

A SERVICE OF THE WORD

"First Sunday of Advent"

November 29, 2020

9:00 a.m.

"Politicians compete for the highest offices. Business tycoons scramble for a bigger and bigger piece of the pie.

Armies march and scientists' study and philosophers philosophize
and preachers preach and laborers sweat.

But in that silent baby, lying in that humble manger, there pulses more potential power
and wisdom and grace and aliveness than all the rest of us can imagine."

— Brian D. McLaren

PRE-SERVICE

OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER

PRELUDE

"Prepare the Way, O Zion" / *Swedish melody, XVII century*

Shelly Jashcob & Don Lewellen

SYMBOLIC ENTRY OF GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT

Shane Kahlenberg, Connor Ashenbrenner

CALL TO WORSHIP

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

It is Advent. As a Christian community we stand at the beginning of a new year.

During Advent we remember our ancestors of faith who waited for the coming of the Messiah.

During Advent we celebrate with Mary as she anticipated the birth of God's child.

During Advent we join with other Christians as we look forward to Christ's coming again.

Please join me in speaking this Advent Credo:

It is not true that creation and the human family
are doomed to destruction and loss—

This is true:

For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son,
that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life;

It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination,
hunger and poverty, death and destruction—

This is true:

Jesus has come that we may have life, and that abundantly.

It is not true that violence and hatred should have the last word,
and that war and destruction rule forever—

This is true:

Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given,
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
his name shall be called wonderful councilor, mighty God,
the Everlasting, the Prince of peace.

It is not true that we are simply victims of the powers of evil
who seek to rule the world—

This is true:

To Jesus is given authority in heaven and on earth,
and lo I am with you, even until the end of the world.

HYMN

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

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

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Day-Spring Come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here: Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel Shall come to thee, o Israel

O come, O come, Thou Wisdom from on high and order all things, far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel Shall come to thee, o Israel

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel Shall come to thee, o Israel

CALL TO PRAYER

It is a beautiful and holy experience to enter into the presence of God. In a spirit of humility, I invite you to join me as we offer this prayer of confession.....

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God, we are embedded in sin. We say and do things that do not show forth the light of your love. And so we come with this one humble request. Guide us, we pray, along that pathway which leads towards your Realm of endless joy.

We repent of the deep greed that lives within us. We are greedy for things and we are greedy for attention. We have more than we need, and yet we never seem to have enough. In these days of Advent preparation, bless us with your spiritual gift of contentment and help us to regain our sanity. We pray in the name of Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Beloved in Christ, the good news of the Gospel is that Christ came into our midst to offer up his life for our salvation. Believe this: in Christ you are a new creation; behold the old has passed away and the new has come. Rejoice and be glad. Amen.

SPOKEN HYMN

"Prepare the Way, O Zion"

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

I invite you to speak the words of this hymn with me:

Prepare the way, O Zion; your Christ is drawing near!
Let every hill and valley—a level way appear.
Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story,
Oh blest is Christ that came, in God's most holy name.

He brings God's rule, O Zion; he comes from heaven above,
His rule is peace and freedom, and justice, truth, and love.
Lift high your praise resounding, for grace and joy abounding,
Oh bless is Christ that came, in God's most holy name.

Fling wide your gates, O Zion, your Savior's rule embrace,
His tidings of salvation, proclaim in every place.
All lands will bow before him, their voices will adore him.
Oh, bless is Christ that came, in God's most holy name.

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

Marv, Joylyn, Owen and Dane Moore

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 57

Rachel Guex

It takes a bit of courage to trust God. In the Psalm we're about to pray, the psalmist repeatedly calls upon God for mercy, for strength, for guidance. Please pray with me.

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge;
in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, until the destroying storms pass by.

**I cry to God Most High,
to God who fulfils his purpose for me.**

He will send from heaven and save me,
he will put to shame those who trample on me.
God will send forth his steadfast love and his faithfulness.

**I lie down among lions that greedily devour human prey;
their teeth are spears and arrows, their tongues sharp swords.**

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens.

Let your glory be over all the earth.

They set a net for my steps; my soul was bowed down.

They dug a pit in my path, but they have fallen into it themselves.

My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast.

I will sing and make melody.

Awake, my soul! Awake, O harp and lyre!

I will awake the dawn.

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples;

I will sing praises to you among the nations.

**For your steadfast love is as high as the heavens;
your faithfulness extends to the clouds.**

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens.

Let your glory be over all the earth.

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL

Luke 23: 1-5

(Jesus was a good person. In the text I'm about to read, you will hear the accusations that are about against Jesus. The charge is phrased to sound like treason. Listen for God's Word.....)

Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. They began to accuse him, saying, 'We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.' Then Pilate asked him, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' He answered, 'You say so.' Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, 'I find no basis for an accusation against this man.' But they were insistent and said, 'He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place.'

SERMON ON THE STEPS

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Sleeping Adoni" / H. Sorenson

THE PROPHETIC WORD

Daniel 6:6-27

So the presidents and satraps conspired and came to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! 7All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an interdict, that whoever prays to anyone, divine or human, for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into a den of lions. 8Now, O king, establish the interdict and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." 9Therefore King Darius signed the document and interdict. 10Although Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he continued to go to his house, which had windows in its upper room open toward Jerusalem, and to get down on his knees three times a day to pray to his God and praise him, just as he had done previously.

The conspirators came and found Daniel praying and seeking mercy before his God. 12Then they approached the king and said concerning the interdict, "O king! Did you not sign an interdict, that anyone who prays to anyone, divine or human, within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be thrown into a den of lions?" The king answered, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." 13Then they responded to the king, "Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the interdict you have signed, but he is saying his prayers three times a day." 14When the king heard the charge, he was very much distressed. He was determined to save Daniel, and until the sun went down he made every effort to rescue him. 15Then the conspirators came to the king and said to him, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed." 16Then the king gave the command, and Daniel was brought and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you faithfully serve, deliver you!" 17A stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, so that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel.

18Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no food was brought to him, and sleep fled from him. 19Then, at break of day, the king got up and hurried to the den of lions. 20When he came near the den where Daniel was, he cried out anxiously to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you faithfully serve been able to deliver you from the lions?" 21Daniel then said to the king, "O king, live forever! 22My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no wrong." 23Then the king was exceedingly glad and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. 24The king gave a command, and those who had accused Daniel were brought and thrown into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. Before they reached the bottom of the den the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

25Then King Darius wrote to all peoples and nations of every language throughout the whole world: "May you have abundant prosperity! 26I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: For he is the living God, enduring forever. His kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion has no end. 27He delivers and rescues, he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth; for he has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."

SERMON

"Daniel's Practice of Faith"

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

The church of Jesus Christ is ever-grateful for the message of hope and salvation that we have to proclaim. As individuals and as a community we are grateful to God for these gifts that come to us. It is our trust that we may be faithful stewards, not only of our resources but also our lives.

DOXOLOGY

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

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host: praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

I invite you to pray with me,

Lord, grant me courage as I go through this day of my life. When I am tempted to give up, help me to look forward and keep going. Grant me a cheerful spirit when I feel defeated. Grant me the courage to do what needs to be done. And in all things, O God, may I live in gratitude for all you have given me through Jesus, my Lord. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

"Once In Royal David's City"

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

Once in royal David's city, stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby In a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven, who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable, And His cradle was a stall;
With the poor and meek and lowly, Lived on earth our Savior holy.

Jesus is our child-hood's pattern, Day by day like us He grew,
He was little, weak, and helpless, Tears and smiles like us He knew,
And He feels for all our sadness, And He shares in all our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see Him, Through His own redeeming love;
For that child so dear and gentle, is our Lord in heaven above,
And He leads His children on, To the place where He is gone.

*COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

Episode on "Veni, Emmanuel" / arr. L. Smith

"Advent Credo" used in the Call to Worship was written by Daniel Berrigan.

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: *Shelly Jaschcob, Don Lewellen*

Liturgist: *Kaye Katke*

HOSPITALIZED

Florence Luecker is still a patient at Aurora Medical Center in Two Rivers.

Jerry Sisel was a patient this week at Aurora Medical Center.

HOSPITALIZATION AND SYMPATHY

Jim Hart once served as a choir director at Grace Congregational Church. We recently heard of two set-backs in his family. Jim's mother recently died. A couple days later, Jim fell down the basement stairs, causing paralysis from his neck down. We invite you to express your concern to: Pam and Jim Hart, 1627 Redwing Dr, Neenah, WI 54956

A THANKSGIVING DAY BIRTH

David and Ashley Streu became parents of a baby boy, Jackson James, on November 26. The Great Grandparents of Jackson are Jim and Barbee Lester.

SMALL-PRINT "DAILY BREAD"

We offer large-print and small-print devotionals entitled, "Our Daily Bread." If you desire a copy of the small-print "Our Daily Bread," please inform Pastor Kim (khennig1956@gmail.com) or the church office. If you prefer a large-print copy, you will have to wait until next month (they are printed one month later than the small print!).

"DAILY BIBLE STUDY"

The next quarter of Daily Bible Study begins November 30th. Copies can be picked up at church. OR, a copy can be delivered to your home if you simply contact Pastor Kim or the church office.

WOMEN OF GRACE

The Women of Grace have adopted a family leaving Hope House for the upcoming year. We will be purchasing gifts for the family so each has something to open on Christmas. We invite the congregation to assist us. Ideas would be food gift cards for mom and dad, 2 or 3 plastic sleds, kid's books, gift cards to fun places like roller skating or ice cream, or maybe just Chamber Bucks that would cover almost everything. Thank you so much for being caring people you are. Mickey

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL SERIES - "EXPECTATION"

Pastor Colie is making another video devotional series for advent! Sign up to receive a daily email with a video devotional of about 3 minutes. The theme this year is "Expectation", and will begin on Nov 29. To sign up, go to <http://eepurl.com/hgTTjr> or email Pastor Colie (pastorcolie@gmail.com)

"INSPIRED" BY RACHEL HELD EVANS

At 6 p.m. November 30, we are hosting by Zoom an adult study class using Rachel Held Evan's book, "Inspired." We are studying chapter one of her book (pp.1-28) and pages 8-11 from her study guide. Contact khennig1956k@gmail.com if you would like to receive a Zoom link.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT: "Don't Be Afraid"

Pastor Colie is putting together a Christmas Pageant for our children! It will be all pre-recorded and featured as our worship service on December 20. Roles are available for all ages and abilities, and even non-members. Filming can happen in a variety of ways: some will be filmed outside at the church, some by families at home, some over Zoom calls. For more information, contact Pastor Colie (pastorcolie@gmail.com, 920-973-5775)

CALLING ALL CHRISTMAS HYMN LOVERS

You are invited to be part of our Christmas Eve virtual choir hymns. We are looking for people to record themselves (or family groups) singing Joy to the World, O Come All Ye Faithful, Silent Night, and/or O Little Town of Bethlehem at home. Andrea will collect the videos to compile a video to be used on Christmas Eve. If you're interested please contact Andrea romsosa96@gmail.com. If you're interested but hesitant about the process/technology please let Andrea know. Our choir members have become experts and are willing to help!

SUNDAY SCHOOL KIDS' "MINI LESSON"

Pastor Colie (with the help of Lincoln!) are recording a video each week reading the week's Bible story from the children's Bible. These videos can be played for children as an introduction to the worship service, or as a stand-alone story. Look for the videos included in the worship service emails every weekend.

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.

LAKELAND UNIVERSITY OFFERS SCHOLARSHIPS

Are you looking for ways to get involved in a religious studies community during your time at college? Do you have a passion to speak out for justice? Lakeland University offers a full-tuition scholarship competition opportunity to students with these interests; it's called our **Ulrich Scholars Scholarship Program**.

Each year nine Ulrich Scholars earn a **\$20,000** per year scholarship to attend Lakeland University. Students who receive these awards major or minor in Religion, participate in Ulrich Scholars events throughout the year (including lectures, retreats, community service, and visits to various religious communities), and lead a social justice initiative on or off campus in their junior or senior years.

If this sounds interesting, we would love to have you learn more about the Ulrich Scholars Program. You may apply for the opportunity at lakeland.edu/portal. Applicants must submit their materials by **January 22, 2021**. If you have any questions contact Dr. Karl Kuhn at kuhnka@lakeland.edu or admissions@lakeland.edu.

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 in a nursing home & Bruce Huffer is at his home. Marian Duescher is a resident at Harbor View. Florence Luecker is a resident at Laurel Grove. Jean Sutter is with her daughter, Heidi

Bender: 880 S. Madison Ave. Pasadena, CA 91106. Nicole Kellner is residing with her son in Manitowoc. Bill Monka is a resident at Tender Reflections.

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 (4614 High St. W., Portsmouth, VA 23703); Hunter Hayes (Bagram AFB, Afghanistan); 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 Anthony Reinke, Dean Stoeger, Dorothy Holschbach, Jill Richmond, Megan Christensen, Cruz Yanda, Melvin Erickson, Judie Root, Alanna Duvall, and Lindsey Eis
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY this week to Jerry & Dorothy Holschbach, Shelly & Troy Jaschob, and Troy & Nicole Thor.

THIS WEEK AT GRACE

Monday	Bell Choir Practice	11:00am
Wednesday	Confirmation Class	6:00pm
	Generation G (Zoom)	7:00pm
	Adult Choir (Zoom)	7:00pm
Thursday	Grace Notes (FH)	9:30am