

# A SERVICE OF THE WORD

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Children's Christmas Pageant: Don't Be Afraid

December 20, 2020

9:00 a.m.

A Hunger Beyond Food (inspired by Luke 1:47-55)

By Sara Miles

At the heart of Christianity is a power that continues to speak to and transform us.

As I found to my surprise and alarm, it could speak even to me:

not in the sappy, Jesus-and-cookies tone of mild-mannered liberal Christianity,  
or the blustering, blaming hellfire of the religious right.

What I heard, and continue to hear,

is a voice that can crack religious and political convictions open,  
that advocates for the least qualified, least official, least likely;  
that upsets the established order and makes a joke of certainty.

It proclaims against reason

that the hungry will be fed, that those cast down will be raised up,  
and that all things, including my own failures, are being made new.

It offers food without exception to the worthy and unworthy, the screwed-up and pious,  
and then commands everyone to do the same.

**PRE-SERVICE**

**Selections from 2019 Cantata**

**OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER**

Christmas Eve Worship Services

Epiphany Candle lighting- video submissions needed!

**PRELUDE**

**"Mary, Did You Know?"**

Don Lewellen

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

(inspired by Psalm 146 and Luke 1:46-56)

Our souls proclaim your greatness, O God.

**And our spirits rejoice in you.**

We will praise you as long as we live.

**We will sing praises to you our whole lives long.**

We will not trust in the powerful of this world,

**But will trust in you—Creator of heaven and earth,**

the One who gives food to the hungry,

**the One who enacts justice for the oppressed.**

Our souls proclaim your greatness, O God

**As we worship you in this place.**

## OPENING PRAYER

Holy God of Peace

We rejoice in the reality of who you are. We live within the joy of your love for us.  
Our contentment comes and goes. Our happiness rises and falls -  
Our feelings depend upon our circumstances, our physical health, our brain chemistry.  
But our deeper joy and peace are rooted in knowing who we are as your beloved children.  
And we give you thanks. Amen.

## HYMN OF PREPARATION

Gail Trenholm

**"Waiting for You"**

Christopher Grundy

We are waiting for you, knowing that you always abide  
We are waking to your presence  
And our hearts are open wide..... Open wide

## ADVENT PRAYER

### THE 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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

## RESPONSE

**"Waiting for You"**

Christopher Grundy

We are waiting for you, knowing that you always abide  
We are waking to your presence  
And our hearts are open wide..... Open wide

## LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE: PEACE

Abby, Brianna, and Leona Brixius

## RESPONSE

**"Light Shines in the Darkness"**

*Olson & Peterson*

*(refrain)*

Oh the light shines in the darkness, and the light will not be overcome  
In this world broken and scattered, the light will not be overcome

As our lives are turning – and our hearts are yearning  
through the days of hurting – deep in the night, still the flame burns bright. (refrain)

Tears throughout creation – torn apart relations  
wounds across the nations – hope may seem gone, but the flame burns on. (refrain)

**Psalm 27:1-5, 11-14**

**Ella Schroeder**

Psalm 27 is a psalm of encouragement to trust in God. Even when we feel afraid or anxious about things in this world, the psalmist reminds us to trust that ultimately, God will protect us and guide us through. With faith in God, we do not need to be afraid. Please pray with me.....

The Lord is my light and my salvation. Should I fear anyone?

**The Lord is a fortress protecting my life. Should I be frightened of anything?**

When evildoers come at me trying to eat me up—

it's they, my foes and my enemies, who stumble and fall!

**If an army camps against me, my heart won't be afraid.**

If war comes up against me, I will continue to trust in this:

**I have asked one thing from the Lord—it's all I seek:**

to live in the Lord's house all the days of my life, seeing the Lord's beauty and constantly adoring the Lord's temple.

**Because the Lord will shelter me in God's own dwelling during troubling times;**

**The Lord will hide me in a secret place in God's own tent;**

**God will set me up high, safe on a rock.**

Lord, teach me your way; because of my opponents, lead me on a good path.

**Don't give me over to the desires of my enemies, because false witnesses and violent accusers have taken their stand against me.**

But I have sure faith that I will experience the Lord's goodness in the land of the living!

**Hope in the Lord!**

Be strong! Let your heart take courage!

**Hope in the Lord!**

**A READING FROM THE GOSPEL**

**Luke 1:26-56**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the

mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said,  
"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

**HYMN**

**"Mary Gladly Told Her Cousin"**

TUNE: IRBY 8.7.8.7.7.7 ("Once in Royal David's City")

**Mary gladly told her cousin, "Praise the Lord! My spirit sings!"  
Young and humble, she'd been chosen! God was surely changing things!  
God of love, her words ring true As we sing her prayer to you:**

**"Now my soul is gladly singing At the greatness of the Lord.  
I rejoice, for God is bringing His salvation to the world.  
All who live will say I'm blest Even in my lowliness.**

**"God is mighty, just and holy, And he's done great things for me.  
Those who fear him know the mercy That God gives us endlessly.  
Mighty ones are brought down low; Lowly ones find blessings flow.**

**"God has filled the poor and hungry, And he's sent the rich away.  
God is active here in history, In a real and wondrous way.  
God has promised, and I'm blessed, For I know God's faithfulness."**

## STATEMENT OF FAITH

written by Ann Siddall

Our souls magnify the Lord, and our spirits rejoice in God our Savior,  
for God looks with favor upon us and sees our unrealized potential.

In the tradition of Mary, and all who have said "yes" to God,  
we stand here today, to add our assent to theirs.

Like Mary, we feel overwhelmed;

we wonder if we are worthy, or capable, of following the calling.

Like Mary, we have our questions, and we will not be afraid to ask them.

Like Mary, we will hear and ponder the assurance that God will empower us.

Like Mary we will strive to say - "Let it be with us according to your will."

To whatever God is inviting of us at this time in our lives, and relying on God's grace,  
we say "yes."

## THE OFFERING

This is the final Sunday in Advent. The celebration of Jesus's birth – God's own self coming into the world to be with us, always – is almost upon us. One way we can celebrate this gift from God is by giving back: giving of our time, our talents, our finances, and ourselves, to the work of God in our world. Though physically distant, we come together in one Spirit to offer our gifts of praise and commitment to God and to the work of God's Church.

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Holy One, this Advent season we wait in peace,

And we give in peace.

A peace deeper than our anxiety and fear.

A peace growing from our trust in your loving power.

Receive these generous offerings,

And use them to bring your peace to our world.

Amen.

## CHRISTMAS PAGEANT:

### DON'T BE AFRAID

(from Illustrated Ministry – adapted by Pastor Colie Bettivia for  
the children of Grace Congregational Church, Two Rivers)



### Featuring:

Grown up: Clare Schuette

Kids: Olivia and Cassandra Mancheski

Mary: Josey Allington

Angel Gabe: Ella Schroeder

Elizabeth: Lucy Griffin

Joseph: Shane Kahlenberg

Joseph's Angels: Cadence Smith, Lucas Anderson, and Brynn and Greyson Hampton-Gregory  
Caesar Augustus: Max Loomis  
Angel Messengers: Sidney, Griffin, and Aiden Pietenpol  
Shepherds: Lance Anderson, Jack Backus, Bryan Endries, Landon Kakes, Zaine Mueller, Brooke and Caden O'Connor, Olivia and Joey Reinke, Luke Stodola, Westin, Alaina and Teegan Wallander  
Angel Chorus: Lucas Anderson, Brianna and Ella Basken, Lincoln Bettivia, Jaiden and Trenten Bohman, Leona Brixius, Jennifer and Jessica Christensen, Zoe Coenen, Maddix Gulseth, Khloe and Kambrie Haack, Brynn and Greyson Hampton-Gregory, Maxwell and Jack Hillmer, Anna Loomis, Alyssa Mainwaring, William Mueller, Alaina Novitski, Averick and Alaura Peterson, Colton and Amelia Sayeski, Nora Schroeder, Bailee Seefeldt, Ethan, Isabella and Emmett Shimek, Adalyn Spevacek, Arianna and Landon Stodola  
3 Magi: Caleb Kurth, Dominick Springstube, and Rory Springstube  
King Herod: Jackson Mueller

# DO NOT BE AFRAID

**\*COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION**

**\*POSTLUDE**

**"Good Christian Friends Rejoice!"**

Bill Hampton

Call to Worship adapted from writings by Joanna Harader, and posted on Spacious Faith. <http://spaciousfaith.com/>

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## **GRACE CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**"We are a Christian Community Committed to Love, Service and Growth."**

**2801 Garfield Street, Two Rivers, Wisconsin 54241 (920) 553-1222**

**Website <http://www.graceucc.org>**

**Missionaries:** Mark Knowles and Danielle Murry-Knowles, Serving in Lesotho, Africa

**Ministers:** *All the People of the Congregation*

**Pastor:** *Kim M. Henning*

**Associate Pastor:** *Colie Bettivia*

**Moderator:** *Betty Becker*

**Administrative Assistants:** *Debbie Augustine and Jean Schwalbe*

**Organist/Choir Director:** *Andrea Allington*

**Organist:** *Beverly Barnes Mark*

**Maintenance:** *Michael Timm*

**Sound Board:** *Bruce Suettinger*

**Worship Technology:** *Bill Heinsohn, Bob Randerson, Cal MacAuley*

**Liturgist:** *Cal MacAuley*

## HOSPITALIZED

Nick Meisner was hospitalized at Aurora Medical Center.

## "INSPIRED" BY RACHEL HELD EVANS

Our Monday Adult Study Class will be meeting tomorrow, December 21. We will be studying pp. 51-80 of Rachel Held Evans book, "Inspired" and pages 20-23 from her study guide. Contact [khenning1956k@gmail.com](mailto:khenning1956k@gmail.com) if you would need a study book or if you would like to receive a Zoom link.

## EPIPHANY CANDLE LIGHTING

Cal MacAuley and Pastor Colie are working together to create a video where we will light candles together for Epiphany Sunday. We need help! For instructions, contact Pastor Colie (920-973-5775, [pastorcolie@gmail.com](mailto:pastorcolie@gmail.com)) or watch the instruction video: [https://youtu.be/u4C\\_l7pJCCA](https://youtu.be/u4C_l7pJCCA). Videos need to be submitted by Dec 31.

## ADULT CHOIR

Our adult choir has been meeting online on Wednesdays at 7:15. Our time is spent in fellowship, hymn studies and singing. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Andrea Allington at [romsosa96@gmail.com](mailto:romsosa96@gmail.com). We will resume practices on Wednesday January 6 via zoom and would love to see you there.

## HOPE HOUSE WISH LIST

2021 Planners (Weekly & Monthly), 2021 Calendars, Hand Soap, Bleach, Laundry detergent, Dish Soap, Floor cleaner. Items can be brought directly to Hope House (1000 S. 35<sup>th</sup> St., Manitowoc), Mickey's front porch (2405 Washington St., TR) or to church.

Thank you all for your generosity with our Hope House family. They are doing well in part thanks to all who donated either furniture, household items, Chamber Bucks, toys and games, cash, gift cards and so much more. You have blessed them more than you know. Thank you for your caring hearts.

## QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTIONS – IS IT RIGHT FOR YOU?

A qualified charitable distribution allows you to make a tax free donation from an IRA owned by an individual who is age 70 ½ or over. The distribution would need to be paid directly from the IRA to a qualified charity such as the church. SO....

- If you are 70 ½ year or older
- If you have an IRA which you typically withdraw from to pay your pledge or personal expenses
- Talk with your financial advisor and they will provide you the form to withdraw from your IRA to pay your pledge or church donation directly to the church.
- It is Tax Free for both Federal and State Income Taxes.

## PEOPLE WE WANT TO HOLD IN PRAYER...

Gene Krueger and Bob Stephens are residents at Hamilton Home/Northland Lodge. Ruth Hauboldt is a resident at River House Apartments. Lesley Huffer is at Rivers Bend, & Bruce Huffer is at his home. Marian Duescher is a resident at Harbor View. Florence Luecker is a resident at Magnolia

Meadows. Jean Sutter is with her daughter, Heidi Bender: 880 S. Madison Ave. Pasadena, CA 91106. Nicole Kellner is a resident at Arborview Manor at 1520 Arboretum Drive, Apt. 1120, Oshkosh, WI 54901. Bill Monka is a resident at Tender Reflections. Bonnie Burmeister is living at 2790 Elm Tree Hill, Room 301, Howard, WI; Ginny Posny is a resident at Felician Village.

**OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN**

Bracken Tadych (PFC4 107-1 Lilac Lane, Minot AFB, ND 58704); Jacob Hearley (5350 Berger Street, Stop 1330, Moody AFB GA 31699); MSgt Kevin Allie (PSC37, 19 Naomi Street Magnolie, DE 19962); Gavin and Emily LeGreve (1344 N Lafayette Avenue; Bremerton WA 98312); Hunter Hayes (Air Force, Tucson, AZ); Kaity Pietenpol (Pietenpol-Prueter, Kaitlynn, 4540 Carswell Ave Unit C-9 Nellis AFB NV 89191); Alec Dewane (PVT Dewane, Alec J. B Btry 2-6 ADA BN 2750 Miner Rd. Fort Sill OK 73503); Jimmi & Alex Anderson, 164B Lower Brick Rd., Fort Riley, KS 66442

Please notify the office of additions, changes or corrections to the above lists.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY** today to Allison Gallagher and this week to Colleen Collins, Lana Linzmeier, Connie Steffen, Bruce Suettinger, Olivia Duvall, Jack Goedjen, Holly Pietenpol, Mark Kornely and Nicholas Wagner.

**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY** this week to Scott & Jill DeRosier.

**THIS WEEK AT GRACE**

Thursday	Christmas Eve Service Livestream	4:00pm
	Drive-thru Communion	5:15pm-6:30pm
	Christmas Eve Service Livestream	9:30pm

