



The kingdom
of heaven
is like a
merchant
in search
of fine pearls

MATTHEW 13:45

Grace Lutheran Church

Companion Congregation: Msindo Parish in Tanzania

Welcome to Worship

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

July 26, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Liturgical worship with piano
Tanzanian

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 we are online-only, or 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

Listen! God Is Calling! *An East African Worship Service*

(based upon Tanzanian hymns and hymn tunes)

Prelude Setting of the hymn for the day "Jesus, Priceless Treasure" (ELW 775) - J. Crüger arranged by T. Shaw

Welcome

Please stand as you are able

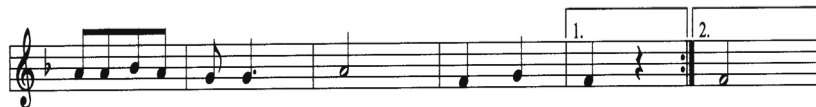
"Listen God is Calling!"

Brightly

Neno lake Mungu (T.M. 112)



Leader Congregation
Lis - ten lis - ten God is call - ing through the Word in - vit - ing,



of - fer - ing for - give - ness, com - fort and joy. joy.



Leader Congregation
Hear the in - vi - ta - tion, sent forth to all.



Let us come and wor - ship; an - swer God's call.



Leader Congregation
Lis - ten, lis - ten, God is call - ing through the Word in - vit - ing,



of - fer - ing for - give - ness, com - fort and joy. joy.

Tanzanian Liturgy

As we worship today, we celebrate the ways that we walk with our brothers and sisters in Christ from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, especially those of the Msindo and Mararo parishes with whom we share a Companion Congregation relationship. At Grace Lutheran Church, we set aside one Sunday of each month to share in a worship setting with a Tanzanian liturgy and altar decorations. This serves as a reminder of our journey with these siblings, and others throughout the world.

Confession and Forgiveness

L: Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God whose compassion endures forever.

C: Amen.

L: Let us confess our sin to God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

L: Compassionate God,

C: we confess to you all our sins. Our burden is heavy, and we cannot free ourselves. In your mercy, call us back to you. Your yoke is easy and your burden is light. Restore us to dwell in your peace. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

L: Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." In the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven. Rest in God's love.

C: Amen.

Gathering Hymn "Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty"

ELW #533

Greeting

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

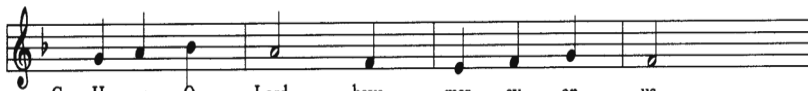
C: And also with you.

Kyrie (Prayerfully)

Mfurahini (T.M. 33)



L. Let us now pray in peace to the Lord.



C. Hear us O Lord, have mer - cy on us.



L. For peace and sal - va - tion we pray to the Lord.



C. Hear us O Lord, have mer - cy on us.



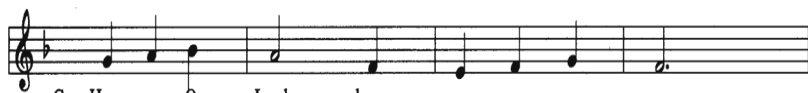
For the whole world, for the one Church of God;



for Chris-tian u-ni-ty here and a-broad.



L. Help and de-fend us; com-fort and save.



C. Hear us O Lord, have mer-cy on us.

Hymn of Praise (Joyfully)

Kule Mbinguni (T. M. 62 arr.)



Leader

1. Praise God the Fa-ther; praise God the Son;

Congregation

2. On-ly be-got-ten Son of the Fa-ther

3. Now let our voi-ces join as we sing;



with Ho-ly Spir-it all three in one.
you are the Sav-ior; there is no o-ther.
praise and thanks-giv-ing glad-ly we bring.



Refrain (All)

Lord now we praise you for your sal-va-tion,



your grace ex-tends to each land and na-tion.

L: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

L: Let us pray,

C: Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Reading Notes:

Because Solomon did not ask for long life, riches, or the defeat of his enemies, God gave him what he asked for: wisdom to govern the people well.

Please be seated

Reading: 1 Kings 3:5-12

⁵ At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶ And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you, and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷ And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸ And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹ Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil, for who can govern this great people of yours?"

¹⁰ It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹ God said to him, "Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or for the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹² I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you."

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalms 119:129-136

¹²⁹ Your decrees are wonderful; therefore I obey them with all my heart.

¹³⁰ **When your word is opened it gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.**

¹³¹ I open my mouth and pant because I long for your commandments.

¹³² **Turn to me and be gracious to me, as you always do to those who love your name.**

¹³³ Order my footsteps in your word; let no iniquity have dominion

over me.

¹³⁴ **Rescue me from those who oppress me, and I will keep your commandments.**

¹³⁵ Let your face shine upon your servant and teach me your statutes.

¹³⁶ **My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your teaching.**

Please stand as you are able

Gospel Acclamation



L: The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the Thirtieth Chapter

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

³¹[Jesus] put before [the crowds] 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.”

³³ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶ on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸ when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” ⁵²

Gospel Acclamation:

Old Lutheran liturgies often call this verse the “Gradual” which is based upon a Latin word meaning “step”. We step up, with the Gospel acclamation, to hear the words of eternal life.

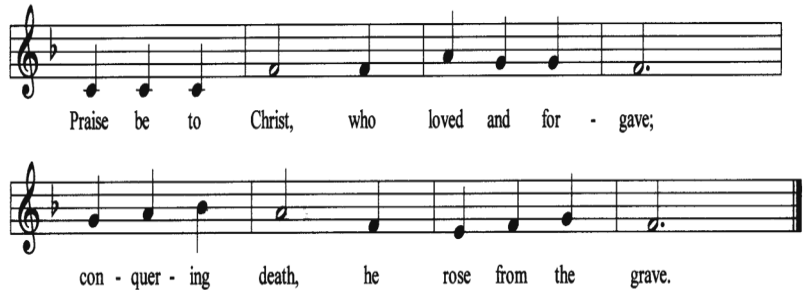
Gospel Notes:

Throughout Matthew’s gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good news that “the kingdom of heaven is near!” Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people’s lives.

And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

L: The Gospel of the Lord.

C:



Please be seated

Sermon

Please stand as you are able

Hymn of the Day “Jesus, Priceless Treasure”

ELW #775

Apostles’ Creed:

The Apostles’ Creed is in a way the “Reader’s Digest Bible”. If you took the Bible and did to it what Southern chefs do to green beans (cook them for 24 hours), you would find the Apostle’s Creed at the bottom of the pot when you lifted the lid.

Prayers of the

People: *In the middle of worship, we pause to pray not only for ourselves and our loved ones and their needs, but for everyone: the whole church, the world, and its leaders, and the local*

Apostles’ 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: God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

L: Grateful for your abundant provision and trusting in your good-

ness, we cast all our cares upon you, through the abundant grace of Christ Jesus.

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 stand as you are able

Offering Prayer

L: Loving God,

C: we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts. Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love, so that all creation can taste your abundance. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever. Amen.

Thanksgiving at the Table

L: In the night in which he was betrayed...

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: Heaven has come near. Come, share in the feast!

Please be seated

community. This kind of all-inclusive prayer is at the heart of Christian worship precisely because Jesus Christ died and rose again, not just for a few but for all people.

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.



Lord's Prayer:

We gather in prayer in response to the gospel heard in the proclamation that this meal is given "for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin." We find ourselves at the very heart of the gospel message. Christ not only speaks to us in the supper, but gives us what he is speaking about: his body and blood for the forgiveness of sins.

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.

The Distribution

"Jesus, O Lamb of God" is a haunting tune that comes from a traditional Maasai cry for help.

Prayerfully (free meter)

Engoipapayai Enanu (T.M.26)

Je - sus, O Lamb of God, who takes a - way the
 sin of the world, have mer - cy up - on us.
 Je - sus, O Lamb of God, who takes a - way the
 sin of the world, have mer - cy up - on us.
 Je - sus, O Lamb of God, who takes a - way the
 sin of the world, grant us your peace.

Distribution Hymns: #752 (3x), #466, #479, #471

Please stand as you are able

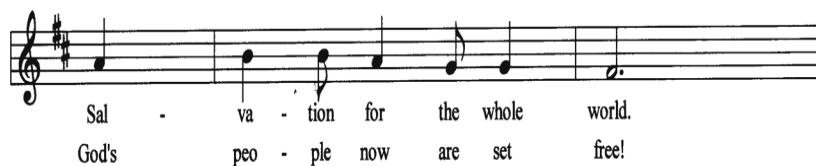
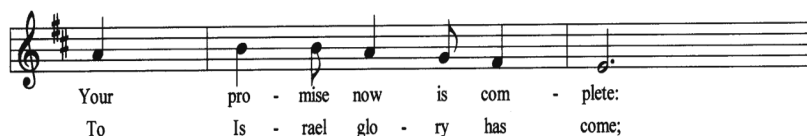
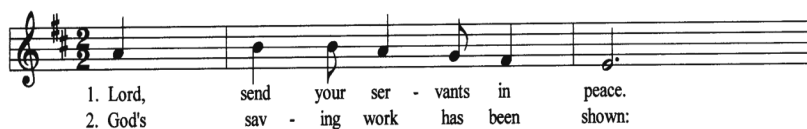
Prayer after Communion

L: Compassionate God, through the gifts of bread and wine our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love. Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal, may share your love freely, as you have shared with us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever.

C: Amen.

Joyfully

Kwa Neema na Pendo (T.M.64)



Refrain



Dismissal: *With the dismissal from worship, we are sent to serve the Lord through the unique gifts, talents, and relationships of each one of us. This is not a conclusion of service, but a start to what the next week will bring in our walk with Christ. So it is fitting that the response is a resounding "Thanks be to God."*

Blessing

L: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine upon you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Sending Hymn "God of Grace and God of Glory" ELW #705

Dismissal

L: Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news!

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Setting of the sending hymn "God Of Grace And God Of Glory" (ELW 705) - J. Hughes arranged by T. Shaw

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