

And This
Shall Be



A Sign
Unto You.



Grace
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Serving the Portland Area with the Means of Grace and as a family of believers for over 110 years... as a church, school, preschool, mission, and ministry.

Church Campus: 7610 NE Fremont Street, Pastor – Pastor Thad Bitter (503.290.6316 – call/text)

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Advent 4 – December 18, 2022 Grace School Christmas Service Welcome!

GRACE ~ *“I am not ashamed of the gospel...”*



When it comes to the truth of Scripture, there is no room for compromise. The Bible is the book we live by... for life now and for life forever. We accept the Bible as the pure Word of God. We believe that our only Savior is Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God, who was crucified, died, and was buried but rose again to open the door to heaven for everyone who believes in him.

GRACE ~ *“These are written that you may believe...”*



Grace Lutheran Church has served the Portland area for 110 years by faithfully preaching and teaching the timeless truth of God’s Word. We believe that God uses the timeless message of Word and Sacraments to bring souls into his care. This is a message that we share here and around the world through our affiliation with the WELS.

GRACE ~ *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...”*



Grace Lutheran Church exists to win souls by joyfully proclaiming the truth of God’s grace through Christ, to nurture believers in growing in faith and lives of Christian service, and to join together in worship and praise. **“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and forever! Amen.” 2 Pt. 3:18**

Order of Service for
THE SEASON OF ADVENT



Processional Hymn:

CW21 Blue #354 Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful

*Oh, come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,
Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, Born the King of angels.*

*Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

*God from true God, and Light from Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, to earth he comes,
Only begotten Son of God the Father.*

*Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

*Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation;
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above.
Glory to God, All glory in the highest.*

*Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

*Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n,
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing.*

*Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

Pastor:

Welcome

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Brothers and sisters in Christ: there was a time when the world sat in darkness, separated from God because of sin. Since we human beings were unable to find God in that darkness, He came near to us as a baby, born of a virgin, bringing with Him the great light of our salvation. Now, come near to God and confess to Him your sins.

People: **We confess that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and deeds. The world has tempted us in this Christmas season to put our delight and joy in material things, to be envious of others, and to center our celebrations around ourselves rather than on You. Thus we have sinned against You and against one another. Forgive our sins, O Lord, for the sake of the Babe of Bethlehem, Jesus Christ, who died for us. Decorate our hearts with repentance and joy that our Christmas celebration may be pleasing to You.**

Pastor: This Child whose birth we celebrate came among us to live perfectly in our stead, to give His life in payment for our sins, to rise from the grave for our justification, and to give us new life. In His name and at His command, I as a called and ordained servant of the Word, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES WITH THE CHILDREN:

Pastor : We light four Advent candles now.

People: **The Angels' Candle kindles bright.**

Pastor: Dispelling darkness, Jesus comes

People: **and warms us with his holy light.**

Pastor: The manger marks the earthly start

People: **of heaven's plan to save the lost,**

Pastor: for Beth'lem leads to Calvary,

People: **and manger soon becomes a cross.**

People: And so we make a cradle new

Pastor: **inside our hearts to hold God's Son.**

People: We pray, "Lord Jesus, be our guest.

Pastor: **Fill us with light! Come, Jesus, come!"**



Introduction: Mr. Eternick

Bells. Christmas trees. Ribbons and bows. Stars. Wreaths. Lights. Holly. Mistletoe. We see these things all around us, and they all tell us it is Christmastime. You may have many of these items in your homes. Perhaps you even have an Advent wreath or a nativity scene set up in your living room. There are so many images that remind us of Christmas, and without them Christmas seems almost empty. But what do they all mean? The church has a rich heritage of symbolism tracing back to the beginning of the world. Look around at our church building and consider the many images that surround us. They initially serve as reminders, but upon further inspection they teach us truths about God and his Word.

Educational psychologists tell us that we learn best if all of our senses are engaged in the learning process. At Christmas we hear the familiar music and the Christmas story, taste the food, smell the lit candles, see the lavish adornments, and greet our family and friends. Our service today focuses on how God speaks to us through the many visual symbols that he has given us through the ages to remind us of the history of his people, to instruct us in his plan of salvation, to support our understanding of his truths, and to beautify our worship.

As you worship today, take special note of these symbols and signs that we are given to focus on Christ's birth at Bethlehem.

Part One: The Tree

Narration:

The Christmas tree is easily one of the most recognizable symbols of the Christmas season. Some believe that Martin Luther may have been the first to set up an evergreen tree in his home and decorate it with candles. The tree is a symbol for Christmas, however, the importance of trees goes all the way back to the beginning of time when God placed two special trees in the Garden of Eden: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.



God gave special instructions to Adam and Eve regarding these trees: Don't eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or you will die. One day in the garden, Satan, in the form of a serpent, tempted Adam and Eve to eat from this tree. Adam and Eve both ate fruit from the tree and had to answer to God for their sin. But before God told them of the consequences, he first gave them a promise. This was the first promise of the Savior, who would be born to pay for that sin in the garden as well as the sins of the entire world.

Recitation: All

God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16

Narration:

The Holy Spirit spoke through the prophet Isaiah about another tree. He was speaking of the promised Messiah. But the picture doesn't stop with a tree. He also speaks of the work the Messiah would do on earth. This Prince of peace would return his people to the state of perfection that they had in the Garden of Eden.

Pastor: Responsive Reading:

Pastor: A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;

People: from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

Pastor: The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—

People: the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,

Pastor: the Spirit of counsel and of power,

People: the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord—and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.

Pastor: He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,

People: or decide by what he hears with his ears;

Pastor: but with righteousness he will judge the needy,

People: with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

Pastor: He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;

People: with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

Pastor: In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples;

People: the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.

ALL: To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Song: “Sing We the Song of Emmanuel” Students vs 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3YXBf4F6Mg>

Narration:

The first chapter of the gospel of Matthew shows how Jesus' family tree grew from the seed of Adam and Eve to its sturdy trunk in Abraham, Jacob, and David, all the way to the branches of Joseph and Mary. In the first chapter of Luke, we hear how Mary, an ordinary young woman, received a visit from an extraordinary messenger.

Recitations:

5-8: In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

3&4 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

1&2: "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin." The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. "

K: "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Congregation Hymn: CW21 Blue #301 (1,3,5) "*Savior of the Nations Come*"

***Savior of the nations, come;
Virgin's Son, make here your home.
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth.***

***Wondrous birth! O wondrous Child
Of the virgin undefiled,
Though by all the world disowned,
Yet to be in heav'n enthroned!***

***Praise to God the Father sing,
Praise to God the Son, our King,
Praise to God the Spirit be
Ever and eternally.***

Part Two: The Manger

Narration:

A nativity scene makes a lovely Christmas decoration and reminds us of the true meaning of Christmas. At the center of any nativity scene is a manger, a feedbox. That bed for the Creator of the universe was not the ideal place for a newborn. But it was the perfect start in life for our Savior. It was a picture of the humility that he took on himself all through his life—a picture of his submission to God’s law and the laws of men. The account of Jesus’ birth begins in Luke chapter 2, with Mary and Joseph obeying the law of the Roman emperor that the population of the entire empire should be counted.



Recitations:

5-8: In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

3&4: He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

1&2: While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.

K: She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Song K-8: “Away in a Manger/Sleep, Sleep”

Narration:

The King of kings and Lord of lords humbled himself by taking on the form of a human. God be praised that this “riches to rags” story turns into a “rags to riches” story for us sinners. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, wrote:

When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “*Abba, Father.*” So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Song 1-8: “Behold What Manner”

Part Three: The Angel

Narration:

Scripture speaks of angels throughout its pages. They are God’s messengers. God sent angels to people to announce important news. Angels visited Abraham to tell him that he and his wife, Sarah, would have a baby boy in their old age. The angel Gabriel announced the birth of John to Zechariah and Elizabeth. Later he proclaimed to Mary that she was to be the mother of the Savior. After the birth in the manger, angels made an announcement to shepherds at work in the fields.



Recitations:

5-8: There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them,

3&4: “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

1&2: Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

All Students: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

Congregation Hymn: CW21 Blue #346 (1-3) “*Angels We Have Heard On High*”

*Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.*

Refrain:

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

*Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song?*

Refrain:

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

*Come to Bethlehem and see,
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.*

Refrain.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Recitations:

5-8: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

3&4: When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

1&2 Girls: But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

1&2 Boys: The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Song: Sing We the Song of Emmanuel" Students vs.2

Part Four: The Star

Narration:

Stars seem to appear everywhere at Christmas. You can find them on the tops of Christmas trees, on wrapping paper, cut out as cookies, even in the eyes of children when they hear and recite the Christmas story. Certainly the Christmas lights on houses and the candles in the Advent wreath can remind us of stars also. The Bible has many references to stars, these references often point to Jesus.



Recitation:

1-8: I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”

Narration: Pastor Bitter

God put a special star in the sky for Magi from the East to lead them to the newborn Savior. Matthew wrote in his gospel chapter 2:9-11: They went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. Until that day dawns, when the Morning Star rises for us and all believers and our eyes at last shall see him, may we, his children, who will be crowned like the stars, sound his praises, not only in this festive season but every day throughout our lives.

Song: “Sing We the Song of Emmanuel” Students vs.3

Prayers:

Pastor: Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true light. Grant that as we have known on earth the wonder of that light, we may also behold him in all his glory in the life to come; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, they will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The Blessing

Pastor: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: Amen.

Recessional Hymn: CW21 Blue #353 “Joy To The World”

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.*

*Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.*

*No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love.*