



## **Grace Lutheran Church**

*Companion Congregation: Msindo Parish in Tanzania*

### **Welcome to Worship**

**First Sunday of Advent**

November 30, 2025

9:00 a.m.

Liturgical worship with piano

## 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](http://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 Mega-blocks! This space is intended to offer a place for children to be and play if they need to step 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](mailto:Mike@gracedm.org), 515-276-6873.**

## Prelude

“My Lord, What a Morning”

Arr. Anne Krentz Organ

## Welcome

### Poetry Prayer: In the Time of Herod

*I didn't live during Herod's time—that brutal, murderous king, God save his soul.*

*But even hundreds of years later, I know the prayers of his people.*

*I know the prayers of the mothers and the children under his rule.*

*I know the prayers of the young men under his angry arm.*

*I know their prayers, because anyone who has ever lived in this*

*soft world for more than two days*

*knows how to pray for a miracle.*

*We rub our hands together.*

*We fold weary shoulders in,*

*a cage of bone to protect our bleeding hearts.*

*We sing, we shall overcome and bind my wandering heart to thee.*

*We walk across bridges and in front of powerful buildings.*

*We cover our cars in stickers that scream, we will not give up!*

*We allow a hungry cry to slip from our lips,*

*giving our lament a life of its own (with room to dance!).*

*And when all of that is said and done, we whisper to our creator,*

*God, break through the yelling and the fear. Break through the violence and the oppression.*

*Get past the Herods of this world, and come be here.*

*Like every bleeding heart before, we pray for a miracle.*

*Please rise in body or in spirit*

### Confession and Forgiveness

L: Friends, if you long to feel closer to God, then the Prayer of Confession is a step in the right direction. For in the Prayer of Confession, we lay our hearts before God. We pour out the truth of our lives. We do not hide anything from our Creator, and in that simple act, God somehow always feels closer. So join me in this prayer. Join me as we invite God to draw closer, to break in here.

**C: Ever-present God, we long to feel you close. We long to feel your presence in our lives. We long for you to break through the chaos and suffering of this world. However, if we're honest, we rarely stand still long enough to feel you in our midst. Forgive our rushing and distractions. Forgive our wandering hearts, and center us in this space. Remind us that even in the time of Herod, even on the longest nights, you are always there. Amen.**

L: Family of faith, even when we doubt God's presence, even

### **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).*

when we fail to notice God’s fingerprints in this world, God is always moving closer to us. Hear and believe the good news this Advent season:

**C: Nothing can keep God’s love away. We are seen. We are forgiven. We are not alone. Amen.**

### **Gathering Hymn**

“Come, Ye Disconsolate”

ELW #607

### **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.**

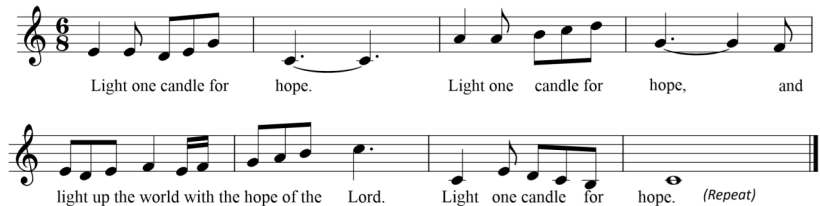
### **Lighting of Advent Wreath**

L: In a world full of fear, where do you see hope?

**C: We see hope when we look to the next generation. We feel hopeful when we gather together. We know hope, deep in our bones, when we dream of a better world.**

L: You are right. Even in a fearful world, hope is all around us. Today we light the candle of hope as a reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light help us remember that we have reason to hope.

**C: Thanks be to God! Amen.**



L: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

### **Prayer of the Day**

L: With-us God,

**C: in the time of Moses, you spoke through water in the desert and a pillar of smoke. In the time of the judges, you spoke through the prophets. In the time of Herod, you spoke through angel choruses and unlikely miracles. In every time you have been speaking. So today, in our time, we ask that you would speak again. Break through the chatter and the distraction of our weary minds and speak to us once more. With hope we pray, Amen.**

*Please be seated*

**Reading: Lamentations 3:55-57**

<sup>55</sup> I called on your name, O Lord, from the depths of the pit;  
<sup>56</sup> you heard my plea, “Do not close your ear to my cry for help,  
but give me relief!” <sup>57</sup> You came near when I called on you; you  
said, “Do not fear!”

L: The Word of the Lord

**C: Thanks be to God**

**Reading: Luke 1:5-13**

<sup>5</sup> In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was descended from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. <sup>6</sup> Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. <sup>7</sup> But they had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

<sup>8</sup> Once when he was serving as priest before God during his section’s turn of duty, <sup>9</sup> he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to offer incense. <sup>10</sup> Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. <sup>11</sup> Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup> When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified, and fear overwhelmed him. <sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John.

L: The Word of the Lord

**C: Thanks be to God**

**Sermon**

*Please rise in body or in spirit*

**Hymn of the Day** “Each Winter as the Year Grows Older”

ELW #252

**Affirmation of Faith**

**C: We have seen the valley. We have seen a sky without stars. We have seen the longest night, and still we believe. We believe in a with-us God. We believe in the hope of tomorrow. We believe that good news is louder than fear. We believe this good news is for all people. So even when our knees shake, even when our voice trembles, even when fear is all around us, we will hold onto that good news. We will reach for each other. We will look for God in our midst. We will sing songs of joy. We will proclaim: Unto us, love is born. We have seen the longest night, and we have seen unimaginable love. So still, we believe. Amen.**

### **Prayers of the People**

**pe:** *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.*

**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.*



### **Prayers of the People**

L: Inbreaking God, every time we read the story of Zechariah...

L: Remind us that we are not alone and that our prayers have been heard. And as you do, and as we wait, we raise all of our prayers to you.

**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*

### **Offering Prayer**

L: Nourishing God,

**C: you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. Amen.**

### **Thanksgiving at the Table**

L: With-us God, We live in a fearful world. If we're honest, we come to this Table today with the taste of fear on our tongues. We come to this Table carrying our anxiety. We come to this Table asking for guidance. We come to this Table with all of life's "what-ifs." ...

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: Here at this Table, you are wanted and welcomed. You are safe and loved. Here at this Table, you belong. There is no need for fear here, for this is a joyful feast. Come. All are welcome.

*Please be seated*

### Lamb of God



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have



mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the



world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -



way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

### Communion

Today we will receive Holy Communion through wafers and pouring chalice. Two lines will form from the front pews to the back. Please use the hand sanitizer provided and take a cup from the tray. Then proceed to receive the gluten-free wafer. Both wine and grape juice will be available. Please place your cup in the basket by the side aisle as you return to the pew.

*Distribution Hymns: #472 (3x), #423, #464, #542*

*Please rise in body or in spirit*

### Prayer after Communion

L: God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

**C: Amen**

### Benediction

L: In a fearful world, may you look for God's spirit. May you reach for each other's hands. May you choose courage whenever you can. And in all things, may you remember that good news is louder than fear. In the name of the one who calls, the one who sends, and the one who journeys with—go in peace and be not afraid.

**C: Amen**

**Sending Hymn** “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”  
*to tune of Love Divine All Love's Excelling*

ELW #254

- 1 Come, thou long-expected Jesus,  
born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us;  
let us find our rest in thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation,  
hope of all the earth thou art,  
dear desire of ev'ry nation,  
joy of ev'ry longing heart.
- 2 Born thy people to deliver,  
born a child, and yet a king;  
born to reign in us forever,  
now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By thine own eternal Spirit  
rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all-sufficient merit  
raise us to thy glorious throne.

**Dismissal**

L: Go in peace. Keep awake.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude**

“Canticle of the Turning”

Arr. Anne Krentz Organ