

SPIRIT OF GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

**December 30-31, 2023
First Sunday of Christmas**

**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.

CALL TO WORSHIP (*adapted from Psalm 148*)

Praise God from the heavens!

Praise Him from the skies above!

Praise God, angels and all the hosts of heaven!

Praise Him, sun and moon, and shining stars!

Praise God, all creatures great and small,

Praise Him, animals and birds, reptiles and fish!

Praise God, kings of the earth and people everywhere,

Praise Him, men and women, young and old!

Let all the earth bring praise to the Lord,
at whose word creation came into being.

We gather to praise and worship our God!

GATHERING HYMN "What Child is This"

What child is this, who, laid to rest, / on Mary's lap is sleeping? / Whom angels
greet with anthems sweet / while shepherds watch are keeping? / This, this is
Christ the king, / whom shepherds guard and angels sing; / haste, haste to bring
him laud, / the babe, the son of Mary!

Why lies he in such mean estate / where ox and ass are feeding? / Good Christian,
fear; for sinners here / the silent Word is pleading. / Nails, spear shall pierce him
through, / the cross be borne for me, for you; / hail, hail the Word made flesh, /
the babe, the son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; / come, peasant, king, to own him. / The
King of kings salvation brings; / let loving hearts enthrone him. / Raise, raise the
song on high, / the virgin sings her lullaby; / joy, joy, for Christ is born, / the
babe, the son of Mary!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898. Public Domain.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Trusting the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior, let us confess our sin.

God of life,

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. Amen.

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.

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.

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957; Text & music (c) 1993 Bernadette Farrell, admin. OCP Publications. All rights reserved. Reprinted under ONE LICENSE A-706001.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

Amen.

ANTHEM

Joyful Spirit Singers

FIRST READING: Galatians 4:4-7

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

Word of God, word of life

Thanks be to God!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, and let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Alleluia. (Col. 3:15, 16)

THE GOSPEL Luke 2:22-40

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." ²⁵Now 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. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; ³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."³³And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed — and a sword will pierce your own soul too."³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty- four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

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

SERMON

"12 Days! Really?"

Pastor Scott Hackler

HYMN OF THE DAY "In His Temple Now Behold Him"

In his temple now behold him, / see the long-expected Lord; / ancient prophets
had foretold him, / God has now fulfilled his word. / Now to praise him, his
redeemed / shall break forth with one accord.

In the arms of her who bore him, / virgin pure, behold him lie, / while his aged
saints adore him, / ere in perfect faith they die. / Alleluia! Alleluia! / Lo, the
incarnate God Most High!

Jesus, by your presentation, / when they blest you, weak and poor, / make us see your great salvation, / seal us with your promise sure; / and present us, in your glory, / to your Father, cleansed and pure.

Text: Henry J. Pye, 1825-1903, alt. Public Domain.

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: Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

OFFERING PRAYER

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. 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.

Text: Claire Cloninger, b. 1942. Text © 1991 Integrity's Hosanna! Music (ASCAP) c/o Integrity Media, Inc., 1000 Cody Road, Mobile, AL 36695; Juniper Landing Music (admin. Word Music); and Word Music (ASCAP). Reprinted under ONE LICENSE A-706001.

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.

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.

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.

CLOSING HYMN "The Bells of Christmas."

The bells of Christmas chime once more; / the heav'nly guest is at the door. / He comes to earthly dwellings still / with new year gifts of peace, good will.

This world, though wide and far outspread, / could scarcely find for you a bed. / Your cradle was a manger stall, / no pearl nor silk nor kingly hall.

Now let us go with quiet mind, / the swaddled babe with shepherds find, / to gaze on him who gladdens them, / the loveliest flow'r of / Jesse's stem.

Oh, join with me, in gladness sing, / to keep our Christmas with our king, / until our song, from loving souls, / like rushing mighty water rolls!

Text: Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig, 1783-1872; tr. Charles Porterfield Krauth, 1823-1883, alt. Public Domain.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

SERVING AS WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Choir Director	Ken Carnes
Choir Accompanist	Sandy Hobbs
Saturday Scripture Reader	Bekki Hamilton
Sunday Scripture Reader	Bekki Hamilton
Saturday Usher Coordinator	Glenda Jones
Sunday Usher Coordinator	Rich Frusciano
Audio/Lighting	Jerry Huston

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 about our church and how you can be more connected and committed to our ministry. You will meet other prospective members, learn about our vision, mission and values, and our various ministries. Our next Welcome Session is Monday, February 5th 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 – “Thank You!” to all those who have picked up their 2024 Contribution Envelopes! For those who have not yet picked up their Envelopes for next year, they are on a table in the Fellowship Hall. Please Note: If you did not pick up or use your 2023 envelopes, the 2024 envelopes have not been issued. *However*, if you still want them for next year, please notify Merly in the office Merly@spiritofgrace.com or 623-977-6000, ext. 100).

FIRST SUNDAY FOOD BANK DONATION

Bring your financial donations for the Valley View Community Food Bank next Sunday. *“And if you offer yourself to the hungry and satisfy the need of the afflicted, then your light will rise in darkness, and your gloom will become like midday.”* Isaiah 58:10.

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

SPRING BASEBALL - The March 7 baseball tickets for the AZ Diamondbacks and the Texas Rangers will only be available next weekend in the narthex. After that the remaining unsold tickets must be returned to the ballpark. Cost: \$52 includes meal & drink and reserved seating in the Legion's Section

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION - Our 25th Anniversary Celebration is Sunday, January 14, 2024. Just two weeks until our Anniversary Celebration. You are invited to meet our Grand Canyon Synod Bishop, Rev. Deborah Hutterer and our current and former Pastors and Associate Pastors at 9:00 am in the Narthex. The worship service is at 9:30am. If you did not get a ticket for the Anniversary Breakfast return for the Anniversary Celebration Program in the Sanctuary at 11:30am. Bring your family and friends to this special day.

GIFTS OF HOPE— As 2023 draws to a close, we reflect on events of the past year and on our blessings. We also think about other parts of the world and how we can help others. You still have time to donate to Gifts of Hope for Healthcare (Gifts #1,2,3,4), Education (#5,6) or Nutrition (#7,8,9,10) in African countries. Healthcare at Kafika House, School Lunches for Refugee and Displaced Children, and Scholarships for Tanzanian Medical Students were given special emphasis this year. Donations can be given this weekend and received in the church office until January 5th, 2024, when our Gifts of Hope program ends. We greatly appreciate your continued support and generous giving!

GET READY FOR ALL THAT JAZZ — The All-Stars Big Band will be jazzing it up with the theme of Mardi Gras and New Orleans jazz for our February 4 Fellowship event. The concert will be held in the sanctuary from 2:30-3:30 pm, followed by a Mardi Gras dessert in Cafe Grace. Cost \$5. Tickets will go on sale in the narthex next weekend Jan 6 & 7!

CHOIR

If there are those who have been in choir, or those who would like to sing just once, I would like to encourage you to think about singing with us for the upcoming church anniversary celebration. Start attending the first Tuesday after the New Year. Rehearsal begins at 4:15 pm. We will extend the rehearsals until 5:45. Choir Director Ken Carnes.

The Middle East – What's Going on There? Wednesdays, January 10th & 17th, 10-11 a.m. Winnie Fritz, a member of Spirit of Grace, will be presenting on the geography, culture, history, & current events. Winnie has lived in the Middle East all or part of every year for 51 years. Come and learn.

SPIRIT OF GRACE CALENDAR
December 30 – January 7

Saturday, December 30

5:00 pm Worship Service

Sunday, December 31

9:00 am Worship Service

Monday, January 1

New Years Day - Office closed

Tuesday, January 2

12:00 pm Counseling Ministry

*By appointment only

with Dr Joe Dramise

3:00 pm Chimes Rehearsal

4:15 pm Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, January 3

9:00 am Counseling Ministry*

*By appointment only

with Dr Joe Dramise

Thursday, January 4

Friday, January 5

Saturday, January 6

5:00 pm Worship Service

Sunday, January 7

9:00 am Worship Service