

## First Sunday of Christmas

December 31, 2023 – 9:30 a.m.



### Grace Lutheran Church

313 S. Prospect Avenue, Champaign, IL 61820

(217) 356-6232 • [office@glccu.org](mailto:office@glccu.org)

[www.glccu.org](http://www.glccu.org) • Pastor: Chris Repp

## Welcome to Grace!

At Grace Lutheran Church, we strive to be a community of acceptance, reconciliation and hope. Following in the way of Jesus, we welcome all people regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, or age. God's acceptance of all compels us to stand against racism, sexism and all forms of hate and prejudice. We welcome your questions, your gifts, and your being.

We believe that God is at work in this worship service, through Word and Sacrament, to create and sustain faith in God's promises of love, forgiveness, and reconciliation in Jesus Christ. We use a rich, traditional pattern of worship that dates to the early days of Christianity. We recognize that it comes with a bit of a learning curve, but we're convinced that it's worth the effort. Don't feel like you have to get everything the first time. This way of worshipping may also include postures like standing and kneeling that may not be possible or comfortable for everyone. Please know that you are welcome to do what works for you.

### KEY TO THE ORDER OF SERVICE:

Regular type: spoken by a leader

**Bold type: spoken by the people**

*Regular Italics: sung/chanted by a leader*

***Bold Italics: sung/chanted by the people***

*Small Italics: liturgical directions and info.*

✙ the sign of the cross may be made

ELW: Evangelical Lutheran Worship  
(Red Hymnal)

ACS: All Creation Sings  
(Purple Hymnal)

♪ Favorite Hymn request

### HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:

- Restrooms are in the hall to the left of the main entrance, opposite the elevator.
- Hand sanitizer is available on the sanctuary windowsills.
- Please sign our guest book at the entrance.

### As We Gather:

The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

# Gathering

Prelude

Welcome

*The assembly stands.*

Confession and Forgiveness

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✙ one God, the Word made flesh, our life and our salvation.  
**Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and one another.

*All are invited to either kneel or sit. Silence is kept for reflection.*

Gracious God,  
**have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

Hear the good news: We are children of God and heirs of God's promises through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In ✙ Jesus you are forgiven and redeemed. Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth shall know the salvation of God.  
**Amen.**

# Gathering Hymn

*Once in Royal David's City*

ELW 269

1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,  
2 He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and Lord of all,  
3 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re - deem - ing love;  
4 Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the ox - en stand - ing by,

where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for his bed:  
and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall;  
for that child so dear and gen - tle is our Lord in heav'n a - bove;  
we shall see him; but in heav - en, set at God's right hand on high;

Mar - y was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.  
with the poor and meek and low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.  
and he leads his chil - dren on to the place where he is gone.  
there his chil - dren gath - er round, bright like stars, with glo - ry crowned.

The musical score is written for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. It features a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The melody is primarily in the soprano and alto parts, with the piano providing harmonic support. The lyrics are arranged in four stanzas, each corresponding to a line of the hymn. The first stanza is the main body of the hymn, and the subsequent stanzas are variations or additional verses. The score concludes with a final cadence in the piano part.

## Greeting

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

**And also with you.**

## Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*



## Word

## Children's Sermon

Pastor Janet Lepp

## First Reading

Isaiah 61:10—62:3

*To the people who returned to Jerusalem after the exile, the prophet proclaims that God's salvation will fully come to pass. Jerusalem will become a shining light to the nations and righteousness and praise will spring up as surely as the earth puts forth vegetation.*

<sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

<sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

<sup>62:1</sup>For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. <sup>2</sup>The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. <sup>3</sup>You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God..

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Psalm

Psalm 148

<sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! Praise the Lord from the heavens;  
praise God in the heights.

<sup>2</sup>**Praise the Lord, all you angels;  
sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**

<sup>3</sup>Praise the Lord, sun and moon;  
sing praise, all you shining stars.

<sup>4</sup>**Praise the Lord, heaven of heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens.**

<sup>5</sup>Let them praise the name of the Lord,  
who commanded, and they were created,

<sup>6</sup>**who made them stand fast forever and ever,  
giving them a law that shall not pass away.**

<sup>7</sup>Praise the Lord from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deeps;

<sup>8</sup>**fire and hail, snow and fog,  
tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**

<sup>9</sup>mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars;

<sup>10</sup>**wild beasts and all cattle,  
creeping things and flying birds;**

<sup>11</sup>**sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the world;**

<sup>12</sup>**young men and maidens,  
old and young together.**

<sup>13</sup>**Let them praise the name of the Lord,  
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.**

<sup>14</sup>**The Lord has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants,  
the children of Israel, a people who are near the Lord. Hallelujah!**

## Second Reading

Galatians 4:4-7

*Paul seeks to show the Galatians that the purpose of Christ's birth was to liberate us from the law's condemnation so that we would be fully adopted into God's family as beloved children.*

<sup>4</sup>When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup>in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. <sup>6</sup>And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" <sup>7</sup>So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

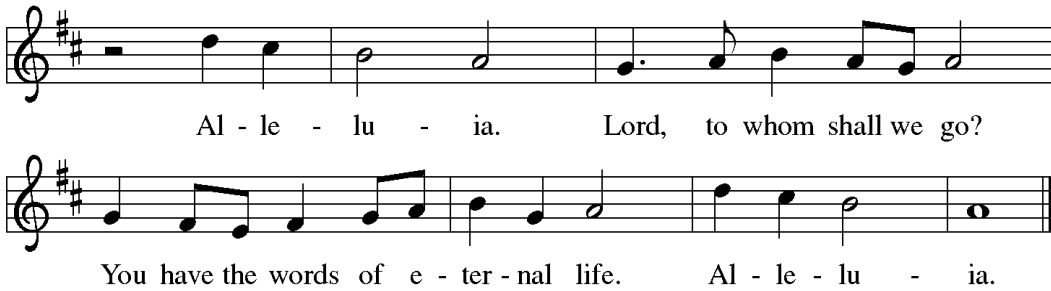
Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The assembly stands.*



## Gospel Acclamation



## Gospel

Luke 2:22-40

*Luke's narrative continues with stories that emphasize Jesus' connection to Judaism. His family is devout in its observance of the law, and Jesus himself is recognized as one who will bring glory to Israel.*

The Holy Gospel, according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>22</sup>When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup>(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), <sup>24</sup>and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

<sup>25</sup>Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. <sup>26</sup>It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. <sup>27</sup>Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, <sup>28</sup>Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

<sup>29</sup>“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; <sup>30</sup>for my eyes have seen your salvation, <sup>31</sup>which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, <sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

<sup>33</sup>And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. <sup>34</sup>Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling



and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed <sup>35</sup>so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

<sup>36</sup>There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, <sup>37</sup>then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup>At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

<sup>39</sup>When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup>The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

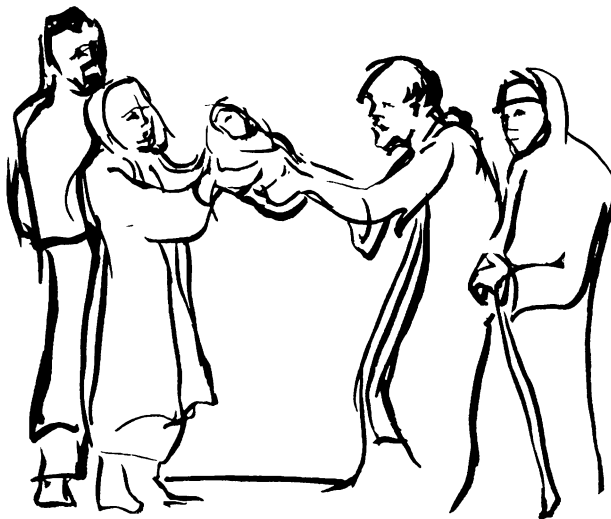
The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*The assembly is seated.*

Sermon

Pastor Janet Lepp

*The assembly stands.*



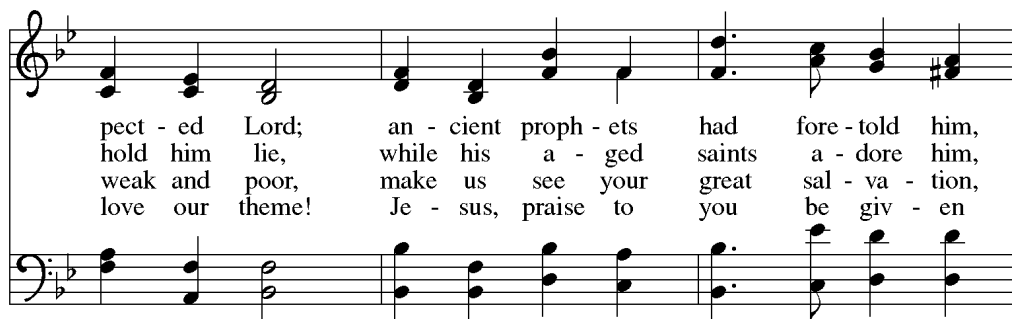
# Hymn of the Day

*In His Temple Now Behold Him*

ELW 417



1 In his tem - ple now be - hold him, see the long - ex -  
2 In the arms of her who bore him, vir - gin pure, be -  
3 Je - sus, by your pre - sen - ta - tion, when they blessed you,  
4 Prince and au - thor of sal - va - tion, be your bound - less



pect - ed Lord; an - cient proph - ets had fore - told him,  
hold him lie, while his a - ged saints a - dore him,  
weak and poor, make us see your great sal - va - tion,  
love our theme! Je - sus, praise to you be giv - en



God has sent the prom - ised Word. Now to praise him,  
ere in per - fect faith they die. Al - le - lu - ia!  
seal us with your prom - ise sure; and pre - sent us,  
by the world you did re - deem, with the Fa - ther



## Apostles' Creed

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**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 Intercession

*All are invited to either kneel or sit for the prayers.*

Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

*Each petition concludes:*

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*The prayers conclude:*

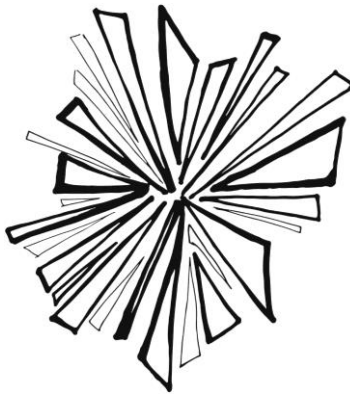
Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.  
**Amen.**

## Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say, "Peace be with you," or similar words. After the Peace, the assembly is seated.*



## Meal

### Offering

*Please place your offering in the box on the table in the aisle as you leave.  
You may also give online at <http://glccu.org/donate>.*

### Offertory

*West Indies Carol*

arr. Hart Morris

Eileen Herrstrom, *bells*, and Janet Lepp, *piano*

## Offering Verse



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that



we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of



all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble



with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

*The assembly stands.*

## Offering Prayer

Let us pray.

**God our provider,**

**by your merciful hand**

**abundance springs up from the earth.**

**Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty.**

**Let them be a sign of your steadfast love**

**and faithfulness for all people,**

**through Jesus Christ our Savior.**

**Amen.**

# Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed, right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times, and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty, and merciful God, through our Savior, Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choir of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.  
Ho - san - na in the high - est. ✝ Bless - ed is he who comes  
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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.

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 for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

The gifts of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The assembly is seated.*

## Communion

*We believe that Christ is truly present for us in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, forming us into his body for the sake of the world. We welcome to the Lord's table all baptized Christians. Those who are not baptized we invite to explore with us the Christian faith and consider baptism. Those who do not commune are invited to come forward to receive a blessing. Please hold this bulletin in your hands as a sign that you would like a blessing.*

*To receive communion, please join the line in the center aisle and proceed to the pastor. (Note: gluten-free wafers are available. Just ask the pastor.) After receiving the bread, proceed to your left or right to receive the wine, taking a pre-filled glass from the tray. (Grape juice is also available.) Place your used glass in the basket provided near the stairs on the side you leave.*

## 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.



## Communion Hymns

*What Child is This*  
*Your Little One's Dear Lord*

ELW 296  
ELW 286

*The assembly stands.*

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.  
**Amen.**

## Prayer After Communion

Let us pray.

Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**

# Sending

## (Sending Of Communion)

*A prayer may be said for the sending of communion to those who are absent.*

## Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

**Amen.**

## Sending Hymn

*Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

ELW 288

# Announcements

## Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the harvest.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Postlude

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## Worship Support

*The ministry of the church is carried out by all of its people, and Christian worship is a communal activity of the whole assembly. We give thanks to the following for their worship leadership and support today.*

Presiding Minister: **Pastor Janet Lepp**

Assisting Minister: **Kathy Bowersox**

Reader: **Steven Blanke**

Deacon: **Dan Lepp**

Ushers: **Dave and Carol Larson**

Greeters: **Brian and Amy Nicely**

Music Director:

Organist:

Sound Technician:

Video Technician:

Office Assistant:

**Nicholas Pierle**

**Dana Robinson**

**Kevin Vail**

**Kevin Vail**

**Alexandra Goodman**

✠ In addition to the Christmas flowers, flowers are also given by **Karen Krusa** ✠  
*In celebration of Doug's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday*

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# Christmas Chancel Plants

*In gratitude to the following people who made donations for the beautification of the sanctuary at Grace Lutheran for Christmas 2023:*

**Ruth and Jim Anderson**, *in memory of Bob and Jean Koch*

**Kathy and Van Bowersox**, *to the Glory of God*

**Jo Ellen DeVilbiss**, *in honor of Nona Clagget*

**Kathy and Jim Eckstein**, *in gratitude for our families*

**Mary Jo Erickson**, *in memory of my parents, Jo and Paul Erickson*

**Jo and Jim Fleming**, *Merry Christmas!*

**Gail Hug**, *in memory of Rev. Patrick Bell*

**Nancy Johnson**, *in memory of Ken Bengoechea*

**Bev and George Kieffer**, *to the Glory of God*

**Karen and Doug Krusa**, *in memory of loved ones*

**Carol and David Larson**, *in memory of loved ones*

**Deborah Leckband**, *in memory of Aunt Dorothy*

**Debbie Peterson**, *in memory of my parents*

**Bob Pearson**, *in loving memory of June Pearson*

**Bob Pearson**, *in loving memory of Ellen Pearson*

**Gloria Rainer**, *in gratitude for my family and friends*

**The Saylor Family**, *in memory of Paul Saylor and to the Glory of God*

**Carol Shupp**, *to the Glory of God*

**Shirley and Art Traugott**, *in hope for those who are yet to learn of Jesus*

**Claire and Kevin Vail**, *in gratitude for our family*

**Leanne Wichus**, *to the Glory of God*

**Alicia and Bruce Winter**, *to the Glory of God*

**Anonymous**, *in gratitude for Grace Lutheran Church Friends*

*Those who donated may take their plant home after the Christmas Eve service or can leave it in the sanctuary as decoration for the next two Sundays and take it home then.*