

SPIRIT OF GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

December 2-3, 2023

1st Sunday of Advent

Ministers: Every Member of Spirit of Grace

Pastor Scott Hackler – Pastor Gary E Benson

OUR MISSION

Proclaiming God's Love, God's Promises,
and the Abundant Life

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENT

INVOCATION

We worship in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit!

Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Praise to you, O God, our salvation who is near. You hold us in our waiting and keep us awake to the world. You show up in our lives at unexpected times. Bless us as we light this candle to keep vigil for your arrival. We trust that even though we do not know the day or the hour, you hurry to gather all people to your peace.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN "Blessed Assurance!"

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! / Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine! / Heir of salvation, purchase of God, / born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

Refrain

This is my story, this is my song, / praising my Savior, all the day long: / this is my story, this is my song, / praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight, / visions of rapture now burst on my sight; / angels descending bring from above / echoes of mercy, whispers of love. *Refrain*

Perfect submission, all is at rest; / I in my Savior am happy and blest, / watching and waiting, looking above, / filled with his goodness, lost in his love. *Refrain*

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CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are not awake for you. We are often not faithful in using your gifts. We forget the least of our siblings and to often do not see your beautiful image in one another. We are infected by sin that divides your beloved community. Open our hearts to your coming, open our eyes to see you in our neighbor, open our hands to serve your creation. Amen.

Beloved, we are God's children, and Jesus, our Beloved, opens the door to us. Through Jesus you are forgiven, by Jesus you are welcome, in Jesus you are called to rejoice! Let us live in the promises prepared for us from the foundation of the world.

Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE "Christ, Be Our Light"

Christ, be our light! / Shine in our hearts. / Shine through the darkness. / Christ, be our light! / Shine in Your church gathered today.

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PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

ANTHEM "It is Well"

Joyful Spirit Singers

FIRST READING: Isaiah 64:1-9

¹O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence — ²as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil — to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! ³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.⁴From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. ⁵You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. ⁶We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. ⁷There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. ⁸Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. ⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

¹⁵I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of

wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ²⁰God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. ²²And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Word of God, word of life
Thanks be to God!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? / You have the words of eternal life. /
Alleluia! Alleluia!

THE GOSPEL Mark 13:24-37

[Jesus said:] ²⁴In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ²⁸From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³²But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

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

SERMON

"Remembrance and Anticipation"

Pastor Gary Benson

HYMN OF THE DAY "View the Present Through the Promise"

Tune: Go, My Children, with My Blessing

View the present through the promise, Christ will come again. / Trust despite the deepening darkness, Christ will come again. / Lift the world above its grieving through your watching and believing / in the hope past hope's conceiving: Christ will come again.

Probe the present with the promise, Christ will come again. / Let your daily actions witness, Christ will come again. / Let your loving and your giving and your justice and forgiving / be a sign to all the living: Christ will come again.

Match the present to the promise, Christ will come again. / Make this hope your guiding premise, Christ will come again. / Pattern all your calculating and the world you are creating / to the advent you are waiting: Christ will come again.

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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 into hell. 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

After each petition: Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

OFFERING PRAYER

God our provider,

by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION

"Come to the Table of Mercy"

Come to the table of mercy, / prepared with the wine and the bread. / All who are hungry and thirsty, / come, and your souls will be fed. / Come at the Lord's

invitation; / receive from his nail-scarred hand. / Eat of the bread of salvation; / drink of the blood of the Lamb.

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WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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.

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

DISTRIBUTION

BLESSING AND PRAYER

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

Amen.

Generous God,

in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

BENEDICTION

The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit remain upon you now and forever.

Amen.

CHRISTMAS CAROL "It Came Upon A Midnight."

It came upon the midnight clear, / that glorious song of old, / from angels bending
near the earth / to touch their harps of gold: / "Peace on the earth, good will to
all, / from heav'n's all-gracious king." / The world in solemn stillness lay / to hear
the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come / with peaceful wings unfurled, / and still
their heav'nly music floats / o'er all the weary world. / Above its sad and lowly
plains / they bend on hov'ring wing, / and ever o'er its babel sounds / the blessed
angels sing.

And you, beneath life's crushing load, / whose forms are bending low, / who toil
along the climbing way / with painful steps and slow: / look now, for glad and
golden hours / come swiftly on the wing; / oh, rest beside the weary road / and
hear the angels sing!

For lo! The days are hast'ning on, / by prophets seen of old, / when with the ever-
circling years / shall come the time foretold, / when peace shall over all the
earth / its ancient splendors fling, / and all the world give back the song / which
now the angels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876. Public domain.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.
Thanks be to God.

Announcements & Upcoming Events

Visitors, Guests and Friends! Let us know that you are here by using this QR code. We are so happy that you have joined us in worship.



WELCOME SESSIONS are an opportunity for new and long-time visitors to learn why our church exists and how you can be more connected and committed to our ministry. You will meet other prospective members, learn about our mission and vision, and our various ministries. Our next Welcome Session is Monday, December 4th, from 10am - noon. So that we may have sufficient materials, please call the church office (623-977-6000, ext. 100) to register. Hope to see you there!

2024 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPE PACKETS – For those who have Contribution Envelopes assigned to them, they will be available for pick-up beginning **December 3rd**

and 4th in the Fellowship Hall. If you no longer want envelopes, please notify Merly in the office. If you did not pick-up or use your 2023 envelopes, the 2024 envelopes will not be issued, *however, if you still want them for next year*, please notify Merly in the office (email: Merly@spiritofgrace.com or 623-977-6000, ext. 100).

INTERESTED IN CPR TRAINING? - Contact Faith Community Nurse Deborah Frusciano at 623-977-6000, ext. 140 or via email: deborah@spiritofgrace.com.

GRIEFSHARE WILL RESUME on Thursdays, January 25th to April 18th from 10:00am - 11:30am in the Fellowship Hall.

ADVENT GIVING TREE 2023 GIFT CARD COLLECTION:

For this year's Advent Giving Tree, we will once again be sharing the light and hope of Advent with Military Families at Luke Air Force Base. We are collecting gift cards and Christmas cards to give to the families. Thank you for your continued support of the Advent Giving Tree. Your prayers and generosity show our Military Families how much their service and sacrifice mean to our congregation. Please bring gift cards and Christmas cards by December 12. For further information Contact Deborah 623-977-6000 ext 140 or 602-909-8369 cell.

SPRING BASEBALL - The Fellowship Team has obtained 125 reserved tickets in the Legion's Section of the Surprise Stadium for the March 7th baseball game between AZ Diamondbacks and TX Rangers. The cost of \$52 includes food and drink. Tickets will go on sale in lobby Dec 2 & 3. Checks only.

CAROLING/SOUP SUPPER - December 10th at 2:00pm. Cost \$10. Tickets are available today in the lobby. Checks only.

AVAILABLE NOW IN SOG'S LIBRARY - Copies of Pastor Vern Anderson's 2016 presentations on the Quran and the three divisions of Muslim people in the world. (Pastor Vern is a former SOG Senior Pastor.) The CDs are now available for check out.

SPIRIT OF GRACE MEN'S BREAFAST meets Tuesday December 19 at 8am. Don't forget to sign up in the lobby.

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION BREAKFAST - Our 25th Anniversary Celebration is Sunday, January 14 Tickets are on sales www.spiritofgrace.com. The cost of the tickets is \$25. Thank you for all the generous contributions to support the 25th anniversary celebration.

GIFTS OF HOPE—Did you hear Kafika House's Founder Sarah Rejman share her gratitude for our continued support when she visited Spirit of Grace on Nov. 4th and 5th? Sarah spoke of children brought to Kafika House (*formerly known as The Plaster House*) from villages in northern Tanzania with disabilities such as cleft lip, burn scar contractions, clubfoot and bent legs. There they received life-changing corrective surgery and

rehabilitation care. Learn how you can help with Gifts #1, #4, #6 listed in the brochure available at the Gifts of Hope table in the Narthex.

SPIRIT OF GRACE CALENDAR
December 2 – December 10

Saturday, December 2

5:00 pm Worship Service

Sunday, December 3

9:00 am Worship Service

Monday, December 4

10:00am Welcome Session

Tuesday, December 5

9:00 Staff Meeting

9:00 am Marketing Outreach

12:00 pm Counseling Ministry

*By appointment only

with Dr Joe Dramise

3:00 pm Chimes Rehearsal

4:15 pm Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, December 6

9:00 am Counseling Ministry*

*By appointment only

with Dr Joe Dramise

Thursday, December 7

1:00 pm Pastor's Bible Study

with WELCA Leaders

Friday, December 8

9:00 am Christmas Decorating

Saturday, December 9

5:00 pm Worship Service

Sunday, December 10

9:00 am Worship Service

1:00 pm Caroling soup supper.

Grace Notes Newsletter- deadline