



the good news is...

so good, it catches
us by surprise

Grace Lutheran Church

Companion Congregation: Msindo Parish in Tanzania

Welcome to Worship

First Sunday in Lent

February 22, 2026

9:00 a.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 “O God, Why Are You So Silent?” (ELW 703)
H. Hassler arranged by T. Shaw

Welcome

Poetry Prayer — “They’re Out of Wine”

*They kicked off their sandals when the dancing began.
Everyone flooded the floor. He was there, head thrown back,
laughing at the stars.
Everyone could see it was joy and hope in the air, the kind of
love that makes it impossible not to dance.
So the whole community spun and twirled, jumped and clapped,
pushing back the pain of the world for a night.
Reveling in the fact that two people could stand to build some-
thing beautiful in this fractured world.
But before too long, a tug on his sleeve.
I wonder if Jesus stopped dancing when he heard the news.
I wonder if he looked out over the crowd of happy people.
I wonder if he could see their joy poking through their fragility.
And I wonder if he knew, in that moment, that joy was holy,
that joy would sustain them, that joy was a form of resurrection,
so he turned water into wine and the dancing did not stop.*

Please rise in body or in spirit

Call to Worship

L: The good news of the gospel is:

**C: manna in the desert, water turned into wine, love after loss,
forgiveness after pain.**

L: The good news of the gospel is:

**C: release for the captive, hope for the hopeless, mourning
turned to dancing, and strangers turned to friends.**

L: So come on in. There’s no time to waste! This surprising good
news is here for you.

C: Let us worship this good-news God.

Gathering Hymn “What is This Place” ELW #524

Confession and Forgiveness

L: You may have heard, “All is fair in love and war,” or “An eye for
an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” But God says, “Forgive seventy
times seven.” God says, “I am slow to anger and abounding in
steadfast love.” God says, “Turn the other cheek.” God’s mercy
catches us by surprise. So with wonder and gratitude, let us go to
God in prayer. Let us be surprised by God’s grace all over again.
Friends, let us pray:

L: Loving God,

Gathering Hymn:

*We are a “singing
church,” so we
follow the advice
of the apostle Paul
to teach and ad-
monish “one an-
other in psalms and
hymns and spiritual
songs, singing with
grace in your
hearts to the
Lord” (Colossians
3:16).*

C: somewhere along the way we picked up the message that in order to be faithful, we have to be serious. We have to pray on our knees without ceasing. We have to be somber in worship and quiet in our studies. We have to check our wiggles and our questions at the door. But then you say the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed—unruly and untamed. You turn water into wine—surprising and extravagant. And all of a sudden, we wonder: Can we be like that mustard seed? Can we be faithful and unruly? Can we be playful and curious? Can we be messy and still be yours? We know the answer already. The Spirit whispers: of course, of course, of course. Forgive our doubt. Pull us closer into your embrace. With faith like a mustard seed, we pray. Amen.

L: God's grace is wild and unruly. God's mercy is abundant and surprising. God's love is expansive and unending. So if you ask, "Holy One, am I forgiven?" the answer is and always will be:

C: of course, of course, of course.

L: This is the good news of the gospel.

C: Thanks be to God! Amen.

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.

Prayer of the Day

L: Let us pray,

C: Holy One, it is easy to see the mustard plant and forget to marvel at the seed. It is easy to taste good wine and not appreciate it. It is easy to miss the holy that is in our midst. So as we turn to your text today, we pray, surprise us. Speak to us. Move through us. Draw us closer to your good news. We wait with bated breath. Amen.

Please be seated

Reading: John 2:1-11

¹On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." ⁴And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to me and to you? My hour has not yet come." ⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the person in charge of the banquet." So

they took it. ⁹ When the person in charge tasted the water that had become wine and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), that person called the bridegroom ¹⁰ and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.” ¹¹ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee and revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Anthem

“Seed That in Earth Is Dying”

Chancel Choir

Reading: Matthew 13:31-32

³¹ He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Sermon

Please rise in body or in spirit

Hymn of the Day “Jesus, Come! For We Invite You” ELW #312

Affirmation of Faith

C: I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ. It sounds like welcome and feels like home. It sounds like laughter and feels like mercy. It sounds like love and feels like a seat at the table, so I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ. I have seen it alive in the world. And even when my heart aches, even when wars rage, even when mercy feels out of reach, I remember the one who welcomed the children and led with nonviolence. I remember the one who cared for the vulnerable and inspired those around him. I remember that the good news really is good news, for I have seen it alive in the world. Thanks be to God! 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: Hear us, O God,

C:

God wel - comes all, strang - ers and friends;

God's love is strong and it nev - er ends.

L: Until that promised day, when we will once again find ourselves dancing until our feet are sore and gathering around the table with our neighbors, we will 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

Please rise in body or in spirit

Offering Prayer

L: O God, maker of heaven and earth,

C: your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty.

Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus' name. 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: 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,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

Communion:

Today we will receive Holy Communion through wafers and pouring 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 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.

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: 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: #472 (3x), #423, #464, #542

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, when you meet anger, speak with love. When you meet fear, speak with hope. When you meet pain, speak with gentleness. But no matter what, speak this good news. For the good news of the gospel is love and justice for all. It is joy that surprises, and nonviolence that transforms. The good news of the gospel is alive in the world, so go forth speaking. For if you won't, then who will? Thanks be to God for this good, good news.

C: Amen.

Sending Hymn

“Not for Tongues of Heaven's Angels”

ACS #1044

Dismissal

L: Go in peace. Believe the good news.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Setting of “Lord, Dismiss Us With Your Blessing”

(ELW) 545) - Sicilian folk tune arranged by T. Shaw