger seat, you'd weep at what it covers. Those looking for fast shade plant this invasive vine. Who can blame them? We're all impatient. But if it's fruit you want—the tart cherry, the sticky sweet kumquat, the soft side of a peach, the crisp bite of an apple—then bless the rain. Thank the sun. Put your hands in the dirt, and wait.

Please rise in body or in spirit

#### **Call to Worship**

L: Worship is a place to rest.

- C: We breathe deeply here.
- L: We still our aching bones.
- C: We sit in the quiet.
- L: We surround ourselves with music.
- C: Worship is a place to rest.
- L: Worship is a place to grow.
- C: We listen for God's word.
- L: We invite it to challenge us.
- C: We lean in with curiosity.
- L: We ask questions.
- C: Worship is a place to grow.
- L: So come into this space. Come rest and grow here.
- C: For where two or more are gathered, God is always there.
- L: Let us worship our gracious God.

## **Confession and Forgiveness**

L: Friends, we carve out time for confession in worship because it is not enough to hear about God's grace once. We need that reminder again, and again, and again. So join me in speaking the truth of our lives, and join me in receiving God's grace again.

L: Holy God, There are days when we fail to rest.

C: We stretch ourselves too thin. We say "yes" to every invitation.

We run a million miles a minute. We ignore your command to rest.

L: There are also days when we fail to act.

C: We wait for someone else. We take the easy road. We find excuses and justify our inaction.

L: God, forgive our imbalance.

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#### **Gathering Hymn**

We are a "singing church," so we follow the advice of the apostle Paul to teach and admonish "one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16).

# C: Remind us that birds rest, and they also fly. Show us how to do the same. Amen.

L: Family of faith, I have good news! Our God does not keep score. Our God does not hold grudges. Our God does not assume the worst about us. No, our God offers grace, and endless second chances, and boundless love. So join me in proclaiming the good news of the gospel:

C: God's grace is deeper than the ocean. God's love is wider than the sky. We are seen. We are claimed. We are forgiven. May this realization change and inspire us. Thanks be to God! Amen.

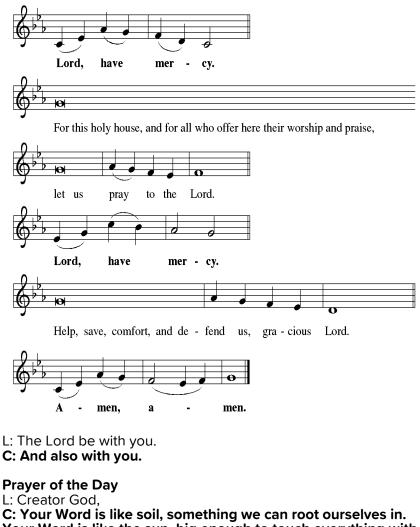
Gathering Hymn "Can You Feel the Seasons Turning" ACS 1065

#### Greeting

L: 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.** 







C: Your Word is like soil, something we can root ourselves in. Your Word is like the sun, big enough to touch everything with its warmth. And your Word is like a gardener, a love that prunes and encourages, waters and delights, seeds and tends. So as we turn to your text today, warm our bones, tend to our broken pieces, and show us how to grow. With hope we pray, Amen.

## Please be seated

#### Reading: Luke 15:6-9

<sup>6</sup>Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup>So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come

#### **Reading Notes:**

The gardener in the vineyard knows the fig tree needs rest, nutrients, and time—and it also needs to produce fruit. Both things are true, which is also true for us. If we are always striving for more growth without taking time to rest. we will burn out. But if we are only ever resting, we won't bear fruit or grow. The fig tree also teaches us that the in between time-of nurture before fruit—can be where transformation begins.

#### Prayers of the Peo-

**ple** This prayer in the service follows the directive of the Apostle Paul to young Timothy, a pastor: "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone. looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' <sup>8</sup>He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. <sup>9</sup>If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

L: The Word of the Lord **C: Thanks be to God** 

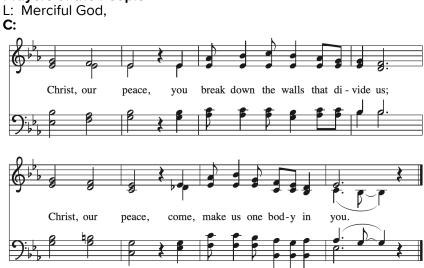
#### Sermon

Please rise in body or in spirit **Hymn of the Day** "God Weeps With Us Who Weep and Mourn" ACS #1054

Affirmation of Faith C: We believe in a God who loves and tends to us like a gardener. We believe that like the trees, some seasons are for growth,

and some seasons are for rest. Some days require pruning, and some require planting. Fortunately, we believe that our green-thumbed God sees us and cultivates the sweetest fruit. So may we plant roots, reach for the sky, grow where we can, and rest when we need, for we believe there is holiness in the pruning and in the planting. And we do not grow alone. Thanks be to God, amen.

#### **Prayers of the People**



L: We entrust all these prayers and those of our hearts to you, O God. In Jesus name we pray. Amen. **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 Temple Talk

Please rise in body or in spirit Offering Prayer L: Let us pray,

C: Holy God, gracious and merciful, you bring forth food from the earth and nourish your whole creation. Turn our hearts toward those who hunger in any way, that all may know your care; and prepare us now to feast on the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

#### Thanksgiving at the Table

L: God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, you have brought us this far along the way.

L: In times of bitterness you did not abandon us, but guided us into the path of love and light. In every age you sent prophets to make known your loving will for all humanity. The cry of the poor has become your own cry; our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire. In the fullness of time, you sent your chosen servant to preach good news to the afflicted, to break bread with the outcast and despised, and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.

L: 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.

L: Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:

## Offering

As Lutherans, we believe that Christian giving is about worship AND action. As an option to the offering plate, scan this QR code to access our secure digital offering plate.



This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

L: For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

L: Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection, we await the day when Jesus shall return to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death. Come, Lord Jesus! And let the church say, Amen. **C: Amen.** 

L: Send your Holy Spirit, our advocate, to fill the hearts of all who share this bread and cup with courage and wisdom to pursue love and justice in all the world. Come, Spirit of freedom! And let the church say, Amen.

#### C: Amen.

L: Join our prayers and praise with your prophets and martyrs of every age, that, rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection, we might live in the freedom and hope of your Son. Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. **C: Amen.** 

L: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray. Lord's Prayer Our Father in heaven. hallowed be your name, vour kingdom come. vour 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.

#### Communion

Today we will receive Holy Communion through wafers and pouring

#### Invitation to Communion

L: Jesus, our neighbor, invites us and all of his neighbors throughout the world to come together at this table and feast in his presence. Be nourished by this holy meal that you might go forth with joy and love your neighbors as yourselves. *Please be seated* 

Distribution Hymns: #751 (3x), #474, #515, #488

#### **Centering Prayer**

There will be two minutes of silence for centering prayer.

#### Please rise in body or in spirit

#### Prayer after Communion

L: Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

#### Benediction

L: As you leave this place, may you find God in every messy middle. May you know that the world is bigger than two sides. May you trust that you are made in the image of God, and therefore, you contain multitudes. So may you move through this world with an open heart, with a curious mind, and with the confidence that you do not go alone. God is with you in the mountains, in the valleys, and everywhere in between. Believe that good news, and go in peace.

#### Č: Amen

Sending Hymn "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me" #325

#### Dismissal

L: Go in Peace, Serve in Love **C: Thanks be to God.** 

**Postlude** Choral prelude on the hymn "Jesus, My Joy (Jesu, Meine Freude)" - J. Crüger arranged by J. S. Bach

## Poetry and Liturgy by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org Graphic Design by Rev. Lauren Wright

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chalice. The line forms from the front pews to the back. with the ambo side of the aisle going first followed by the organ side. Please use the hand sanitizer provided and take a cup from the tray. Then proceed to receive the aluten -free wafer. Both wine and grape iuice will be available. Please place your cup in the bas*ket by the side aisle* as you return to the pew.

Welcome to Grace!	
Ministers — the people of Grace	
Pastor –	
The Rev. Michael Schmidt	<u>mike@gracedm.org</u>
Vicar	
Jesse Hershberger	jesse@gracedm.org
Organist –	
Rich Snyder	<u>rich@gracedm.org</u>
Piano Accompanist, Music Ensemble Coordinator – Kathy Bowermaster	
Minister for Communications –	
Michelle Voelker	<u>michelle@gracedm.org</u>
Bookkeeper	
Mike Hilsabeck	<u>mike.h@gracedm.org</u>
Office Assistant for Worship	
Jessica Flannery	j <u>essica@gracedm.org</u>
Custodian – Todd Haugen	
<b>Usher</b> – Carter Woodruff	
Greeter –	
Liturgist – Emma Stammer	
Lector – Ro Zimany	
Communion Assistant –	
Altar Guild – Sue Anderson & Jane Ridnour	
<b>Tech Crew</b> – Greg Boeschen, Jamie Briggs, Chuck Denton, Paul Nelson, Jon Rissman, & Amy Schmelzer	
Counters – Aaron Brandsfield & Jon Rissman	
Coffee & Donuts –	



## **Grace Lutheran Church**

5201 Urbandale Avenue Des Moines, Iowa 50310 **Pastor Michael Schmidt** 515-276-6873 <u>www.gracedm.org</u>