



Grace Lutheran Church

Companion Congregation: Msindo Parish in Tanzania

Welcome to Worship

Third Sunday of Advent

December 14, 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*
- *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

“Christmas Suite for Brass” arr. Alan E. Anderson
Grace Brass

Welcome

Poetry Prayer: The First Step

*Watch any parent. It starts with the first step.
They kneel down. They smile with anticipation.
They reach for their baby, calling and cooing them forward.
And then before they know it, they're running behind a bike.
They're yelling,
“Keep pedaling! You got it! I'm right here!” And they're jumping
up and down,
because that little red helmet passed the mailbox.
And then, just like that, they're driving circles in the church parking lot.
They're giving instructions about easing on and off the pedal.
They're having conversations about curfew and heartbreak.
And then, before they know it, they're standing in a hospital room.
Their heart is bursting. And they say, “Put her head right here.
Rock her gently. Do you remember the nursery rhymes?
You were born for this.”
The first step is always the hardest,
but you, beloved, were born for this.*

Please rise in body or in spirit

Confession and Forgiveness

L: Friends, often in life, when we make mistakes, we want to keep those mistakes to ourselves. We don't want to advertise our blunders. We don't want to highlight our failings. We can be tempted to brush those things under the rug and move on. But when it comes to God, there is nothing we need to brush under the rug. God welcomes and loves our full, honest, messy selves—blunders and all. So let us go before God in prayer, trusting that there is nothing we need to hide from our Creator. Let us pray.

C: Courageous God, you invite us to live into our call. You invite us to act, to serve, and to trust. Instead of responding with a resounding “yes,” we often hide our face. We dig our heels in. We look for someone else to volunteer. Spark courage in us. Remind us that every person is capable of making a difference. Remind us that even when we're scared, we are not alone. You invite us forward. With baby steps we hope, we pray, amen.

L: Family of faith, no matter where your path has led you in the past, today is a new day. So join me in declaring this good news:

C: We are known. We are forgiven! We are sent to serve. May

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).

we step forward in faith, always moving closer to God’s call. Amen.

Gathering Hymn “Now The Heavens Start to Whisper”

ACS #901

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.

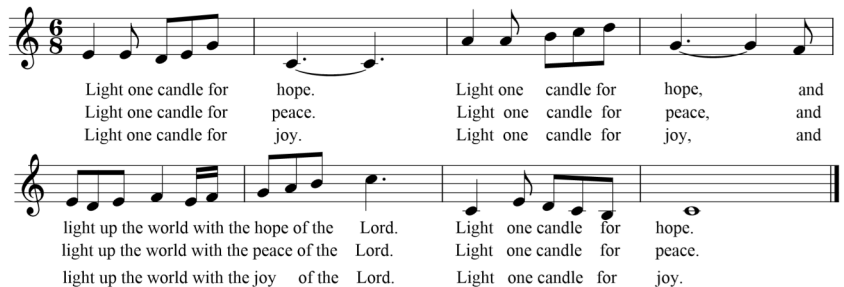
Lighting of Advent Wreath

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

C: We see glimmers of joy in birthday candles and homemade cards. We see joy in the laughter of children and the delight of grandparents. We see joy in meals around the table and in the singing of Christmas songs.

L: You are right. Even in a fearful world, joy is all around us. Today we light the candle of joy as a reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, joy is here. Joy is real. We only have to look for it.

C: Thanks be to God for that good news! 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 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.

L: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

L: Holy One,

C: the story of this season is not a new one. We’ve heard this tale before. We’ve seen the nativities, watched the plays, sung the songs, witnessed the children act it out. The story of this season is not a new one, and yet we long to hear it as if it is. So spark our spirits awake. Call forth awareness, attention, and reverence in us. Allow us to hear this ancient tale with brand new ears. With hope we pray, amen.

Please be seated

Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-10

⁴ Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, ⁵ “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

⁶ Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.” ⁷ But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a boy,’ for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. ⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.” ⁹ Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, “Now I have put my words in your mouth.

¹⁰ See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Reading: Luke 1:26-39

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.”^[a] ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”^[b] ³⁵ The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born^[c] will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸ Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her. ³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country,

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Sermon

Please rise in body or in spirit

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.*



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

L: Calling God, if you tapped on my shoulder today, would my knees shake? Would my mind race? Would my voice waver? Or, knowing the stories of all the faithful folks you’ve called before, would I be ready? ...

... For no matter how big or how small, we trust that you are a calling, inviting, nudging, inspiring God who sees us in the best light.

L: With hope we lean forward, we listen for your word, and we continue to pray.

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: 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.

Distribution Hymns: #473 (3x), #496, #484, #492

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.

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 "My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness"

ELW #251

Dismissal

L: Go in peace. Keep awake.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude - "Pat-a-Pan" and "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

Grace Brass

Arr. William Himes

Grace Brass: Kari Dostalík, Marty Dostalík, Paul Kallenbach,
Jenny Rehder, Mike Schmidt, Tom Selander, and Rich Voelker.