



Grace Lutheran Church

Companion Congregation: Msindo Parish in Tanzania

Welcome to Worship

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2025

5:00 p.m.

Liturgical worship with organ

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!*

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 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, 515-276-6873.

Prelude Setting of the hymn “Of The Father's Love Begotten”
(ELW 295) - Plainsong arranged by W. Held

Gathering Hymn “O Come, All Ye Faithful” ELW #283

Welcome

Poetry Prayer: Honeysuckle

*There is an abandoned house on my block.
Maybe someone owns it and is just waiting to fix it up,
or maybe it belongs to a family that simply cannot let it go.
Either way, the yard is an overgrown tangle of weeds—
crabgrass and yellow nutsedge, horsetail and clover—
unforgiving and entrenched.*

*Over the summer, a honeysuckle bush crept
from that forgotten house over the fence and through the yard.
It spilled out in broad patches on the sidewalk. As a result,
you could not pass that mess of a house without the taste of
honey in your mouth.*

*You could not pass that mess of a house without being engulfed
in the sweet scent*

*of something good. It was almost as if the earth was saying,
sure, things are chaotic here,
but pause for a moment. Pull a flower bud off in your fingers.
Break the stem.*

*Slurp the tiny bead of honey at the base. Remember that even
when bad news is unforgiving
and entrenched, good news grows out of its cage, across the
sidewalk, just to get to you.*

Please rise in body or in spirit

Call to Worship

L: On this holy night, we come,

C: dazzled and awe-struck, ready to sing alongside the angels.

L: On this holy night, we come,

C: eager and hopeful, ready to journey alongside the shepherds.

L: On this holy night, we come,

C: quietly and tenderly, ready to worship alongside Mary.

L: On this holy night, we come,

C: singing, trusting, believing, proclaiming: good news is louder than fear.

L: Let us worship our good news, with-us God.

Greeting

L: Today Christ is Born! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the

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).

love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

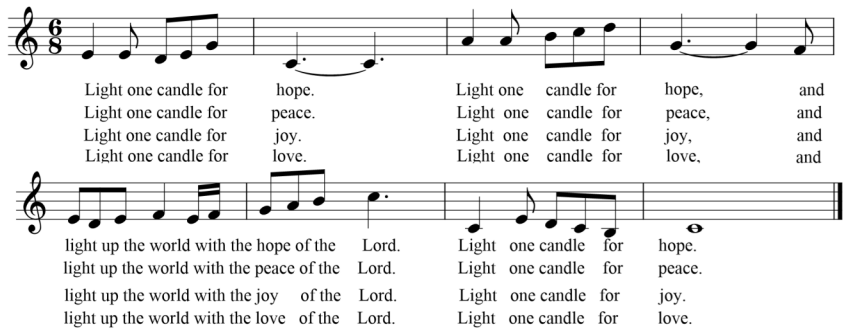
Lighting of Advent Wreath

L: In a fearful world, where do you see the presence of God?

C: We see God's fingerprints all around us. We see God in the beauty of the stars. We see God in the love of this community. We see God in the dreams we hold for a better world.

L: You are right. Even in a fearful world, God is here. God is all around us. On this holy night, we light the Christ Candle as a reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, God's love is all around us.

C: Thanks be to God for a love like that! Amen.



Light one candle for hope. Light one candle for hope, and
Light one candle for peace. Light one candle for peace, and
Light one candle for joy. Light one candle for joy, and
Light one candle for love. Light one candle for love, and

light up the world with the hope of the Lord. Light one candle for hope.
light up the world with the peace of the Lord. Light one candle for peace.
light up the world with the joy of the Lord. Light one candle for joy.
light up the world with the love of the Lord. Light one candle for love.

L: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

L: God of yesterday, today and tomorrow,

C: we long to catch a glimpse of your Spirit. We cup our ears to hear the sound of the angel chorus. We turn our eyes toward the sky to see if we can find your star. We lean forward in our seat to see if we can feel your presence in our midst. We long to catch a glimpse of your Spirit, O God. So on this quiet night, on this holy night, on this joyful night, reveal yourself to us once more. Speak to us through the music and the children. Speak to us through starlight and candlelight. Speak to us through these ancient words once again. We long to catch a glimpse of you. Amen.

Please be seated

Anthem

“Away in a Manger”

Chancel Choir

Kirkpatrick, arr. John Ferguson

Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. ³ You have multiplied exultation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴ For 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. ⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶ For 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. ⁷ Great will be his authority, 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

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.

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:

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.

Gospel: Luke 2:1-20

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

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

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, ¹⁹ and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

L: The Gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to you, O Christ

Please be seated

Sermon "Fog"

Please rise in body or in spirit

Hymn of the Day "Angels We Have Heard on High"

ELW #289

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: Holy One, tonight is a night for good news. Tonight is a night for candles in the window and joyful music in the air. Tonight is a night for family around the table, and children too excited to sleep. Tonight is a night for Christmas caroling and storytelling...

... Remind us of the good news of this night, and may we always hold onto some portion of the wonder, the mystery, and the joy found here.

L: With hope, we lift our voices in prayer.

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 Creed is our response to God's speaking to us. Martyrs and saints have been confessing this creed since 325 A.D. The word "creed" comes from the Latin "credo" which means, "I believe!"

Prayers of the People

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.



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.

Offering Prayer

L: God of glory,

C: great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior. 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.**

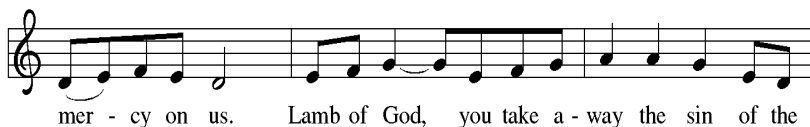
**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

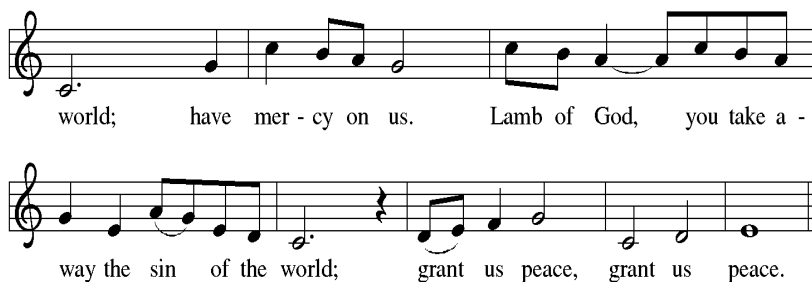
**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

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





Distribution Hymns: #276, #277, # 296, # 282, #286

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

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.

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.

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

“Joy to the World”

ELW #267

Dismissal

L: Glory to God in the highest!

C: And peace to God's people on earth!

L: Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude Setting of the hymn “Joy To The World” (ELW 267)

I. Watts arranged by J. Konkel



Christmas Day Worship: 10 a.m.

In-person only, not livestreamed.

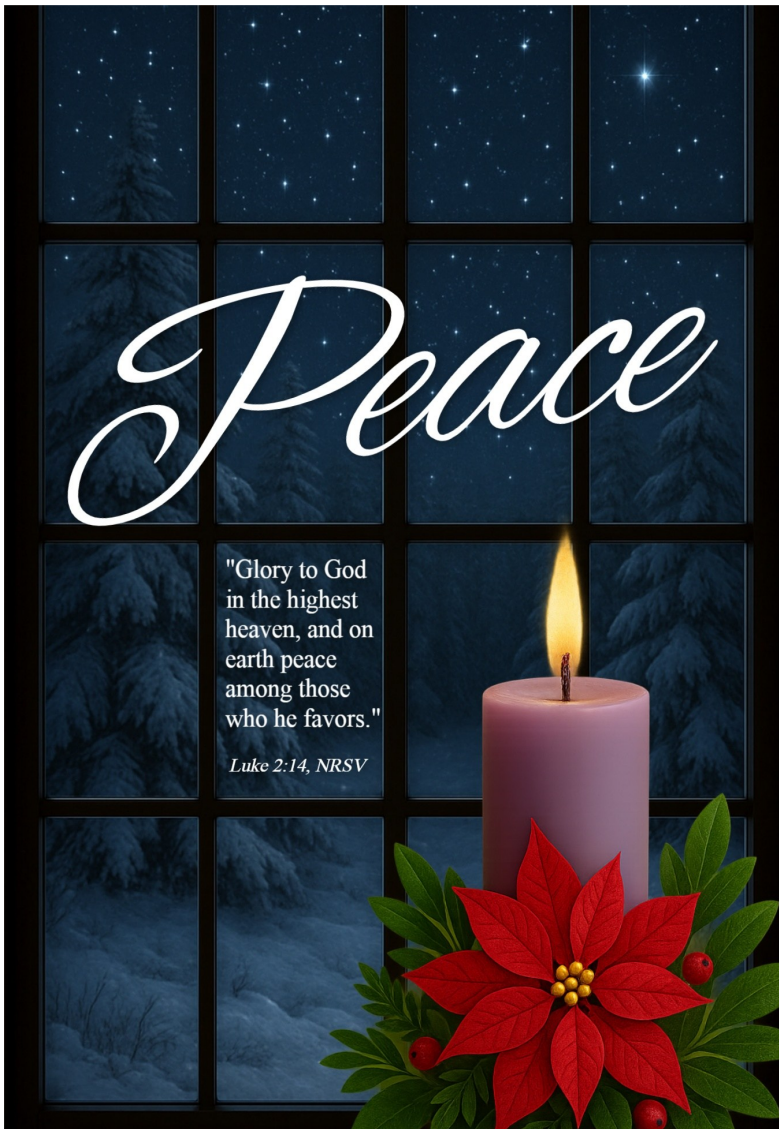
Lessons and Carols Worship

Sunday, December 28, at 9 a.m.

Join us for a joyful worship of readings and singing! There will be an opportunity for an abbreviated fellowship with coffee and donuts in the Gathering Hall after worship.

Exploring Grace With Pastor Mike, on January 4.

A warm invitation to learn about our community, faith, and life together. **Exploring Grace** is an opportunity for you to get answers about us and find out about what being a part of Grace might look like for you. Enjoy coffee and a donut hole after worship; then at 10:15 a.m., meet in the office on the main floor: just up the stairs and to the left from the main entry.



Welcome to Grace!

Ministers —the people of Grace

Pastor –

The Rev. Michael Schmidtmike@gracedm.org

Vicar –

Lotegeluaki Lengai.....lotegeluaki@gracedm.org
(Loh-tay-gay-loo-wahk-ee Lain-guy)

Organist –

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

Piano Accompanist, Music Ensemble Coordinator –

Kathy Bowermaster

Minister for Communications –

Michelle Voelkermichelle@gracedm.org

Bookkeeper –

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

Office Assistant for Worship –

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

Property Manager –

Nichole Aubert.....nichole@gracedm.org

Custodian – Todd Haugen

Usher – Carter Woodruff

Greeter – Lenny and Pam Palmer

Poetry Reader – Cherie Rissman

Lector – Carol Woodruff

Communion Assistants – Jenny Rehder, Julie Honsey, Cathy Watson

Altar Guild – Sue Anderson & Carol Woodruff

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

Counters – Mark Stumme & Tom McCleary



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Pastor Michael Schmidt

515-276-6873

www.gracedm.org