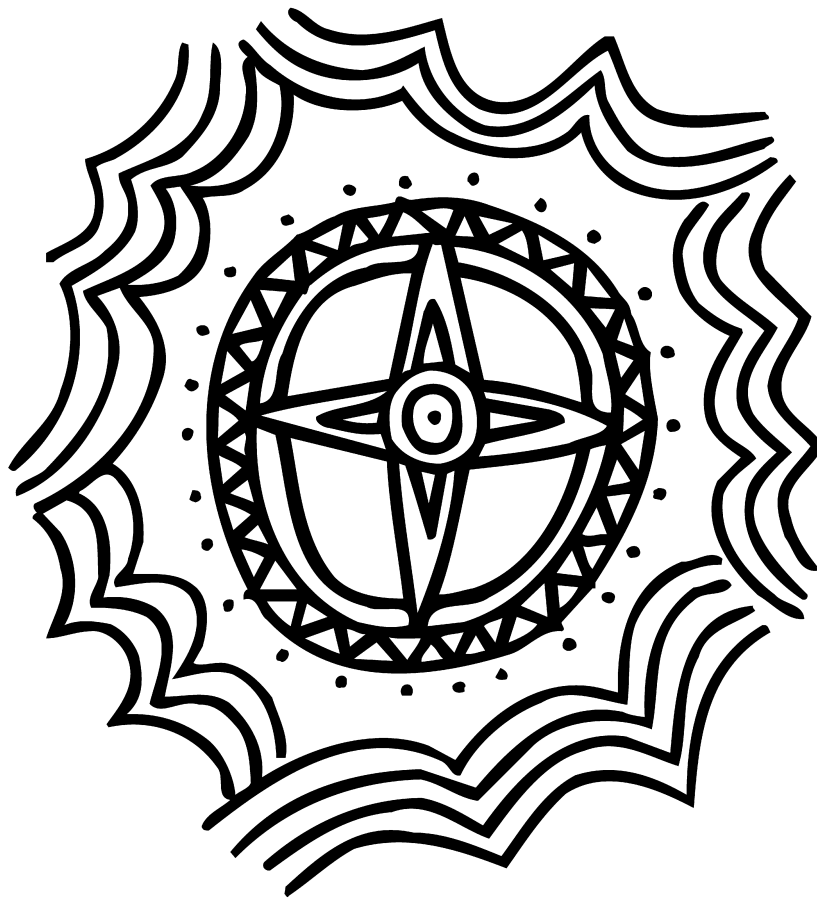


# *2nd Sunday of Christmas*

*January 3, 2020*



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

727-446-5026  
[office@GraceCLW.com](mailto: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. We have closed the Sanctuary to the general public amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. 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](http://GraceCLW.com)

# SERVICE OF THE WORD

GATHERING HYMN

*Away in a Manger*

verses 1 & 3



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

## APOSTOLIC 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: Let us pray together the Prayer of the Day.

**Congregation: 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. Amen.**

## FIRST READING

**Jeremiah 31:7-14**

Introduction to the Lesson: *God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gifts of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.*

Reader: <sup>2</sup>**T**hus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,  
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;  
proclaim, give praise, and say,  
“Save, O LORD, your people,  
the remnant of Israel.”

<sup>8</sup>See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,  
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,  
among them the blind and the lame,  
those with child and those in labor, together;  
a great company, they shall return here.

<sup>9</sup>With weeping they shall come,  
and with consolations I will lead them back,  
I will let them walk by brooks of water,  
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;  
for I have become a father to Israel,  
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

<sup>10</sup>Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,  
and declare it in the coastlands far away;  
say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him,

and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.”

<sup>11</sup>For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,  
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

<sup>12</sup>They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,  
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,  
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
and over the young of the flock and the herd;  
their life shall become like a watered garden,  
and they shall never languish again.

<sup>13</sup>Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,  
and the young men and the old shall be merry.

I will turn their mourning into joy,  
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

<sup>14</sup>I will give the priests their fill of fatness,  
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,  
says the LORD.

*After the reading...*

Reader: The word of the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

## **SECOND 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: <sup>3</sup>**B**lessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup>just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup>He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup>that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup>he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, <sup>10</sup>as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup>In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, <sup>12</sup>so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup>In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked

with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; <sup>14</sup>this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of 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 in the 1st chapter.

**Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.**

Worship Leader: <sup>1</sup>**I**n the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup>(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") <sup>16</sup>From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup>The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who 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

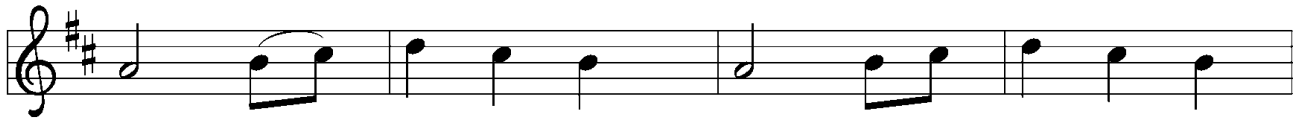
### HYMN OF THE DAY *The First Noel vs. 1 & 2*



1	The	first	No - el	the	an - gel	did	say	was	to
2	They	look - ed	up	and	saw . .	a	star	shin - ing	
3	And	by	the	light	of	that . .	same	star	three . .
4	This	star	drew	near	to	the . .	north - west,	o'er . .	
5	Then	en - tered	in	those	wise . .	men	three,	full . .	



cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where  
in . . . the east . . . be - yond . . . them far; and to the  
wise . . . men came . . . from coun - try far; to seek for a  
Beth - le - hem . . . it took . . . its rest; and there it  
rev - 'rent - ly . . . up - on . . . their knee, and of - fered



they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's  
earth it gave . . . great light, and . . . so it con -  
king was their . . . in - tent, and to fol - low the  
did both stop . . . and stay right . . . o - ver the  
there in his . . . pres - ence their . . . gold, . . . . and

*Refrain*



night that was so deep.  
tin-ued both day and night.  
star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -  
place where Je - sus lay.  
myrrh, and frank - in - cense.



el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

Text: English traditional

Music: THE FIRST NOWELL, English traditional

## APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Worship Leader: Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

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 bring together heaven and earth. All creation testifies to your splendor. Hold the ecosystems of this earth in delicate balance, from coastlands to farmlands, forests to wetlands, deserts to rainforests. Show us new ways to live in harmony with the world around us. 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, Lisa & Ty Hauschild, Bishop Pedro Suarez, Pastor Courtney Erzkus and family, Ralph Burson, Ellen Duncan, Luanne Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Seve Chacon, Pat Fredell, Skylar Favos, Marcos de Souza Lima, Maria de Nazare & Michele Rios, Steve Murray and his mom, the family and friends of Ethan Burgess, and all those suffering from natural disasters [including all those affected by COVID-19; and Western wildfires], from violence, & terror, and the family & friends of the 331,000+ people in the US & the 1,600,000+ people worldwide who have died from COVID-19). Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: You come to us in the beauty of darkness and of light. Bring justice and reconciliation to communities divided by oppressions and misuse of power. Guide us to speak holy words of advocacy and truth. Help us to honor your image in one another. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Prayer Leader: You turn our mourning into joy. We give thanks for those who have died in faith, especially those resting within our Memorial Garden. With all the saints, give us our inheritance in Christ. In the fullness of time, gather us all together in your mercy. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Worship Leader: Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.


**Congregation: Amen.**

## **OFFERING**

*Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at [GraceCLW.com](http://GraceCLW.com) (look for the “Donate” button), or 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 also fill out your attendance form on our website.***

## OFFERTORY

### *Create in Me a Clean Heart*



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right  
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take  
not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of  
your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923

Music © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

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## OFFERING PRAYER

Prayer Leader: Gracious God, you came to us as one unknown, bringing joy and salvation to the earth. Nourish us with your light and your Word, that with all who welcome your birth we may proclaim your peace, revealed in Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**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 LIGHT AND THE WORD

Worship Leader: The Lord be with you.

**Congregation: And also with you.**

Worship Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**Congregation: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Worship Leader: We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning you called light into being, and you set light in the sky to govern night and day. In a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night you led your people into freedom. Enlighten our darkness by the light of your Christ: 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: Almighty God, who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary, proclaimed joy through the angels, sent the shepherds with good news, and led the magi by a star, bless you this day † through the Word made flesh.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## SENDING CAROL

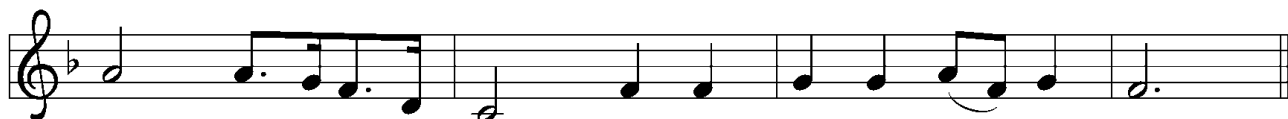
### *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

*vs. 1 & 2*

*Refrain*



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born;

*Refrain*



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.  
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872–1925, stanzas, alt.

Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

## **DISMISSAL**

Worship Leader: For us a child is born; for us a son is given! 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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