

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24, 2023 | 5:00 and 9:00 pm

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH Thornville, Ohio

VISITORS

We welcome you in the name of Christ and hope his word of forgiveness and freedom finds you while you are with us this morning. If you are visiting or are new to our church, we ask that you complete a yellow Connection Card and pass it to the center isle for collection during the Entrance Hymn. We would like to be in touch with you and to let you know more about Grace Lutheran. We are glad you are with us.

OUR WORSHIP

Lutherans think of worship not in terms of something we do for God, but rather what God does for us. We often call our worship a "service," and that means that God serves us in our need. At the end of his life in 1546, Martin Luther famously said, "We are beggars" before God. In our liturgy (order of worship), which includes hymns and songs, specially selected Bible readings, preaching, and Holy Communion, God serves us by delivering to us sinful human beings the good news of Jesus Christ as Savior, which we grasp by faith. We respond with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, which carries over into our everyday lives.

PARENTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me." The presence of children in worship, even when they are noisy, is a gift to the Church and a reminder that our parish is growing. If you have to leave worship with your children, feel free to do so, but even more so, feel free to come back in!

PRAYER BEFORE HOLY COMMUNION

We do not presume to come to your table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, and so to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him and he in us. Amen

ORDER FOR WORSHIP - LBW SETTING 1

Watchword: Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. - Luke 2:10b-11 ESV

PRELUDE | WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS | OPENING PRAYER

GraceNotes Handbells (9pm): "Carol of The Bells"



Confession and Absolution

The people stand.

P: In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Gathered in the name of Jesus, let us confess our sin against God and our neighbor.

The people kneel, as they are able, for silent reflection and self-examination.

P: Gracious God,

C: in Christ Jesus you come among us as light shining in darkness. We confess our failure to welcome and live in this light. Forgive us and renew our hope, so that we may live in the light of your grace, and welcome the truth of Christ the Lord. Amen.

The pastor stands and addresses the assembly.

P: I bring you good news of great joy for all people: To you is born a Savior, Christ the Lord. To those who believe in Jesus Christ, he gives the power to become children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

The people stand.



Gathering

ENTRANCE HYMN

Angels We Have Heard On High

Green Book 71

APOSTOLIC GREETING

P: 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.

THE CHRISTMAS DIALOG

A: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

C: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

A: Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

C: We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

A: For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

C: In him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Green Book 60

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, you have made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

The people may be seated.



The Liturgy of the Word

THE FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 9:2-7

L: A reading from Isaiah.

Watch for light, watch for joy, watch for freedom, and watch for a child to be born

² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. ³You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. ⁴For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALMODY

Psalm 96

The verses are chanted alternately by the cantor and the congregation.



¹Sing to the Lord | a new song;* sing to the Lord, all | the whole earth.

²**Sing to the Lord and | bless his name;* proclaim the good news of his salvation from | day to day.**

³Declare his glory a- | mong the nations* and his wonders a- | mong all peoples.

⁴**For great is the Lord and greatly | to be praised;* he is more to be feared | than all gods.**

⁵As for all the gods of the nations, they | are but idols;* but it is the Lord who | made the heavens.

⁶**Oh, the majesty and magnificence | of his presence!* Oh, the power and the splendor of his | sanctuary!**

⁷Ascribe to the Lord, you families | of the peoples;* ascribe to the Lord hon- | or and power.

⁸**Ascribe to the Lord the honor | due his name;* bring offerings and come in- | to his courts.**

⁹Worship the Lord in the beau- | ty of holiness;* let the whole earth trem- | ble before him.

¹⁰**Tell it out among the nations: "The | Lord is king!* He has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved; he will judge the peo- | ples with equity."**

¹¹Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea thunder and all | that is in it;* let the field be joyful and all that | is therein.

¹²**Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the Lord | when he comes,* when he comes to | judge the earth.**

¹³He will judge the | world with righteousness* and the peoples | with his truth.

THE SECOND LESSON

Titus 2.11–14

L: A reading from Titus.

When we open the gift of salvation, what do we find? A life giving, a life changing, and purifying reality.

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹²training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live selfcontrolled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

L: The Word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

THE VERSE

The people please stand.



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

THE GOSPEL

Luke 2.1–14

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 2nd chapter.



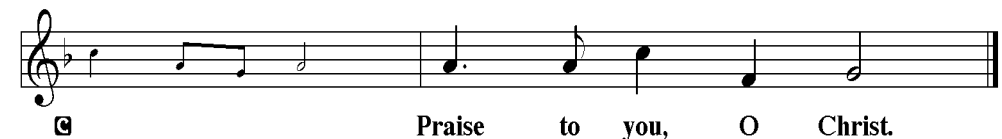
Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

P: ¹In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

P: The Gospel of our Lord.



Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Pastor Tom Jacobson

The people may be seated.

The people stand.

THE NICENE CREED

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; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. 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. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He 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.

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

A: I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever.

C: With my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

A: To us you have brought abundant joy.

C: Before you we rejoice and sing.

P: Let us pray. O God, to whom glory is sung in the highest while on earth peace is proclaimed to all people of goodwill, grant that goodwill to us, your servants. Cleanse us from all our sins, and give perpetual peace to us and to all people; through your mercy, O God, who blesses and governs all things, now and forever.

C: Amen.

A: The iniquity of the earth shall be blotted out.

C: And the Savior of the world shall reign over us.

A: The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light.

C: For those abiding in the land of death, a new splendor has appeared.

P: God of love, Father of all, the darkness that covered the earth has given way to the bright dawn of Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh. Make us a people of this light. Make us faithful to your Word, that we may bring your life to the waiting world; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

A: For our sake, the King of heaven is born of a virgin mother:

C: To reclaim the lost for the heavenly kingdom.

A: All the angels cry aloud with joy:

C: For God himself has come to save all humanity.

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

C: Amen.



The Liturgy of Holy Communion

THE PEACE

P: The Peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

The people greet one another in the name of the Lord and then are seated.

OFFERING

Stationary plates have been placed in the sanctuary for giving offerings before or after service. Online giving through the church's website is also highly encouraged. Quiet music will play to provide a time for prayer and reflection.

GraceNotes Handbells (9pm): "Christmas Joy"

OFFERTORY RESPONSE *I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve* LBW 69

The people stand.

THE OFFERTORY PRAYER

A: Let us pray. Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with these, your gifts, let them now be a blessing for others. To you belong all honor and glory, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

☐ The Lord be with you. ☑ **And al - so 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 him thanks and praise.**

THE PREFACE

P: It is indeed right we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

THE SANCTUS

☑ **Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:**

Heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san - na.

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.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth. In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son, that all those who believe in him should not perish, but have eternal life. We give thanks to you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as he comes to us in his holy supper.

C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P: 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.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

C: 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.

THE FRACTION

P: Our Lord, Emmanuel, shares his life with us.

C: Hosanna in the highest!

The people may be seated.

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.

DISTRIBUTION

Lutherans teach that Holy Communion (the Lord's Supper) was instituted by Jesus Christ himself for us to eat and drink. As his words declare, with bread and wine, he imparts to us his body and blood, and with it the grace of God. This sacrament is God's way of giving us the good news of Jesus in a concrete, physical way as we continue our pilgrimage on earth. We are rightly prepared to receive this great gift when we come before God with humility and faith. All are welcome to receive the Lord's Body and Blood who are baptized and believe that Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is truly present in, with and under the forms of bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

To receive Holy Communion, come forward in two lines as the ushers direct you. With open hands, you will receive the bread from the pastor or assisting minister. For those not able to receive regular bread, some gluten free wafers are available. Then proceed to receive the wine from an assistant on your side of the sanctuary. Take an empty cup, which will be filled using a pouring chalice. For those not able to receive wine, there are some pre-filled cups of grape juice available. After receiving the Lord's Supper, the communicant may say "Amen" and return to your pew for prayer. Those choosing not to receive Holy Communion may come forward for a brief prayer and blessing. You may indicate that by crossing your arms over your chest.

Hymns during distribution: Green Book 67, 41, 58, 56

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

The people please stand.

P: The body and blood of God's true Word bless you and renew you in this Christmas season.

C: Amen.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

A: Let us pray. Lord, as you once came at your blessed birth so in this Holy Sacrament you have come down to save. Come to us always; complete your gracious visitation; lift us up to be with you in eternity. You are the Lord forevermore.

C: Amen.



Lighting of the Candles

Candles are to be lighted during the reading from the Gospel of John. Please keep the lighted candle upright and let the person next to you tilt his or her candle to receive the light. Extinguish your candle before leaving the sanctuary.

LESSON OF LIGHT

John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light,

which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

HYMN

Silent Night

Green Book 65

BENEDICTION

P: May Christ, who by his incarnation has filled us with grace and truth, give you peace this Christmas. And may Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

A: Glory to God in the highest!

C: And peace to God's people on earth!

A: Go in peace. Christ was born for you!

C: Thanks be to God!

SENDING HYMN

Joy to the World

Green Book 39

THE POSTLUDE

We are sent into the world to proclaim God's grace in word and deed.

PRAYER AFTER WORSHIP

Almighty God, grant that the words we have heard this day with our ears may be grafted onto our hearts through your grace, that they may produce in us the fruit of a good life, to the praise and honor of your name, through Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord. Amen

**POINSETTIAS ARE GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD BY THE
FOLLOWING PEOPLE:**



By Sue Cottrill.

In memory of Keith Fetheroff, by Jacqueline Combs.

*In honor of God's Gift of Salvation - Jesus, by Susan Cheney.
In memory of all lost lives in Israel/Palestine War, by Susan Cheney.*

In memory of Carl R. Cooperrider, by Doug & Lesa Cooperrider.

In memory of Robert Forsythe, by Susan Forsythe.

In memory of Brandon Haggenjos and Jay Carson, by Cherl & Jeff Haggenjos.

*In honor of our parents and grandparents: Carl & Linda Keaser, William & Joyce
Hamilton, by Chad, Jen, Josiah, and Zac Hamilton.*

In memory of Dean Boyer, by Jim & Martha Harrison.

*In memory of John Mickey and Franklin & Eva Boyer, by Mary Louise Boyer and
Mary Lou Mickey.*

In honor of our family, by Paul & Sandy Moentmann.

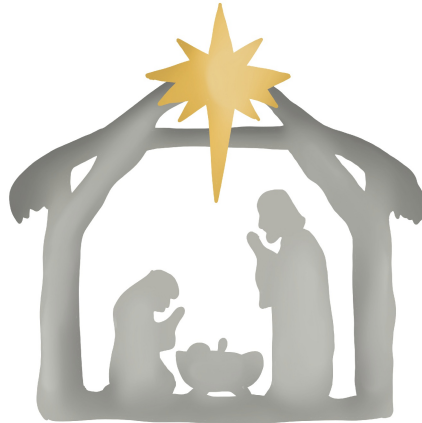
In memory of Mary Ellen Pairan, by Karen Pairan.

In honor of Keith Stought, by David & Glenyce Rodenbaugh.

*In memory of Bernard Carpenter and Hilda & Joe Rodgers, by Tom & Twila
Rodgers.*

In memory of Woodrow and Doris Shrider, by Brenda Shearer and family.

In honor of our parents: Mark & Ellen Ricketts and Frank & Dorothy Yakes, by Heather & Jeff Yakes.



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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The Rev. Dr. Thomas Jacobson, Pastor



COMMEMORATIONS:

As Christians in the twenty-first century, we are called to remember that God's people of the past form a great "cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1). In that spirit, we commemorate memorable Christians of the past, usually on the day of their death. Though imperfect, their witness inspires us today as we run the race of faith. This week, the Church commemorates:

Dec. 26 ST. STEPHEN, DEACON AND MARTYR

Dec. 27 ST. JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

Dec. 28 THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR CHRISTMAS DAY (December 25 10:30am)

Isaiah 52:7-10
Hebrews 1:1-12

Psalm 98
John 1:1-14

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR 1 CHRISTMAS (December 31)

Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Galatians 4:4-7

Psalm 148
Luke 2:22-40