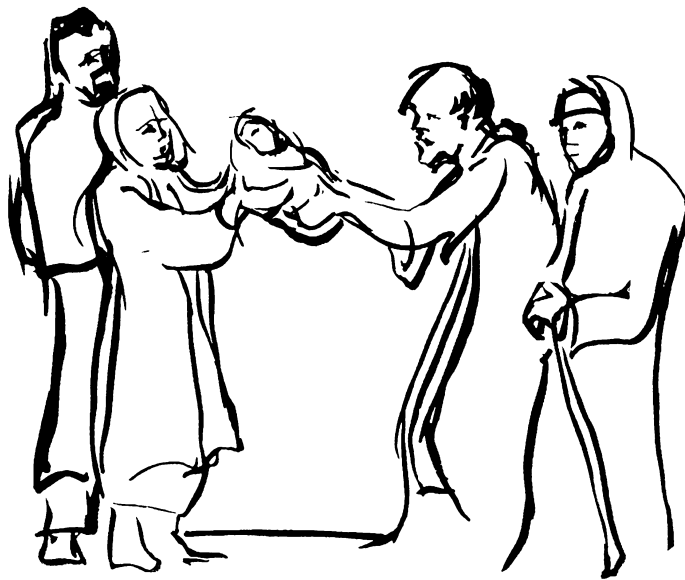


# *1st Sunday of Christmas*

## *December 31, 2023*



1812 North Highland Avenue

Clearwater, Florida 33755

Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

727-446-5026

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Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

Some practical things for you to know:

**Children:** All children, even those who are noisy, upset, or otherwise discombobulated, are always welcome here!

**Restrooms** are located to the left out of the doors you entered in to the narthex or lobby; ushers can further direct you.

**Holy Communion:** All baptized Christians are welcome to the Lord's Table. Our ushers will guide you.

## THE ORDER OF OUR WORSHIP

### PRELUDE

*We stand as we are able.*

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, the Word made flesh, our life and our salvation.

**Congregation: Amen.**

Pastor: Trusting the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Pastor: God of life,

**Congregation: you promise good news of great joy for all people, and call us to be messengers of your peace. We confess that too often we hoard our joy, our resources, and our security. We nurture conflict and build barriers. We neglect the needs of our neighbors and ignore the groaning of creation. Have mercy on us. Where we are self-centered, open our hearts. Where we are reluctant, give us courage. Where we are cynical, restore our trust. Renew us with your grace and give us again the hope of eternal life in you.**

Pastor: Hear the good news: We are children of God and heirs of God's promises through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In ☩ Jesus we are forgiven and redeemed. Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth shall know the salvation of God. **Congregation: Amen.**

### GATHERING HYMN

*Angels, from the Realms of Glory*

ELW 275 vs. 1-3

### GREETING

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

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Congregation: Amen.**

*We sit.*

## FIRST READING

**Isaiah 61:10—62:3**

*To the people who returned to Jerusalem after the exile, the prophet proclaims that God's salvation will fully come to pass. Jerusalem will become a shining light to the nations and righteousness and praise will spring up as surely as the earth puts forth vegetation.*

<sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,  
my whole being shall exult in my God;  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

<sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.

<sup>62:1</sup>For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,  
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,  
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,  
and her salvation like a burning torch.

<sup>2</sup>The nations shall see your vindication,  
and all the kings your glory;  
and you shall be called by a new name  
that the mouth of the LORD will give.

<sup>3</sup>You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,  
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

The reading is concluded:

The word of the Lord. **Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

## SECOND READING

**Galatians 4:4-7**

*Paul seeks to show the Galatians that the purpose of Christ's birth was to liberate us from the law's condemnation so that we would be fully adopted into God's family as beloved children.*

<sup>4</sup>When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,  
<sup>5</sup>in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as

children. <sup>6</sup>And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” <sup>7</sup>So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

The reading is concluded:

The word of the Lord. **Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

*We stand.*

### ALLELUIA VERSE



Music: Caribbean traditional

### GOSPEL

#### Luke 2:22-40

*Luke's narrative continues with stories that emphasize Jesus' connection to Judaism. His family is devout in its observance of the law, and Jesus himself is recognized as one who will bring glory to Israel.*

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to Luke in the 2nd chapter.

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

<sup>22</sup>When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup>(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), <sup>24</sup>and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

<sup>25</sup>Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. <sup>26</sup>It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the

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 dreams of

all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble

with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980

Music: Ronald A. Nelson, b. 1927

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## OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. **Congregation: Amen.**

## DIALOGUE

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**Congregation: And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

**Congregation: We lift them to the Lord.**

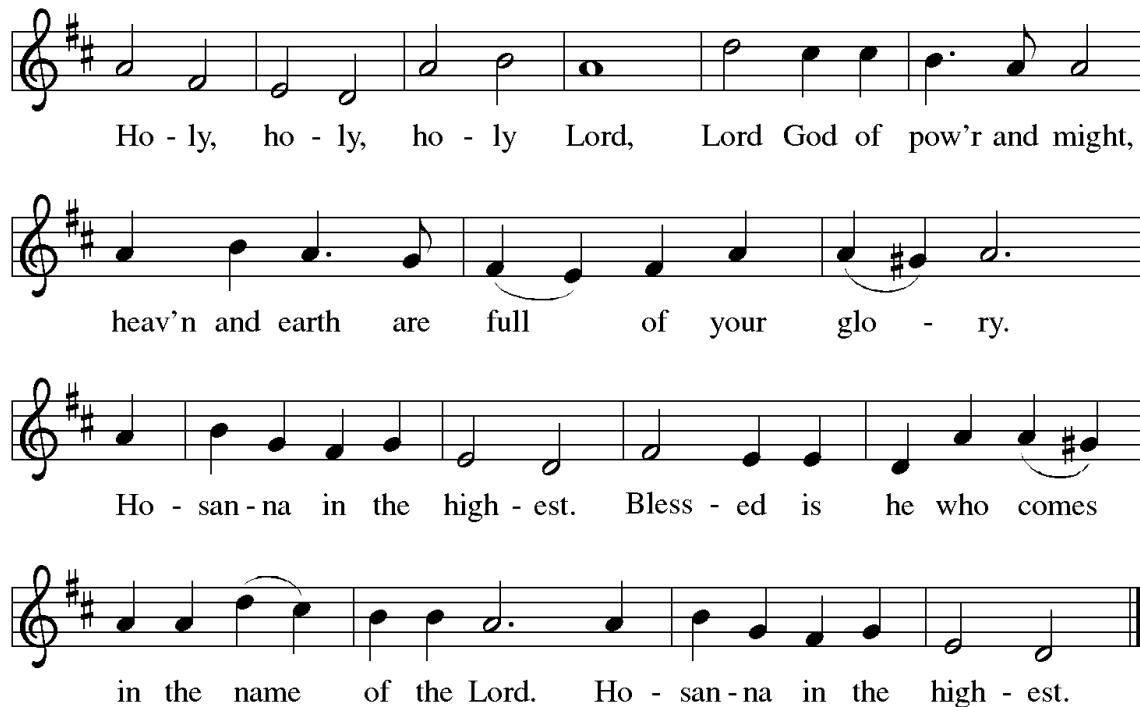
Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

## PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant

vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.  
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.

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Pastor: Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

versuchung, sondern erlöse  
uns Von dem Bösen.  
Denn dein ist das Reich, Und die Kraft,  
und die Herrlichkeit in Ewigkeit. Amen.

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever **Congregation: Amen.**

### LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in whichever language is

**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.**

**Vater unser im Himmel,  
Geheiligt werde dein Name.  
Dein Reich komme,  
Dein Wille geschehe,  
wie im Himmel, so auf Erden.**

**Unser tägliches Brot gib uns heute;  
Und vergib uns unsere Schuld,  
Wie auch wir vergeben unsern Schuldigern.**

**Und führe uns nicht in Versuchung,  
sondern erlöse uns von dem Bösen.  
Denn dein ist das Reich, und die Kraft,  
und die Herrlichkeit in Ewigkeit. Amen.**

**Padre nuestro, que estás en el cielo,  
santificado sea tu Nombre;  
venga a nosotros tu reino;  
hágase tu voluntad  
en la tierra como en el cielo.  
Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día;  
perdona nuestras ofensas, como también**

**nosotros perdonamos  
a los que nos ofenden;  
no nos dejes caer en la tentación,  
y libranos del mal.  
Porque tuyo es el reino, el Poder,  
y la gloria por los siglos de los siglos.  
Amén.**

closest to our hearts.







Text: Luke 23:42; Taizé Community

Music: REMEMBER ME, Jacques Berthier, 1923–1994

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*We Sit*

**COMMUNION SONG**

*Jesus, Remember Me*

ELW 616

*After all have receive Communion, we stand.*

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Prayer Leader: Let us pray. God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace.

Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Congregation: Amen.**

### **SENDING OF COMMUNION**

Pastor: Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are sick, homebound, or imprisoned. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### **BLESSING**

Pastor: God bless you and keep you, + Jesus grant you grace and truth, and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever.

**Congregation: Amen.**

**SENDING SONG**

*What Child Is This*

ELW 296

**SHARING OF PEACE & DISMISSAL**

**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.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt., sts. 1–3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4  
Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813–1879

Together we have heard God's Word and shared in the Lord's Supper, we have given and have been forgiven. The peace of the Lord be with you all. **Congregation: And also with you.**

Now as this service of worship is ending, this week's service to the world is beginning! Christ

## Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath  
2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in  
3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the  
4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man

sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as  
mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the  
air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the  
woe; O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who

seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -  
vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she  
dark-ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from  
dost our weak - ness know: bring us at length, we pray, to

mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.  
bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.  
sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.  
the bright courts of heav - en and in - to end - less day.

Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851–1934, sts. 1–2; Harriet R. Krauth, 1845–1925, st. 3; John C. Mattes, 1876–1948, st. 4  
Music: ES IST EIN ROS, *Alte catholische geistliche Kirchengesänge*, Köln, 1599

the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim this good news. **Congregation: Thanks be to God!**

## What Child Is This



- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?
- 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - 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?  
Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead - 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;  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
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!  
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898

Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

***Light refreshments are served after the church service. Please come join us for cookies and conversation.***

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