



the good news is...

protection & care for
the vulnerable

Grace Lutheran Church

Companion Congregation: Msindo Parish in Tanzania

Welcome to Worship

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 15, 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.

Grace Lutheran Church commits to welcoming and celebrating all people; those in the LGBTQIA+ community, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and their allies.

We commit to the work of anti-racism, liberation, social and environmental justice for all of God's creation. We affirm the sacredness of all people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

We affirm the sacredness of all those who have experienced exclusion because of race, ability, age, culture, or nationality. We affirm the sacredness of those who wrestle with addiction, physical or mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances, or anything that too often divides us.

No matter the labels others may place upon you, or the labels you may place upon yourself, here at Grace you will find a home among friends in need of a Savior. You are welcome here.

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 “Three Church Windows,” Part I: “A New Creation” -
Based on a Swedish folk tune used in the hymn of the day today
J. Behnke

Welcome

Poetry Prayer — Unwritten Agreement

*L: We have this unwritten agreement, us members of humanity.
When the toddler at the coffee shop runs round the corner, when
her mom, at the register, looks up in panic, we, the adults in the
room, will pledge, with quick smiles and silent head nods, to
keep watch.*

We will lean out of our seats.

We will put down our phones.

*We will stand at the ready to scoop up, to offer words of comfort,
to make silly faces, to keep an eye on the door.*

*And we will do this, because we cannot ignore the instinct to
care.*

*We will do this, because we cannot ignore the child right in front
of us.*

We will do this, because love always includes the least of these.

Please rise in body or in spirit

Call to Worship

L: God loves the field mouse.

C: God loves the crows that take flight when church bells ring.

L: God loves the baby, cooing in the back pew.

C: God loves the child who rocks and claps.

L: God loves the one with wrinkled hands and soft eyes.

C: God loves the bumblebees and the tabby cats.

L: God loves those who walk, crawl, and roll.

**C: God loves the giant oaks and the evergreens, standing
strong over all of us.**

L: God loves the young, the impressionable, and the earnest.

C: There is no bit of creation that God does not love.

L: So let us worship this good-news God!

C: Amen.

Gathering Hymn “As the Winter Days Grow Longer”
ACS #924

Confession and Forgiveness

L: Family of Faith, every week we pray the Prayer of Confession,
because every week we need to be reminded of God’s abundant
grace. Every week we need to be reminded of God’s love. Every
week we need to be reminded that we too can grow and
change. So join me in this moment of honesty as we seek trans-
formation. Friends, let us pray:

L: God said, “When a foreigner resides among you in your land,

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).*

do not mistreat them.”

C: Holy God, we confess, we have mistreated the immigrants in our land.

L: Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

C: We confess, we have clung to guns and war more than we have pursued peace.

L: God said, “When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow.”

C: We confess, we have hoarded our resources and failed to care for our neighbors.

L: Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not stop them.”

C: We confess, we have gatekept the good news in unfair ways.

L: Fortunately for all of us, God also said, “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine.”

C: By God’s grace, despite our sin and shortcomings, we are redeemed, claimed, forgiven, and loved.

L: May this good news change our lives!

C: 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, sometimes the simplest of your commands are the hardest for us to hear. You say, “Love your enemy.” “Turn the other cheek.” “Care for the widow and the orphan.” And we want to know: How? When? Where? Today as we turn to your word, open up space in us to simply hear your truth for what it is. Open up space in our hearts to dream new dreams, to imagine new realities, to draw closer to you and closer to love. With hope for a better tomorrow, we listen, we pray. Amen.

Please be seated

Reading: Deuteronomy 24:17-22

¹⁷“You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice; you shall not take a widow’s garment in pledge. ¹⁸Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this. ¹⁹“When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan,

and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all your undertakings. ²⁰ When you beat your olive trees, do not strip what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow.²¹ “When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. ²² Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this.

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

Reading: Matthew 19:13-15

¹³ Then children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them, ¹⁴ but Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.” ¹⁵ And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

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

Sermon - Rev. Sarah Trone Garriott

Please rise in body or in spirit

Hymn of the Day “Children of the Heavenly Father” ELW #781

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.

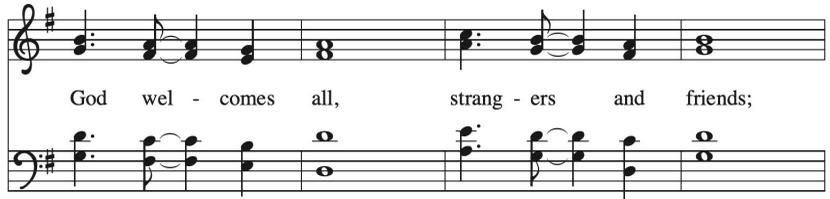
Prayers of the People

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.

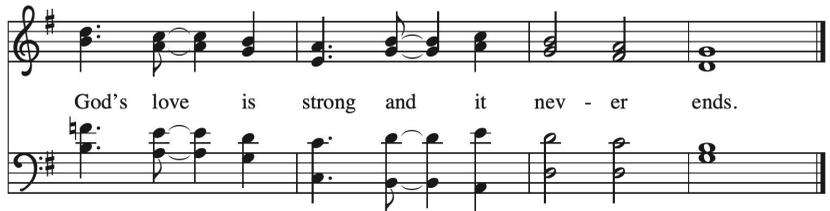
Prayers of the People

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: Comfort, O comfort your people. Wrap your arms around us. And as you do, we ask that we might be transformed. As you do, we ask that we might bend toward love and move toward compassion. As you do, we ask that you might soften our hearts. Until your promised day, when all are cared for and seen, 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.

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.



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

**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 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.

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

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 "Sent Forth By God's Blessing"

ELW #547

Dismissal

L: Go in peace. Believe the good news.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude Prelude on the sending hymn "Sent Forth By God's Blessing" (ELW 547) - Welsh folk tune arranged by J. Behnke