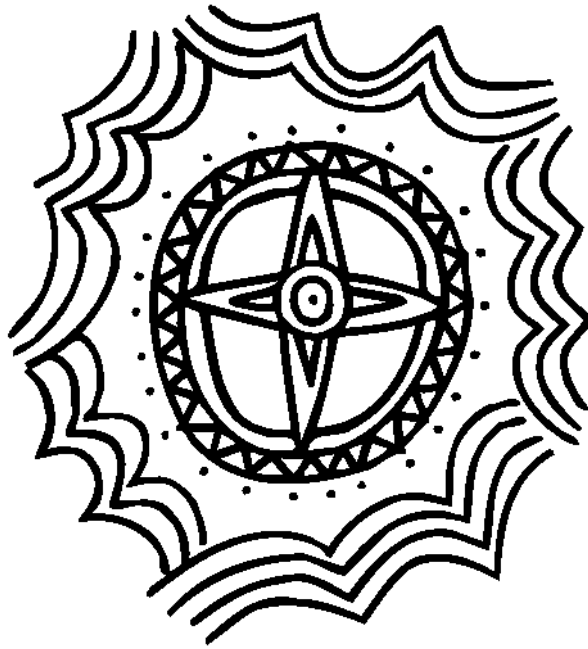


*2nd Sunday of Christmas
Adaptive Worship Service*

January 3, 2021



1812 North Highland Avenue
Clearwater, Florida 33755
Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

727-446-5026
office@GraceCLW.com
Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. This bulletin is designed to be used at home by anyone who is baptized serving as the Worship Leader. If you use this bulletin for worship, either by itself or alongside our service on YouTube, please fill out the Attendance Record Form on our website: GraceCLW.com

ADAPTIVE SERVICE OF THE WORD

GREETING

Worship Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Congregation: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Worship Leader: Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

FIRST READING

Ephesians 1:3-14

Introduction to the Lesson: *In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made know as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.*

Reader: 3 Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! For in our union with Christ he has blessed us by giving us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly world. 4 Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be his through our union with Christ, so that we would be holy and without fault before him.

Because of his love 5 God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would make us his children—this was his pleasure and purpose. 6 Let us praise God for his glorious grace, for the free gift he gave us in his dear Son! 7 For by the blood of Christ we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven. How great is the grace of God, 8 which he gave to us in such large measure!

In all his wisdom and insight 9 God did what he had purposed, and made known to us the secret plan he had already decided to complete by means of Christ. 10 This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head.

11 All things are done according to God's plan and decision; and God chose us to be his own people in union with Christ because of his own purpose, based on what he had decided from the very beginning. 12 Let us, then, who were the first to hope in Christ, praise God's glory!

13 And you also became God's people when you heard the true message, the Good News that brought you salvation. You believed in Christ, and God put his stamp of ownership on you by giving you the Holy Spirit he had promised. 14 The Spirit is the guarantee that we shall receive what God has promised his people, and this assures us that God will give complete freedom to those who are his. Let us praise his glory!

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL LESSON

John 1:1-18

Introduction to the Gospel: *John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to John the 1st chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

Worship Leader: In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 From the very beginning the Word was with God. 3 Through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him. 4 The Word was the source of life, and this life brought light to people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.

6 God sent his messenger, a man named John, 7 who came to tell people about the light, so that all should hear the message and believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came to tell about the light. 9 This was the real light—the light that comes into the world and shines on all people.

10 The Word was in the world, and though God made the world through him, yet the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to his own country, but his own people did not receive him. 12 Some, however, did receive him and believed in him; so he gave them the right to become God's children. 13 They did not become God's children by natural

means, that is, by being born as the children of a human father; God himself was their Father.

14 The Word became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory which he received as the Father's only Son.

15 John spoke about him. He cried out, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'He comes after me, but he is greater than I am, because he existed before I was born.'"

16 Out of the fullness of his grace he has blessed us all, giving us one blessing after another. 17 God gave the Law through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is the same as God and is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

After the reading...

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

Truth beyond the Facts

There are many questions today about facts. Who do we trust to give us the facts? What sources and individuals are reliable? Social media can be a great tool for sharing, but it has also become a means of spreading misinformation, false beliefs, and bad advice. Many people today are suspicious of what some claim to be the facts.

Even if we have the right facts, we might not have something more important: the truth. Facts can be a partial representation of the truth. Facts might tell us that it is sunny and warm this morning, but the weather forecast might say thunderstorms are coming in the afternoon. The latter statement is truth. Truth is the larger reality that smaller facts don't capture, and sometimes contradict.

John tells us that Jesus is God's Word, full of grace and truth. In Jesus we get the full truth of God, not merely the facts. What are the facts we might see? We are all sinful and have strayed from God's just and loving ways. The world is a mess. Left to our own ways, we are surely lost. These are the facts, as if we woke up to a dangerous thunderstorm but don't know what the weather forecast is after that. Jesus is the fuller truth that in spite of the stormy mess of the world and our individual lives, God's grace is a gift to us in Christ. There is a blue sky and a safe calm that is ours through divine love.

Some of us live with messages that tell us we are not the right kind of person to receive God's grace because of our past mistakes, or ethnicity, or gender identity, or level of education, or poverty. The truth of Jesus Christ tells us we are children of God. "From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace" (John 1:16). This is the truth that gives us life.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

Away in a Manger vs. 1 & 2



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed, the lit - tle Lord
2 The cat - tle are low - ing; the ba - by a - wakes, but lit - tle Lord
3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay close by me for -



Je - sus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the bright sky looked
Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes. I love you, Lord Je - sus; look
ev - er and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in



down where he lay, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
down from the sky and stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
your ten - der care and fit us for heav - en, to live with you there.

Text: North American, 19th cent.

Music: AWAY IN A MANGER, James R. Murray, 1841–1905

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

Prayer Leader: Redeeming God, you gather together your people from the farthest parts of the earth. Protect your church from stumbling. Let it not be overcome by sorrow, division, or despair. Make us radiant with goodness, that we might live always to the praise of your glory. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: You overflow with grace upon grace. Expand the imaginations of those who serve in positions of authority. Open their hearts to the needs of their nations and communities. Protect all those in harm's way and those risking danger for the sake of others. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: You bring consolation to those who weep. Embrace those who feel far-off, excluded, or defeated. Accompany those living with chronic and invisible illness. Sustain the weak and weary. Refresh those who labor under the weight of pain or sickness (especially Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Gary Neal, Karen Bates, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard, Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George Clark, Jill Grote, Larry Timmons, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia & family, Kelly Sullivan, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Deacon Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Steve Davis, Rose Marie Piff, Gary Mostrum, Vicki Kennedy, Gail Elder, Valerie Smutko, Jason Meadows, Missy, Penny, & Henry, Lisa & Ty Hauschild, Bishop Pedro Suarez, Pastor Courtney Erzkus and family, Ralph Burson, Luanne Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Pat Fredell, Len and Nancy Sagnella, the family and friends of Rosemary Collins and Ethan Burgess, and all those suffering from natural disasters [including all those impacted by COVID-19 and other natural disasters], violence, & terror, and the family & friends of the 350,000+ people in the US & the 1.84 million+ people worldwide who have died from COVID-19). Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Worship Leader: Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

OFFERING

Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at GraceCLW.com (look for the "Donate" button), or (for now) by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. You can fill out your attendance form on our website as well.

OFFERING PRAYER

Prayer Leader: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Worship Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

Congregation: 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.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Worship Leader: Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

Congregation: Amen.

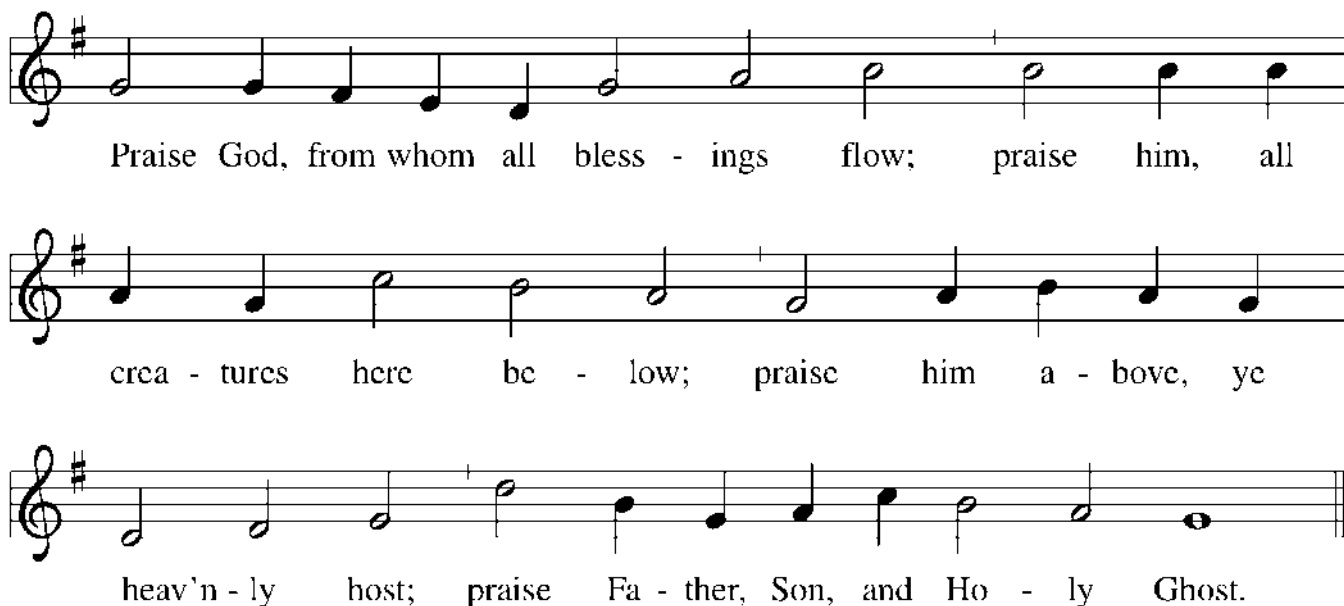
BLESSING

Worship Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace .

Congregation: Amen.

SENDING SONG

The Doxology



The musical notation consists of three staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The first staff contains the lyrics: "Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all". The second staff contains: "crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye". The third staff contains: "heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost." The music ends with a double bar line.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711

Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

DISMISSAL

Pastor: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

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