

WHAT DID GOD GIVE YOU
FOR CHRISTMAS?

THE *Gift*



Immanuel



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.

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Advent 4 / GLS Christmas – December 19th, 2021

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 over 100 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 Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (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**

Processional Hymn:

Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful
Christian Worship #55

*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.*

Invocation and Devotion: Pastor Bitter

Pastor: This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalm 118:24

Congregation: Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.

2 Corinthians 9:15

Narration: Mr. Eternick

Many people around the world will open gifts as they celebrate Christmas. The gifts will come in many shapes and sizes. Some will be so big they cannot be wrapped. Others will be so small they could get lost in the wrapping paper. Others were made by children or adults. Some gifts will be broken before the night is over. Others will eventually fade or tarnish.

Today, through word and song, we will present the greatest gift of all. It is a gift that is new and fresh each day. It is a gift that is meant to be treasured. It is a gift for people of all ages. It is a gift for people from all nations and ethnic backgrounds. It is a gift we do not deserve on our own merits. It is a gift from the loving hand of our gracious God. That gift is Jesus.

Kindergarten: A baby in a manger - He came to set me free
So I can go to heaven - Jesus is God's gift to me
Now I can go tell others - That Jesus loves them too
He came to save all people - Jesus is God's gift to you!

Kindergarten song: "What Gift Can I Bring?"

Part 1: God Promised to Send His Gift

Narration: Donovan Endres

At the dawn of time, already in the Garden of Eden, God promised to send a Savior. Sin had entered the world. The punishment God's justice demands for sin, is death. But the deaths of sinful humans cannot save anyone from eternal death. So God, in His grace, had a plan to rescue mankind from being eternally separated from His gracious presence. That plan included the gift of His dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus set aside His glory to be born into a world of sin, and to pay the price for sin that we could never pay.

Jesus came to live the perfect life we could never live. Jesus was born to die the death we deserved. The apostle Paul, in the letter to the Romans, reminds us of the consequence of sin and the wonderful gift we have through faith in Christ.

Recitation 7&8:

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 6:23

Narration: Donovan Endres

God's first gospel promise is recorded for us in the book of Genesis. Jesus would be the offspring of the woman and He would crush the head of Satan.

Recitation 7&8:

So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals. You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel. Genesis 3:14,15

Narration: Zarina Danilin

Yes, in the Garden of Eden, and throughout the pages of Holy Scripture, God has a wonderful Christmas message for you and me: there is no greater gift to cherish than the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Song 5-8: **“Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”**

Narration: Zarina Danilin

Throughout the Old Testament, God’s people looked forward to God’s gift, the coming of the Messiah. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob passed on God’s promise of the Savior from generation to generation. God’s people, the Israelites, carried the message from Egypt to the promised land of Canaan. Every offering and sacrifice in the temple in Jerusalem pointed to the coming Savior and the joy that the first Christmas in Bethlehem would bring.

The Old testament believers looked with eyes of faith to God’s eternal plan of salvation. God’s plan was laid out before the Old Testament believers through the inspired words of prophets like Isaiah and Micah. The prophets told “how” and “where” God’s gift would be given.

Recitation 5&6:

“The Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son. And will call Him Immanuel.” Isaiah 7:14

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are of old, from ancient times.” Micah 5:2

Hymn - congregation: **“O Little Town of Bethlehem” CW#65 vs. 1&3**

O little town of Bethlehem,

How still we see thee lie!

Above thy deep And dreamless sleep

The silent stars go by.

Yet in thy dark streets shineth

The everlasting light.

The hopes and fears,

Of all the years –

Are met in thee tonight.

*How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming,
But in this world of sin
Where meek souls will
Receive him still,
The dear Christ enters in.*

Part 2: God Prepared His People for His Gift

Narration: Asher Tanner

We see God's grace at work through the announcement of Jesus' birth to Mary and Joseph. God, in His wisdom, chose Mary and Joseph as His special servants. They needed a Savior from sin just as much as you and I. Through faith, Mary and Joseph received the message. Mary recognized God's grace in choosing her, a humble servant, to be the mother of the Lord.

Let us hear about the events leading to the birth of our Savior as recorded for us in the book of Luke.

Recitation 7&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. 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."

"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.

Song K-8: “Behold What Manner of Love the Father Has Given Unto Us”

Narration: Gabriel Postevka

God in His wisdom sent an angel to speak to Joseph regarding the plan for Jesus’ birth. The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. God would use Mary, the woman to whom Joseph was engaged, to give birth to Jesus. Joseph was a God-fearing man. He listened to the angel’s message and showed his faith in a special way. We hear of God’s plan in the book of Matthew.

Recitation 5&6:

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

Because Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save his people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel”-- which means, “God with us.”

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name, Jesus. Matthew 1:18-25

Song K-8: “His Name Is Jesus” (vs. 1)

Part 3: God's Gift Arrived

Narration: Brayden Tanner

No event in history has been celebrated in word and song as much as the birth of Jesus Christ. Jesus' virgin birth, His being born into the family of King David, and His birth in Bethlehem were all part of God's eternal plan. Our almighty God even used the Roman government to carry out His plan.

Caesar Augustus was the Roman ruler of the day. As ruler of the Roman Empire, He ordered a census that took Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the hometown of David. Let us hear the account from Luke chapter 2.

Recitation 1&2:

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

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

She wrapped Him in cloths and placed Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:1-7

Song: Grades 1-4: "The Fox Has A Den/Away In A Manger"

Part 4: God's Gift Was Given for You and Me

Narration: Cole Curry

Jesus came to this earth with a purpose. Jesus--true God and true man--came as the servant of all. He came to live the perfect life we could never live because of sin. Jesus came to die the death that you and I deserved. Jesus came to rise on that first Easter morning to show His victory over death. Jesus lives and rules today as our King.

Because of Jesus, we never need to fear death. Because of Jesus, heaven is the home of all who believe in Him. The true message of Christmas is found in God's gift to all people. Jesus is God's gift to you and me.

Recitation K-8:

“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

Song K-8: “His Name Is Jesus” (vs. 2&3)

Narration: Aleks Proskurnya

God announced the birth of His Son in a wonderful way. God used angels to proclaim the good news of Jesus' birth. Angels lit up the dark sky that first Christmas night as they brought the news of peace and joy to the shepherds. The shepherds went to Bethlehem to see if the words of the angel were true. The shepherds saw firsthand God's greatest gift of all—Jesus, the Savior of the world. Joy filled the hearts of the shepherds when they saw the baby Jesus.

Recitation Grades 3&4:

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, “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.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests.”

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. Luke 2:8-16

Song congregation & K-8: CW #60 “Silent Night” vs 1 German, vs 1-3 English

German

***Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!
Alles schläft; einsam wacht
Nur das traute heilige Paar.
Holder Knab im lockigten Haar,
Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh!
Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh!***

***Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.***

***Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar;
Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!***

***Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.***

Part 5: We Share This Gift with Others

Narration: Mr. Eternick

The shepherds were given the privilege of being the first ones to spread the news of Jesus' birth. They were the first missionaries. They did not travel into faraway lands, but they told the wonderful message of salvation to those living nearby. The shepherds were filled with joy and shared the news of God's gift with others.

You and I can learn from the shepherds. They heard the good news of Jesus' birth and shared it with others. We have the same message to share today. It's a message filled with peace and joy. That message is the simple fact that God sent to the world the most precious gift of all--His Son and our Savior.

Responsive Prayer:

Pastor: O Lord, You created the world to be perfect in every way and without sin. But when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, sin entered the world and destroyed Your perfect creation. Since the fall, all people are sinners and deserve death and eternal separation from You in hell. In love, You chose to save mankind by sending Jesus into the world as the Savior, who gave His life on the cross for the sins of all people.

Congregation: We praise and thank You, O Lord, for Your great love.

Pastor: We rejoice to hear again the announcement of God's great gift to the world. We praise and thank You, O Lord, for Your plan of salvation. You know our sin. You know that we are powerless to remove that sin by ourselves. You know that there is only one way for sinners to be forgiven. You know that Jesus is the greatest gift You could ever give us.

Congregation: O Lord, we praise You for loving us with such a great love.

Pastor: As we come to know Your great love for us, move our hearts to share Your love with as many people as we can. We praise and thank You, O Lord, and ask that You use us to share the good news of forgiveness in Jesus. Strengthened by the Spirit, may we always remember that Jesus is God's gift, for us and for all. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The Blessing & Benediction

- M: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
C: those who lived in deepest night, have seen a brilliant sight.
M: Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.
C: The greatness of his influence and of his peace will never end.
M: Therefore, go out into the world with great joy,
C: glorifying and praising God for all the things you have heard and seen.
M: May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child who God sent because he loved us dearly!
M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The Lord look upon you with His favor and give you peace.

Song K-8: "His Name Is Jesus" vs.4

The Announcements / Christmas Greeting

Recessional Hymn (congregation)

"Go Tell It On the Mountain"
Christian Worship #57

*Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born.*

*While shepherds kept their watching O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens There shone a holy light...
Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born.*

*The shepherds feared and trembled, When lo, above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus, That hailed our Savior's birth...
Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born.*

*Down in a lowly manger The humble Christ was born;
And God sent us salvation That blessed Christmas morn...
Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born.*