

# A SERVICE OF THE WORD

## "First Sunday of Christmas"

December 27, 2020

9:00 a.m.

*The fruit of silence is prayer; the fruit of prayer is faith;  
The fruit of love is service; the fruit of service is peace.  
Let us not use bombs and guns to overcome the world.  
Let us use love and compassion. Mother Teresa*

### PRE-SERVICE

#### OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Eden Seminary Testimonies

Mark Schmitt and Nicole Herda

#### PRELUDE

Holly Pietenpol

"Grown Up Christmas List" by Amy Grant

#### SYMBOLIC ENTRY OF GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT

Kathryn Ruhbusch and Aubry DeRosier

#### CALL TO WORSHIP

John 1:14; Isaiah 9:6-7; Colossians 1:15-20

Greetings to you in the Spirit of the living Jesus Christ. Amen.

Stand amazed you people,

"The Word became flesh and lived among us,  
And we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son."

Stand amazed you people,

"For unto us a child has been born for us, a son given to us,  
Authority rests upon his shoulders and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting father, Prince of Peace.

Stand amazed you people,

and join your voice with mine as we announce what we know to be true:

**Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;  
For in Jesus all things in heaven and on earth were created,  
Things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or power  
---all things have been created through him and for him.  
Jesus himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.  
Jesus is the head of the body, the church;  
He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,  
so that he might come to have first place in everything.  
For in Jesus the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,  
and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things,  
whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of the cross.**

## INVOCATION

**"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"**

(If you are worshiping in the sanctuary, please do not sing.)

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, And with fear and trembling stand;  
Ponder nothing earthly-minded, For with blessing in His hand,  
Christ our God to earth descendeth, Our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary, As of old on earth He stood,  
Lord of lords, in human vesture, In the body and the blood;  
He will give to all the faithful His own self for heav'nly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven Spreads its vanguard on the way,  
As the Light of light descendeth From the realms of endless day,  
That the pow'rs of hell may vanish As the darkness clears away.

At His feet the six-winged seraph, Cherubim with sleepless eye,  
Veil their faces to the presence, As with ceaseless voice they cry:  
"Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Lord Most High!"

## CALL TO PRAYER

It is a good and beautiful thing to come before God in prayer. I invite you to join your voice with mine as we pray.....

## LITANY OF CONFESSION

God, our human vocabulary does not have words sufficient to describe the wonder of our faith. You are the Almighty One, who inhabits eternity; you are the holy One, the Father of mercies; and you are the God of all consolation.

God of grace, save us we pray. We are sinners in need of your love. Save us from hypocrisy, when we say one thing but do another. Save us from pretense, when we project an air of self-importance. And save us, we pray, from self-centered pride, that dreadful disease of thinking and believing that we are self-sufficient onto ourselves. We come to you in this season of the Christ-Child, remembering that you came among us as a human being, as one who took on human flesh, and as one who suffered death---even death on a cross. Help us to rid ourselves of despair, and fill us with holy, divine love born from above. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Give thanks to God, people of faith. The good news of the gospel is that God never gives up on us. In the Holy Child, we have found our salvation, we have met God's over-flowing love. For all this, we offer our praise to God. Alleluia! Amen.

**HYMN**

**"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"**

(If you are worshiping in the sanctuary, please do not sing.)

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 heaven'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 heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world;  
above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hovering wing,  
and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet 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.

**RE-LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT AND CHRIST CANDLES**

Mark and Sue Schmitt

**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 148**

Hallie Schroeter

(There are 150 prayers in the book of Psalms. Towards the end of this book, the psalms tend to be prayers of praise and thanksgiving to God. The prayer we are about to pray is a little unique in that it offers praise for God's Universal Glory. God's glory is not limited to a certain people. God's glory reaches to all segments of creation. Please pray with me..)

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!

**Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!**

Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!

**Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!**

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.

**He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.**

Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,

**fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!**

Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!

**Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!**

Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!

**Young men and women alike, old and young together!**

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.

**He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the Lord!**

#### **A READING FROM PAUL**

**Galatians 4:4-7**

(Paul does not often refer to particular experiences from Jesus' ministry but in the text you are about to hear, Paul talks about the birth of Christ occurring in the 'fullness of time.' The Gospel of John uses those same words to describe the occasion of Jesus' birth. Listen, as Paul further describes the way we can each experience the presence of God.)

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

#### **SERMON ON THE STEPS**

**Nicole Herda**

#### **SPECIAL MUSIC**

**"Breath of Heaven" by Chris Eaton & Amy Grant**

Cal MacAuley

#### **THE GOSPEL**

**Luke 2:21-38**

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.'

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. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided 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, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then 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 so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

There 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 for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At 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.

## SERMON

## "A VISIT TO THE TEMPLE"

### PASTORAL PRAYER AND 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.

### THE OFFERING

We offer our praise to God for the wonder of this Christmas Season. The church's proclamation is that God has come among us in human flesh and that our Lord Jesus Christ is present with us through all of life. In a spirit of gratitude, I invite you to pray a prayer that was penned by Robert Lewis Stevenson.....

### OFFERTORY PRAYER

O God, our loving Father, help us rightly to remember the birth of Jesus,  
That we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds  
And the worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world.  
Deliver us from evil by the blessing that Christ brings,  
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be your children

and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts,  
forgiving, and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

**\*CLOSING HYMN**

**"Sing We Now of Christmas" Vs 1,2,3**

(If you are worshiping in the sanctuary, please do not sing.)

Sing we now of Christmas, Noel, sing we here!  
Hear our grateful praises to the babe so dear.

Refrain: Sing we Noel, the King is born, Noel!  
Sing we now of Christmas, sing we now Noel!

Angels called to shepherds, "Leave your flocks at rest,  
journey forth to Bethlehem, find the lambkin blest." [Refrain]

In Bethlehem they found him; Joseph and Mary mild,  
seated by the manger, watching the holy child. [Refrain]

**\*COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION**

**\*POSTLUDE**

\*\*\*\*\*

**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*

**Song Leader:** *Cal MacAuley*

**Liturgist:** *Betty Becker*

**HOSPITALIZED**

Anne Kleman was hospitalized last week, and continues her recovery at home. Nic Meissner was also hospitalized, and likewise continues his recovery at home.

### 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.

### "INSPIRED" BY RACHEL HELD EVANS

Our Monday Adult Study Class **will not meet tomorrow, December 28**. Our next class will be Monday, January 4<sup>th</sup> when we will study 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.

### ANNUAL MEETING OF GRACE CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST: JANUARY 31

### GRACE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH HOPE HOUSE VOLUNTEERS

Grace Congregational Church provided a dozen or so volunteers this week to serve at Hope House. On behalf of the church of Jesus Christ, thank you for extending yourselves beyond your comfort zones to provide this valuable service of faith and love. As this is being written, four adults and two children are living at Hope House.

For Your Information----Hope House received \$400 worth of gift cards from Fleet Farm to distribute to their guests. If you know someone who works at Fleet Farm, please extend your thanks.

### THANK YOU - TALENTED PEOPLE

Thank you to all of the musicians, sound and video technicians who made it possible to have full services filled with music of the season. We are so grateful for your time, talent and willingness to perform in new ways.

### CONFIRMATION UPDATES

We have 18 youth in Confirmation this year. Class continues to meet in a "hybrid" style, with students (and their mentors!) able to join us in-person in the church sanctuary or online through Zoom at the same time. We are in the sanctuary from 6pm-6:50, then we spend the final 10 minutes outside the front door so we can see and talk directly to one another! Our next class will be Wednesday, January 6. Thank you to parents who are making this a priority, and thank you to our youth, who are engaged and thoughtful.

### ADULT CHOIR RESUMES

Adult Choir will resume on Wednesday, January 6. This group is open to everyone. If you're interested in joining us on Wednesdays via zoom, please contact Andrea.

### BELL CHOIR RESUMES

Bell Choir will resume on Monday, January 11 in the fellowship hall.

### **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 Jim Bohman and this week to Chelcea Boesiger, Mark Rhein, Alex Richmond, Kelcie Shimulunas, Joe Brandt, Ron Eggers, Colin Griffin, Shane Kahlenberg, Laura Steeber, Kayla Heise, Christopher Drew, Parker Reif and Derek Slickman.

**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY** this week to Don & Brenda DeBruyn, Max & Colisa Onderbeke, James & Barbee Lester, Charles & Jane Lohmeyer, Mike & Becky Price

**THIS WEEK AT GRACE**

*Wishing all a very Blessed Post Christmas week.*