

SPIRIT OF GRACE
Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 18, 2022

*The congregation's parts are in **bold**.*
Thank you for masking while singing to help us worship safely.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

In the Bleak Midwinter

WELCOME

GATHERING SONG

HARK THE GLAD SOUND

ELW 239

- 1 Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes,
the Savior promised long;
let ev'ry heart prepare a throne
and ev'ry voice a song.

- 2 He comes the pris'ners to release,
in Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.

- 3 He comes the broken heart to bind,
the bleeding soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace
to enrich the humble poor.

- 4 Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace,
your welcome shall proclaim,
and heav'n's eternal arches ring
with your beloved name.

GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

⁰The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. ¹²But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. ¹³Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

SONG DURING LIGHTING O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL ELW 257, verse 7

O come, O King of nations, come.
O Cornerstone that binds in one:
Refresh the hearts that long for you;
Restore the broken, make us new.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

ADVENT BLESSING

Let us pray together.

**Praise to you, O God, who lives with us,
sharing our flesh and bones.**

**As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed,
so we wait and dream for you.**

**Bless us and let your face shine upon us,
more radiant than these candles,
and more dear than all else we seek.**

**Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil
and choose the good and banish all our fears.**

**We pray in the name of Emmanuel,
your promised child and our Savior. Amen.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

Open your hearts and minds to the Good News as it is recorded in Matthew the eleventh chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do 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 as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us."²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

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

1 Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of ev'ry nation,
joy of ev'ry longing heart.

2 Born thy people to deliver,
born a child, and yet a king;
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

NICENE CREED

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

A brief silence.

God our shepherd, let your Spirit move with power throughout the church. Give discernment and wisdom to our bishops, pastors, deacons, and lay leaders. Take away our fear, so that we serve and love, confident that you are guiding us. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our source, awaken us to the beauty of the earth and the marvelous variety of life. Unite humankind in repairing and caring for your creation. Protect creatures and habitats in peril due to rising seas and warming temperatures. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our vision, raise up leaders in every nation who dream of freedom and justice for all people. We pray for the work of international organizations that promote peace and human rights, especially Amnesty International. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our helper, come to the aid of all who cry out to you. Shelter migrants, refugees, and those fleeing war and famine. Bring relief to individuals and families experiencing hunger, homelessness, or impoverishment. Comfort any who are isolated or lonely.

God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God our Emmanuel, you are with us in our life together. We give you thanks for gathering us in worship and fellowship, and we remember those who cannot be present. Watch over those who travel. Heal the sick and speed their recovery, especially bugs B., Deborah, Jocie, Leila, and Susan. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God our hope, you bring life out of death, and you promise to be our God forever. Shine upon the faithful who now rest in the fulfillment of your promise and bring us also into your blessed reign of peace. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us pray together.

Have mercy upon us, most merciful God;

in your compassion forgive us our sins,

known and unknown, things done and left undone;

and so uphold us by your Spirit,

that we may live and serve you in newness of life,

to the honor and glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray together.

Eternal God, you make the desert bloom and send springs of water to thirsty ground. Receive these simple gifts of bread, wine, and money, and make us messengers of your mercy and love for all in need of your healing and justice. We ask this through 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 choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS

Holy, holy, holy,

Holy, holy Lord God of hosts.

Heaven and earth are filled with your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord God, of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy 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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God, who has come to save you.

All are welcome at the table. Hold your hand under the touch-less dispenser to receive the wafer. Return to your seat to eat it. If you would like to receive a blessing only, place your arms across your chest. Please come forward at the direction of the usher.

COMMUNION SONG

LET US BREAK BREAD TOGETHER

ELW 471

1 Let us break bread together on our knees;
let us break bread together on our knees.

Refrain

*When I fall on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.*

2 Let us drink wine together on our knees;
let us drink wine together on our knees. *Refrain*

3 Let us praise God together on our knees;
let us praise God together on our knees. *Refrain*

Text: African American spiritual

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

Amen.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray together.

Faithful God, in this meal you have remembered your mercy, bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ. As we wait for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled, sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery. Guide us toward your promised future, coming to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

God the eternal Word, who dwells with us in Jesus, and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit, ✠ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENDING SONG

LOVE DIVINE, ALL LOVES EXCELLING

ELW 631

1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter ev'ry trembling heart.

2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy loving Spirit
into ev'ry troubled breast;
let us all in thee inherit;
let us find thy promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.

3 Come, Almighty, to deliver;
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

4 Finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee!
Changed from glory into glory,
till in heav'n we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is near.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

In The Bleak Midwinter

Presiding Minister: Pastor Peggy Rose
Recorded Music: Denise Hobbs
Worship Minister: Judy Woughter
Altar Guild: Kathy Reem
Acolyte: Leonard Novak



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