

“YOU WILL FIND A BABY

*wrapped in swaddling cloths
and lying in a manger.”*

Luke 2:12

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD CHRISTMAS MORNING

December 25, 2023 | 10:30am

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: And the Word became flesh
and dwelt among us. - John 1:14a ESV*

PRELUDE | WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS | OPENING PRAYER

Call To Worship, Confession and Absolution

The people please stand.

P: Today the Christ is born! Alleluia!

C: Today salvation has appeared! Alleluia!

P: Today on earth choirs of angels are singing!

C: Today in heaven archangels are rejoicing!

P: Today the just rejoice and say,

C: Glory to God in the highest! Alleluia

P: In the light of Jesus' presence, let us confess our sin and hear
the promise of forgiveness.

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

C: Amen.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and
unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that
we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of
your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The minister stands and addresses the congregation.

P: Almighty God has mercy on you, forgives you all your sins through our Lord
Jesus Christ, strengthens you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy
Spirit keeps you in eternal life.

C: Amen.

Gathering

ENTRANCE HYMN

Joy to the World

Green Book 39

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.

CHRISTMAS DIALOG

A: Blessed are you, O Christ, Son of God; you were before time began and
came into the world to save us.

**C: Blessed are you, Son of Righteousness; you shine with the Father's
love and illumine the whole universe.**

A: Blessed are you, Son of Mary; born a child, you shared our humanity.

C: Let heaven and earth ring out their praise.

A: O Mystery of the Word made flesh, with all the voices of heaven, we celebrate your coming as our Savior.

C: Let men and women and angels sing of your glory.

A: O Splendor the Father's Light, with all the creatures on earth we sing at your birth.

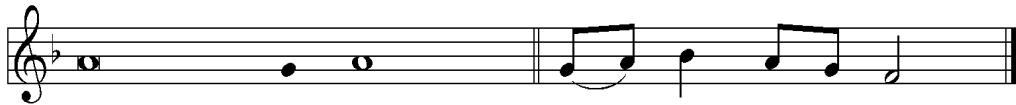
C: Praise and honor and glory to you, O Incarnate Word.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

LBW 55

PRAYER OF THE DAY



☩ The Lord be with you.

☩ And al - so with you.

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, you have made yourself known in your Son, Jesus, redeemer of the world. We pray that his birth as a human child will set us free from the old slavery of our sin; through 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 52:7-10

L: A reading from Isaiah.

A messenger brings good news: "Your God reigns." It is a message for the whole world.

⁷How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." ⁸The voice of your watchmen — they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion. ⁹Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. ¹⁰The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

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



Sing to the Lord | a new song,* for he has done | marvelous things.
With his right hand and his | holy arm* has he won for him- | self the victory.

The Lord has made | known his victory;* his righteousness has he openly shown
 in the sight | of the nations.
**He remembers his mercy and faithfulness to the | house of Israel,* and all the
 ends of the earth have seen the victory | of our God.**

Shout with joy to the Lord, | all you lands;* lift up your voice, re- | joice, and sing.
Sing to the Lord | with the harp,* with the harp and the | voice of song.

With trumpets and the sound | of the horn* shout with joy before the | king,
 the Lord.
**Let the sea make a noise and all | that is in it,* the lands and those
 who | dwell therein.**

Let the rivers | clap their hands,* and let the hills ring out with joy before the Lord,
 when he comes to | judge the earth.
In righteousness shall he | judge the world* and the peo- | ples with equity.

L: A reading from Hebrews.

How does God come to us? By many prophets? Yes, but now by His Son.

¹Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. ⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"? ⁶And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." ⁷Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire." ⁸But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. ⁹You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions." ¹⁰And, "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; ¹¹they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, ¹²like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end."

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

THE VERSE

The people please stand.





THE GOSPEL

John 1.1–14

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 1st chapter.

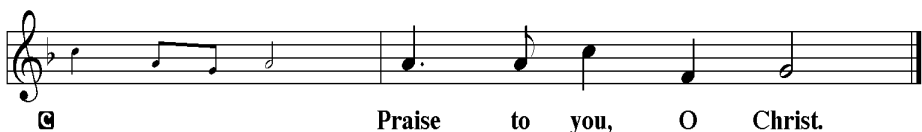


¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. ⁹The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And 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.

P: The Gospel of our Lord.



SERMON

Pastor Tom Jacobson

HYMN OF THE DAY

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Green Book 54

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

After each petition:

A: As we celebrate Christ's birth, C: hear our prayer.

P: Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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.

OFFERTORY RESPONSE

The people stand.

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 the dreams of all; u - nite them with the
prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

THE OFFERTORY PRAYER

A: Let us pray. Merciful Father

C: we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us — our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. 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: With confidence, we pray as Christ taught us:

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.

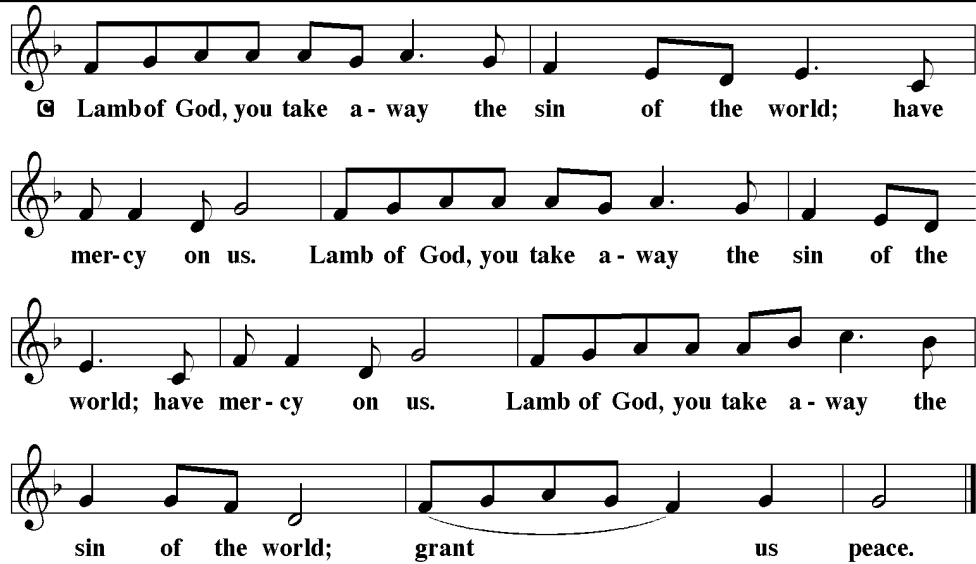
THE FRACTION

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.

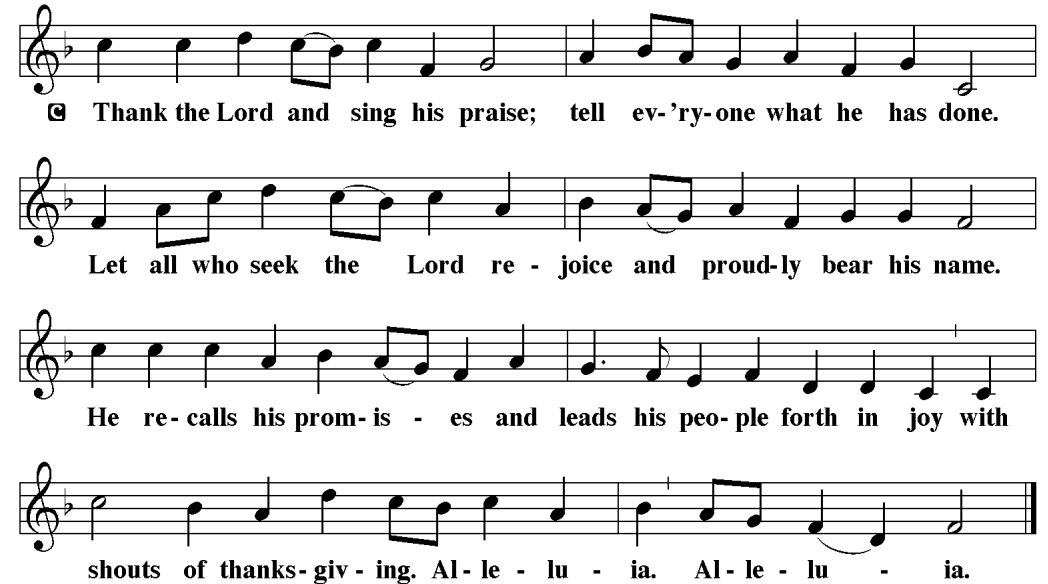
Hymns during distribution: Green Book 45, 50, 56

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

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

C: Amen.

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



☞ Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.
Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and proud-ly bear his name.
He re - calls his prom - is - es and leads his peo - ple forth in joy with
shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

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.



Sending

THE BENEDICTION

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

C: Amen.

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

C: Thanks be to God!

SENDING HYMN

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

Green Book 60

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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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

Jan. 1 THE NAME OF JESUS

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR 1 CHRISTMAS (December 31)

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Galatians 4:4-7

Psalms 148

Luke 2:22-40