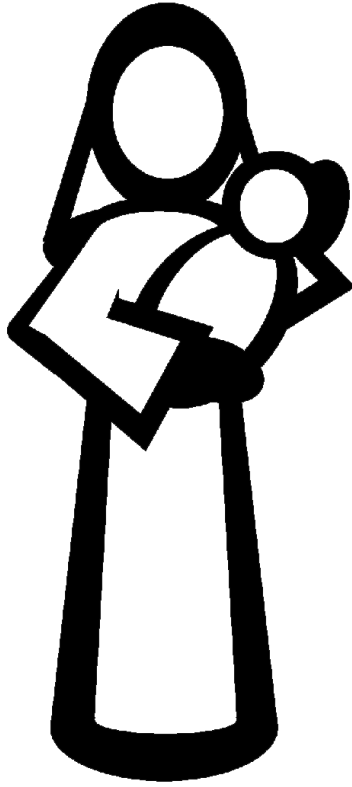


First Sunday After Christmas



December 28, 2025

Welcome to Grace

We give thanks that you have come to worship with us at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, and pray that you will receive God's awesome GRACE, mercy and love as we receive Word and Sacrament, the means of grace!

We invite our guests and visitors to worship with us often! If you will, we invite guests to take a welcome bag at the Welcome Desk to learn more about Grace and fill out a Welcome Form in the bulletin or at the Welcome Desk to let us know you were worshipping with us today. Visitor/Member Information sheets may be returned to the pastor, an usher, or placed in the offering.

The complete worship service is contained in this worship folder. Large print worship folders and Busy Bags for our very young worshipers are available from the ushers! We love having children in worship! Should parents have need of nursery during worship, our professionally staffed nursery for childcare is available. Please see an usher for directions.

Our worship space is equipped with a hearing assistance system to accommodate those with hearing difficulties. Please ask the sound technician (at the rear left of the worship space) for a receiver, if desired. Printed copies of the sermon are available at the ushers table in the entry-way, if desired.

Please remember to turn off or silence personal communication devices. We ask that you not bring food or drink into the worship space.

In accordance with the Biblical mandate and our Lutheran tradition, we seek to worship God "in Spirit and in truth...for these the Father seeks to worship him!" (John 4:23-24). If you are not familiar with liturgical worship, it is "the work of the people," as God speaks, the ministers speak and the congregation responds in a spoken, chanted and sung dialogue! Everything in our worship is focused on God and His incarnate, embodied presence in our midst! We pray that you will experience the Word made flesh as we worship today!

To establish and maintain a spirit of reverence, we remind worshipers to please greet one another and fellowship in the gathering space before entering the sanctuary, where others will be preparing their hearts and minds for worship. We appreciate your understanding!

We invite you to learn more about our congregation at www.grace43081.org and the NALC at www.thenalc.org!

PRELUDE

Linda Hoch

"I Wonder as I Wander" - arr. Kristina Langlois

"The Bells of Christmas" - arr. Knut Nystedt

Announcements

Please stand and face the baptismal font.

The Entrance Rite

Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness

P Blessed be God: Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit
C **and blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen.**

P We hear in Hebrews 4, "Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor, that we may celebrate with joy the Christmas season.

C **Most merciful God, we confess that 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. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

P Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for His sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

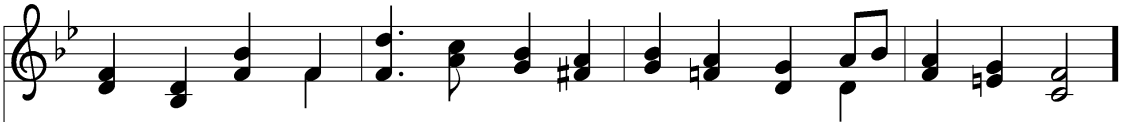
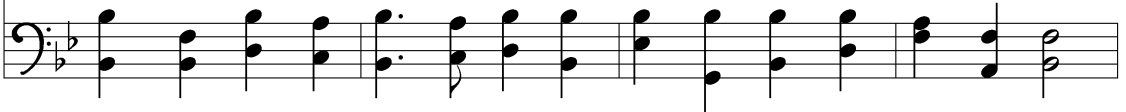
C **Amen.**

ENTRANCE HYMN

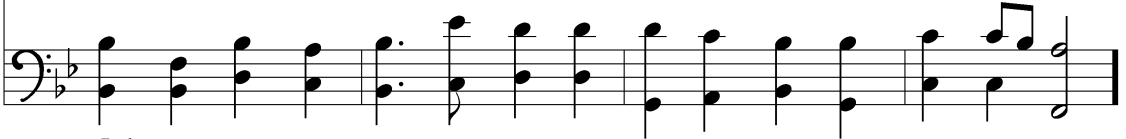
“Angels from the Realms of Glory”



1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
2 Shep-herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,
3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;
4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,



once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.
seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.



Refrain



Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king.



The Liturgy of The Word

THE 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. (*2 Corinthians 13:14*)
C **And also with you!**

KYRIE

A Lord Jesus, Word made flesh to dwell among us;
C **Have mercy upon us.**

A Christ Jesus, Light of the world, shining in darkness;
C **Have mercy upon us.**

A Lord Jesus, Son of God, Lamb of God;
C **Have mercy upon us.**

HYMN OF PRAISE

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;

and the moun - tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.

Refrain
Glo - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo



PRAYER OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

O Lord our God, we know that we cannot trust in ourselves or in any earthly ruler. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all your children from harm and adversity, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Please be seated.

The Liturgy of the Word

FIRST READING: Isaiah 63:7-14

⁷I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. ⁸For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely." And he became their Savior. ⁹In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. ¹⁰But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. ¹¹Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit, ¹²who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses who divided the waters before them to make for himself an everlasting name, ¹³who led them through the depths? Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble. ¹⁴Like livestock that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest. So you led your people, to make for yourself a glorious name.

L The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 111

Refrain

The fear of the LORD is the be - gin - ning of wis - dom.

Psalm Tone

L ¹Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the Lord with ¹my whole heart,
in the assembly of the upright, in the ¹congregation.

C ²**Great are the deeds ¹of the Lord!**
They are studied by all who de- ¹light in them.

L ³His work is full of majes- ¹ty and splendor,
and his righteousness en- ¹dures forever.

C ⁴**He makes his marvelous works to ¹be remembered;**
the Lord is gracious and full ¹of compassion. Refrain

L ⁵He gives food to ¹those who fear him;
he is ever mindful ¹of his covenant.

C ⁶**He has shown his people the power ¹of his works**
in giving them the lands ¹of the nations.

L ⁷The works of his hands are faithful- ¹ness and justice;
all his command- ¹ments are sure.

C ⁸**They stand fast forev- ¹er and ever,**
because they are done in ¹truth and equity. Refrain

L ⁹He sent redemption to his people; he commanded his cove- ¹nant forever;
holy and awesome ¹is his name.

C ¹⁰**The fear of the Lord is the begin- ¹ning of wisdom;**
those who act accordingly have a good understanding. His praise en- ¹dures
forever. Refrain

SECOND READING: Galatians 4:4-7

⁴When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand as you are able.

THE SEQUENCE HYMN "Of the Father's Love Begotten" (verses 1-3)

1 Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten ere the worlds be -
2 Oh, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed, when the vir - gin,
3 This is he whom seers in old time chant - ed of with
gan to be, he is Al - pha and O - me - ga,
full of grace, by the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing,
one ac - cord, whom the voic - es of the proph - ets
he the source, the end - ing he, of the things that are, that
bore the Sav - ior of our race, and the babe, the world's re -
prom-ised in their faith - ful word; now he shines, the long - ex -
have been, and that fu - ture years shall see,
deem - er, first re - vealed his sa - cred face,
pect - ed; let cre - a - tion praise its Lord
ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
ev - er - more and ev - er - more.

HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 2:13-23

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

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹³When {the wise men} had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt ¹⁵and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son." ¹⁶Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. ¹⁷Then

was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: ¹⁸“A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.” ¹⁹But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” ²¹And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. ²³And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

P The gospel of the Lord.
C Praise to you, O Christ.

THE SEQUENCE HYMN “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” (verses 4-5)

4 Let the heights of heav'n a - dore him; an - gel hosts, his
5 Christ, to thee, with God the Fa - ther, and, O Ho - ly
prais - es sing; pow'rs, do - min - ions, bow be - fore him
Ghost, to thee, hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing
and ex - tol our God and King; let no tongue on earth be
and un - wea - ried prais - es be: hon - or, glo - ry, and do -
si - lent, ev - 'ry voice in con - cert ring
min - ion, and e - ter - nal vic - to - ry
ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
ev - er - more and ev - er - more! A - men.

Please be seated.

SERMON: “Not Your Perfect Family!”

The Rev. Dr. David M. Wendel

After the sermon, a time of silence for reflection.

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

“I Wonder As I Wander”

1 I won - der as I wan - der, out un - der the sky, how
2 When Mar - y birthed . . . Je - sus, all in a cow's stall, came
3 If Je - sus had . . . want - ed for an - y wee thing, a
4 I won - der as I wan - der, out un - der the sky, how

Je - sus the Sav - ior did come for to die for poor ord' - n'ry peo - ple like
wise men and farm - ers and shep - herds and all, and high from the heav - ens a
star in the sky or a bird on the wing, or all of God's an - gels in
Je - sus the Sav - ior did come for to die for poor ord' - n'ry peo - ple like

you and like I. I won - der as I wan - der, out un - der the sky.
star's light did fall; the prom - ise of the a - ges it then did re - call.
heav'n for to sing, he sure - ly could have had it, 'cause he was the king.
you and like I. I won - der as I wan - der, out un - der the sky.

THE NICENE CREED

A We confess our Christian faith in the words of the Nicene Creed.

C **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

A Rejoicing in God's gift of grace, let us pray for the Church,
the world, and all on whom the Light of Christ shines.

After each petition:

A Lord, in your mercy;

C **Hear our prayer.**

P Hear our prayers, gracious God, as we live in the light of
your Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen.**

P The peace of the Lord be with you always. (*Matthew 5: 22-24; John 20: 19*)

C **And also with you.**

***You may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace,
and may say, "Peace be with you," or similar words.***

Please be seated.

THE LITURGY OF THE MEAL

MUSICAL OFFERING

Andrea Bush - Violin, Linda Hoch - Piano

"Coventry Carol" - arr. K. L. Phillips

Please stand as the offering is brought forward.

OFFERTORY HYMN

"What Child is This" (v. 1 & 3)



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas-ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an - gels sing;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!



OFFERTORY PRAYER


A Let us pray... Gracious God,

C we offer you these humble Christmas gifts of money, bread and wine, signs of your goodness, returned to you. Receive them and bless them, that all people may know the riches of your love in the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.


THE LITURGY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER



Ⓟ 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.

P It is indeed right and salutary . . . *The Presider continues with the preface, concluding:...*we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



☩ 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 EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P We give you thanks, Father, through Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, whom you sent in this end of the ages to save and redeem us and to proclaim to us your will. He is your Word, inseparable from you. Through him you created all things, and in him you take delight. He is your Word, sent from heaven to a virgin's womb. He there took on our nature and our lot and was shown forth as your Son, born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary. It is he, our Lord Jesus, who fulfilled all your will and won for you a holy people; he stretched out his hands in suffering to free from suffering, those who trust you. It is he who, handed over to a death he freely accepted, to destroy death, to break the bonds of the evil one, to crush hell underfoot, to give light to the righteous, to establish his covenant, and to show forth the resurrection:

P Taking bread and giving thanks to you, said:
Take and eat; this is my body, broken 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.

P Remembering then, his death and resurrection, we lift this Bread and Cup before you, giving you thanks that you have made us worthy to stand before you and to serve you as your priestly people. And we ask you:

Send your Spirit upon these gifts of your Church, that they may become for us the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Gather into one all who share this bread and wine; fill us with your Holy Spirit, to establish our faith in truth, that we may praise and glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ.

C Through Him, with Him, in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

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 BREAKING OF THE BREAD/THE FRACTION

A time of silence...

P Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (*John 1:29*)

C **Blessed are those who are invited to the supper of the Lamb!**
(*Revelation 19:9*)

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

Please be seated.



All who are baptized, have received the Lord's Supper and believe that Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine that become our Lord's Body and Blood, are welcome to commune. Children or adults who do not commune are encouraged to come forward to receive a blessing!

The Lord's sacramental Blood is available in individual glasses and common cup. As the communion assistants approach, simply indicate which you prefer by a nod of the head or pointing to individual cups or chalice. Grape juice is available in the center ring of each tray. Please place empty individual glasses in the basket provided to either side of the altar area. Gluten-free hosts are available for those who require them. Indicate your preference to the minister administering the hosts.

Private prayer before receiving Holy Communion: O merciful Lord, I do not presume to come to your Table, trusting in my own righteousness, but in your many and great mercies. I am not worthy to gather up the crumbs under your Table. But you are the same Lord whose will it is always to have mercy. Make me, I pray you, worthy now to receive this Holy Communion. Grant me, gracious Lord, so to consume the very Body and Blood of your dear Son, Jesus Christ in this Holy Sacrament, that He may evermore dwell in me, and I in Him, that my sinful body may be made clean by His Body, and my soul washed through His most precious Blood. Amen.

Private prayer after receiving Holy Communion: Almighty God, you provide the true Bread from heaven, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that as I have received the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, He may abide in me, and I in Him, and that all who have received may be filled with the power of His endless life. By your grace, help me to walk worthy of my calling, and to learn to bring glory to your name in all things. Amen.

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.

COMMUNION MUSIC

Andrea Bush - Violin

"Carol Medley" - arr. Galliford/Westford/Edmonson

"Angels We Have Heard on High" - arr. Sean O'Laughlin

After all have communed, please stand.

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace!

C **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION HYMN "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"

1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joi - ce with heart and soul and voice;
 2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joi - ce with heart and soul and voice;
 3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joi - ce with heart and soul and voice;

give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!

ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
 He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.

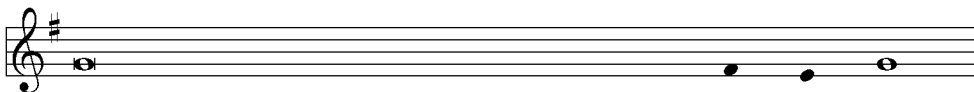
Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

A Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses to Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh! To Him, to You, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

THE BENEDICTION



Ⓟ The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face to shine on you
And be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ... give you peace.
In the name of the Father, and of the Son ✝
and of the Holy Spirit.

A - men, A - men, A - - - men.

RECESSIONAL HYMN

“The Bells of Christmas”



Det ki - mer nu til ju - le - fest, det ki - mer
 1 The bells of Christ - mas chime once more; the heav'n - ly
 2 This world, though wide and far out - spread, could scarce - ly
 3 Now let us go with qui - et mind, the swad - dled
 4 Oh, join with me, in glad - ness sing, to keep our



for den høj - e gæst, som steg til la - ve
 guest is at the door. He comes to earth - ly
 find for you a bed. Your cra - dle was a
 babe with shep - herds find, to gaze on him who
 Christ - mas with our king, un - til our song, from



hyt - ter ned med nyt - års - ga - ver: fryd og fred.
 dwell - ings still with new year gifts of peace, good will.
 man - ger stall, no pearl nor silk nor king - ly hall.
 glad - dens them, the love - liest flow'r of Jes - se's stem.
 lov - ing souls, like rush - ing might - y wa - ter rolls!



THE RITE OF SENDING

A Jesus Christ is the Light of the world. (John 8:12)

C **The light no darkness can overcome!** (John 1:5)

A Go in peace, serve the Lord!

C **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

Linda Hoch

"Angels from the Realms of Glory" - arr. Edwin C. Johnson

Offering: A basket will be placed by the baptismal font for offering. Offerings can be placed in the basket before or after the service.

Remember in our prayers... John Westenhaver, Sue Taylor, Misty Cochenour, Don Melick, Tom Zawodny, Ernestine Dietz, Steve Miller, Betty Milner, Mary Cooney, John Hicks, Amy Seifert Unkefer, Rod Rice, Sue Ross, Mary Ross, Jim Ross

Notes & News

WELCOME, GUESTS! We welcome you as our guest in our church home and invite you to continue to worship with us. We invite guests to take a welcome bag at the Welcome Desk to learn more about Grace and fill out a Welcome Form and place it in the offering or hand it to an usher to let us know you were worshipping with us today.



Scan to *Simply Give*

This QR code connects you to the mobile version of Grace's online giving page to give you a quick and easy way to access our webpage without having to type out a long web address. Through this link, you can create a one-time or on-going donation and to specify where you want your gift to be applied. The *Simply Giving*® Program (endorsed by Thrivent Federal Credit Union) is an automated stewardship program that helps members give generously. Scan to *Simply Give* today.

Financial Update: If you would like a copy of the full monthly Treasurer's report as presented to Council, please reach out to the Treasurer, Jim Caldwell and it will be emailed to you.

4th Sunday of Advent, December 21: 8:15am: 77; 11:00am: 131; Total: 208

MUSIC NOTES

"I Wonder as I Wander" – arr. Kristina Langlois

John Jacob Niles (1892-1980) derived the first line and a half of this song from the young daughter of a traveling evangelist, then composed a complete folk song that he performed while accompanying himself on dulcimer. In notes for an unfinished autobiography, Niles wrote:

"I Wonder As I Wander" grew out of three lines of music sung for me by a girl who called herself Annie Morgan. The place was Murphy, North Carolina, and the time was July 1933. The Morgan family, revivalists all, were about to be ejected by the police, after having camped in the town square for some little time, cooking, washing, hanging their wash from the Confederate monument and generally conducting themselves in such a way as to be classed a public nuisance. Preacher Morgan and his wife pled poverty; they had to hold one more meeting in order to buy enough gas to get out of town. It was then

that Annie Morgan came out—a tousled, unwashed blond, and very lovely. She sang the first three lines of the verse of “I Wonder As I Wander.” At twenty-five cents a performance, I tried to get her to sing all the song. After eight tries, all of which are carefully recorded in my notes, I had only three lines of verse, a garbled fragment of melodic material—and a magnificent idea.

“The Bells of Christmas” – arr. Knut Nystedt

This hymn may seem a rather simple carol about the bells of Christmas, but under its surface it represents the quiet embrace of the incarnation against rationalistic forces of the 19th century. Its author, Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig (1783-1872) lived during the Rationalistic period during which orthodox Christianity was at a low ebb. He attended university under rationalistic theologians but later found himself in opposition to the existing system. He is considered the greatest Danish hymnwriter of the 19th century.

“Coventry Carol” – arr. K. L. Phillips

The music of the “The Coventry Carol” dates from the 16th century and was taken from a pageant put on by shear-men and tailors of Coventry, England, on the steps of the city’s cathedral between 1534-1584. This in turn was based on a much older morality play that tradesmen mounted for the entertainment of their monarchs and town officials. The song’s minor tune and gently lulling words were sung in the play by the women of Bethlehem shortly before King Herod’s men came to slaughter their infant sons in an attempt to kill the newborn “King of the Jews.” In many churches, those children who were killed by Herod are commemorated on December 28th, the feast day of the Holy Innocents.

“Angels from the Realms of Glory” – arr. Edwin C. Johnson

James Montgomery (1771-1854) wrote this poem for the Christmas Eve edition of his paper, *The Sheffield Iris*, in 1816. He revised it in 1825 and published it in his *Christian Psalmist* which is the form that has become universally popular. The hymn is a call for all (angels, shepherds, wise men, saints and us) to come and worship the new-born King as told in the Christmas stories of Luke 2 and Matthew 2.

Dear friends in Christ,

The beloved carol, “Away in a Manger” has traditionally been called, “Martin Luther’s Cradle Song,” as it reflects Luther’s great love for the Nativity of our Lord and the meaning of the Incarnation in the hearts and lives of God’s children. The third verse of the hymn is:

*Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven, to live with thee there.*



As pastor and staff of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, we pray that Jesus may indeed come to us and remain close by each of us in the coming year of God's grace! May He tenderly care for you and prepare us for heaven that we may live with Him forever!

We wish to express heartfelt appreciation for the generous staff Christmas gift, as we also share sincere gratitude for the love and support we receive throughout the year! It is a joy to serve our Lord in this congregation and look forward to our shared ministry in the coming year!

Christmas blessings,

Linda Hoch
Sarah Odum

Helen Kang
Jon Sweet

Molly King
Pastor Wendel

Maria Laderman
Debbie Yoho

Serving Today

OFFICIATING/PREACHER	The Rev. Dr. David Wendel
COMMISSIONED LAY MINISTER	Molly King
ASSISTING MINISTER	8:15 Caleb Scheideger
ORGANIST	11:00 Fred Pfanz
SACRISTAN	Linda Hoch
CHOIR DIRECTOR	Fred Pfanz
BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR	Dr. Helen Kang
CANTOR	Maria Laderman
ACOLYTE	Julie Hotchkiss
LECTOR	8:15 Lauren Place
	11:00 Selah French
COMMUNION ASSISTANTS	8:15 Aaron Singleton
USHERS	11:00 Heather Bush
	8:15 Regina Place, Vanessa Stewart
	11:00 Cheryl Bush, Heather Bush
	8:15 Paul Whitacre, Bob Ayers, Ted Ray, Jim Caldwell
	11:00 Mike Grubb, Beverly Grubb, Tom Seamon
GREETERS	8:15 Lisa Kuhar
	11:00 Tom and Linda Seamon
LITTLE LAMBS	8:15 Ellen Paulus
	11:00 Amy Quinn
NURSERY ATTENDANTS	Kaitlyn F., Donna P.
ALTAR GUILD	Team 2: Julie Hartfelder, Karen Bale, Tami Banks, Carolyn Rearick, Sue Miller, Bonnie Sawyer, Marge Cepek, JoAnn Slemmer
SOUND TECHNICIANS	Chris Banks, Eric Bush, Dan George, Paul Grant, Brice Graves

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"REGENT SQUARE/ Angels, from the Realms of Glory" – arr. Edwin C. Johnson, from *Augsburg Organ Library: Christmas*, ©1999 Augsburg Fortress



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Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church has been serving the Westerville community for more than 115 years, supporting local ministries such as the Westerville Area Resource Ministry, Westerville Partnership Habitat for Humanity, and Westerville CROP Walk. Grace also provides weekly meeting space for five AA groups.

Vision Statement: We envision Grace to be a welcoming Christ-centered community of faith, inviting all, growing in discipleship, sharing in ministries.

Mission Statement: Our mission is to reach out with the love of Jesus to grow disciples and serve our community.