

## THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

December 24, 2023 | 10:30am

## GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Thornville, Ohio

### VISITORS

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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

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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

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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

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*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: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. - Philippians 4:4-5 NRSV*

### PRELUDE | WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS | OPENING PRAYER

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*Special Music: "Mary's Cradle Song" by Diane Christensen and Kim Lutz*



## Confession and Absolution

### INVOCATION

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*The people stand.*

P: In the Name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

### PRAYER OF PREPARATION

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P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

### CONFESSION

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P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*The people kneel for silent reflection and self-examination.*

P: Most merciful God,

**C: we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

### ABSOLUTION

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*The pastor stands and addresses the assembly.*

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ he gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

*The people stand.*



## Gathering

### ENTRANCE HYMN

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*Angels from the Realms of Glory*

Green Book 50

*Connection Cards/Prayer Requests should be passed to the center isle at this time.*

### APOSTOLIC GREETING

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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 KYRIE

A=Leader; C=all voices

**A** In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.

**A** For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

**C** Lord, have mer - cy.

**A** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

**C** Lord, have mer - cy.

**A** For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.

**A** Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **C** A - men

The Advent candle is lit during the Prayer of the Day

# PRAYER OF THE DAY

**P** The Lord be with you. **C** And al - so with you.

**P:** Let us pray. Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Take away the hindrance of our sins and make us ready for the celebration of your birth, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **C: Amen.**

The people may be seated.



# The Liturgy of the Word

## THE FIRST LESSON

Deuteronomy 18:15-19

**L:** A reading from Deuteronomy.

*Moses declares that God promises to speak through the words of a prophet like him. God continues to speak His life-giving Word even today.*

<sup>15</sup>"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—<sup>16</sup> just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.'<sup>17</sup>And the Lord said to me, 'They are right in what they have spoken.<sup>18</sup>I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.<sup>19</sup>And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.

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

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



<sup>1</sup>Be joyful in God, | all you lands;\* sing the glory of his name; sing the glory | of his praise.

<sup>2</sup>**Say to God, “How awesome | are your deeds!\***  
**Because of your great strength your enemies | cringe before you.**

<sup>3</sup>All the earth bows | down before you,\* sings to you, sings | out your name.”

<sup>4</sup>**Come now and see the | works of God,\* how wonderful he is in his doing | toward all people.**

<sup>5</sup>He turned the sea into dry land, so that they went through the wat- | er on foot,\* and there we re- | joiced in him.

<sup>6</sup>**In his might he rules forever; his eyes keep watch o- | ver the nations;\***  
**let no rebel rise | up against him.**

<sup>7</sup>Bless our | God, you peoples;\* make the voice of his praise | to be heard,

<sup>8</sup>**who holds our | souls in life,\* and will not allow our | feet to slip.**

<sup>9</sup>For you, O | God, have proved us;\* you have tried us just as sil- | ver is tried.

<sup>10</sup>**You brought us in- | to the snare;\* you laid heavy burdens up- | on our backs.**

<sup>11</sup>You let enemies ride over our heads; we went through | fire and water,\* but you brought us out into a place | of refreshment.

<sup>12</sup>**I will enter your house with burnt-offerings and will pay | you my vows,\* which I promised with my lips and spoke with my mouth when I | was in trouble.**

L: A reading from 2 Peter.

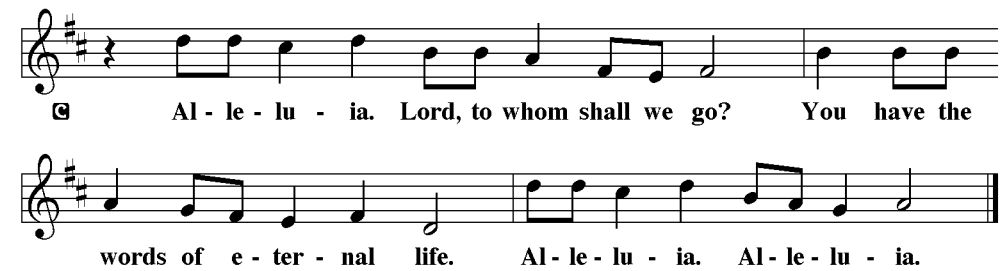
God does not operate according to our schedule or whim. God is patient with us and the world.

<sup>8</sup>But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. <sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. <sup>11</sup>Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup>waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! <sup>13</sup>But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. <sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

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

THE VERSE

The people please stand.



## THE GOSPEL

Mark 1:1-8

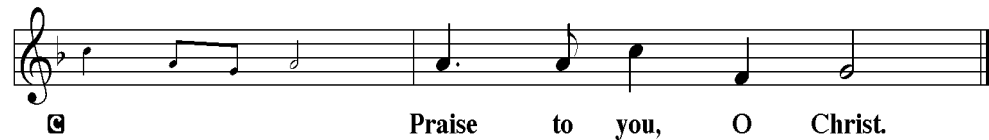
P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.



<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. <sup>2</sup>As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, <sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'"

<sup>4</sup> John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

P: The Gospel of our Lord.



## SERMON

Pastor Tom Jacobson

*The people may be seated.*

## HYMN OF THE DAY

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

Green Book 41

*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 prepare the way of the Lord, 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

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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

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*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.*

*Grace Notes: "Mary, Did You Know?"*

## OFFERTORY RESPONSE

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*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

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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

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☒ 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.

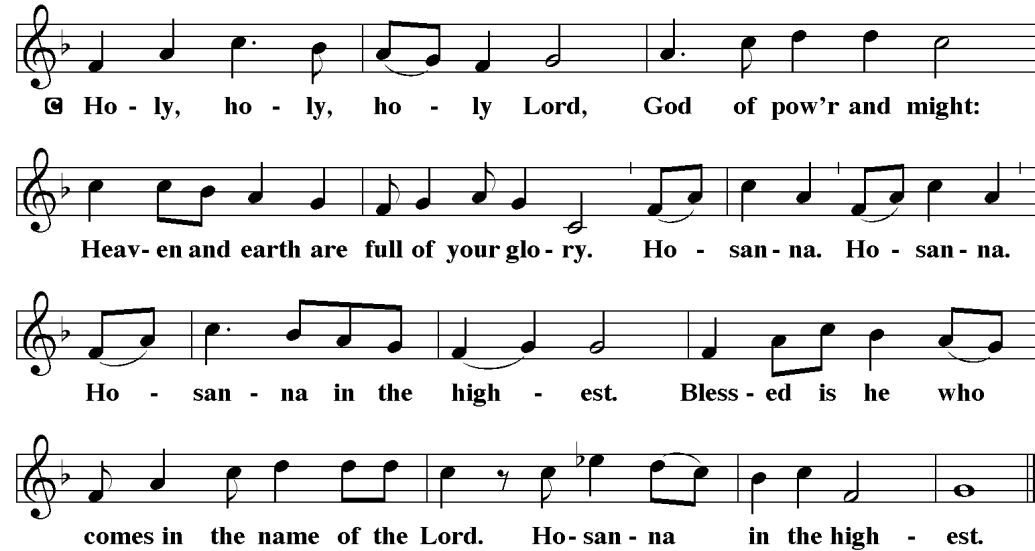
## THE PREFACE

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

## THE SANCTUS

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☩ 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

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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

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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

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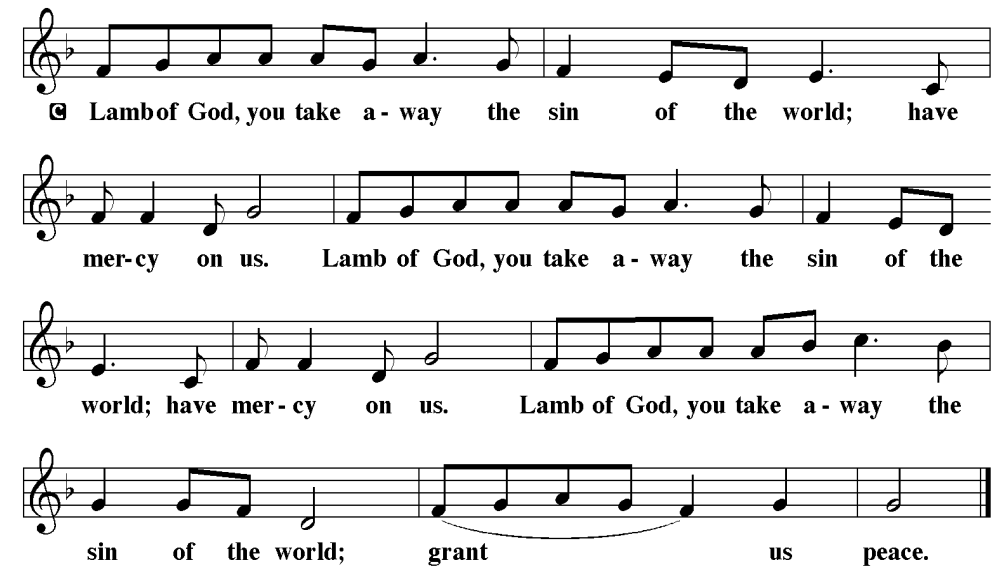
P: Our Lord, Emmanuel, shares his life with us.

**C: Hosanna in the highest!**

*The people may be seated.*

## LAMB OF GOD

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☩ 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

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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 (10:30) or one line (8:00) 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 44, 54, 69*

## POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

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*The people please stand.*

**P:** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**C: Amen.**

## POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE

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**C** 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

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**A:** Let us pray. Almighty God, you gave your Son both as a sacrifice for sin and a model of the godly life. Enable us to receive him always with thanksgiving, and to conform our lives to his; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

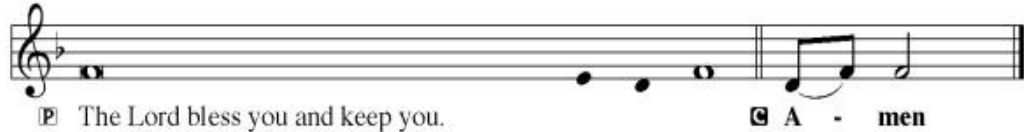




## Sending

### THE BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

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☩ The Lord bless you and keep you.  
 The Lord make his face shine on you  
 and be gracious to you.  
 The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

A: Go in peace. Serve the Lord!

**C: Thanks be to God!**

### SENDING HYMN

*Joy to the World*

Green Book 39

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### THE POSTLUDE

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

### PRAYER AFTER WORSHIP

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*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.*

*Christ  
Is Coming!*

**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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www.gracethornville.org  
The Rev. Dr. Thomas Jacobson, Pastor



**COMMEMORATIONS:**

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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 EVE (December 24 5 & 9pm)**

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Isaiah 9:2-7  
Titus 2:11-14

Psalm 96  
Luke 2:1-14

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

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

Psalm 98  
John 1:1-14

**SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR 1 CHRISTMAS (December 31)**

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

Psalm 148  
Luke 2:22-40