

A Blue Christmas
Service of Holy Communion
December 17, 2025

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
6:30 PM

**-the congregation is invited to stand*

WELCOME TO GRACE

A warm welcome to all who are worshiping with us in this season of preparation as we wait to celebrate the coming of Jesus, the Word of God Incarnate. If you are visiting with us, please fill out a guest card which is found in the pews. Following the service, please introduce yourself to the pastor.

We hope that this bulletin will help guide you through our worship service.

God gathers us in unity.

GATHERING

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

arr. Hartman

Emily & Kris Hartman

The assembly stands as able.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those who lived in a land of deep shadow a light has shone. For the yoke that was weighing upon them, and the burden upon their shoulders, thou hast broken in pieces O God, our Renewer.

***OPENING PRAYER**

Let us pray. God of Mercy and Love, hear our prayer of lament. Show yourself to us and to all our siblings of all faiths and nationalities who live with the painful memories of loss. Provide us with strength for today, courage for tomorrow and peace for the past. We ask these things in the name of Christ who shares in our joys and our sorrows, in our death and new birth and in our despair and promise of salvation.

Amen.

The assembly may be seated.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 40

"Comfort, comfort my people," says our God. "Encourage the people of Jerusalem and tell them that their time of suffering is ended. With whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?"

asks the Holy One. "Look up to the heavens!

Who made the stars, if not the One who leads them out like an army, calling each one by its own name? So mighty is God's power and strength that not one fails to answer. Israel, why then do you complain that our God does not know your troubles or care if you suffer injustice? Our God, the everlasting God, the creator of the farthest parts of the earth, never grows tired or weary. No one can fathom the depths of God's understanding. God gives power to the faint and strength to the powerless. Even youths become exhausted and young ones give up, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 121

¹I lift up my eyes to the hills—

from where will my help come?

²**My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.**

³He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.

⁴**He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.**

⁵The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

⁶**The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

⁷The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.

⁸**The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.**

SECOND READING: Matthew 1:18-24

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife,

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THIRD READING: Matthew 2:7-23

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

¹³ Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ Then

Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN

In the Bleak Midwinter

ELW#294

***GOSPEL: John 1:1-5**

The holy gospel according to St. John.

Glory to you, O Lord

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God.

³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

ANOINTING FOR HEALING AND HOPE

ANTHEM

The Sweetest Gift

The Piano Guys

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yFXfAGl17M>

***A LITURGY OF REMEMBERING**

This first candle we light to remember those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices, the memories that bind them to us in this season.
(Pause while the first candle is lit)

May God's eternal love surround them.

This second candle we light is to redeem the pain of loss: the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, the loss of health. *(Pause while the second candle is lit.)* We pause to gather up the pain of the past and offer it to God, asking that from God's hands we receive the gift of peace.

Refresh, restore, renew us O God, and lead us into your future.

This third candle we light is to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember these past weeks and month; the disbelief, the anger, the down times, the poignancy of reminiscing, the hugs and handshakes of family and friends, all those who stood with us. *(Pause while the third candle is lit.)* We give thanks for all the support we have known.

Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness.

This fourth candle is lit to remember our faith and the gift of hope which the Christmas story offers to us. *(Pause while the fourth candle is lit.)* We remember that God who shares our life promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

Let us remember the one who shows the way, who brings the truth and who bears the light.

***THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

In the spirit of this season let us now confidently ask God for all the things we need; For ourselves as we participate in whatever way we can this Christmas.

For our families and friends that they may continue to help and support us.

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

For the person we have loved that has died. For all the losses that we know, that all may be redeemed by your Easter promise.

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

For all our family and friends that they may know love and peace and happiness in you.

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

For the peace proclaimed by the Christmas angels, to come throughout the whole world.

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

God of great compassion and love, listen to the prayers of these your people. Grant to all, especially the bereaved and troubled ones this Christmas, the blessing we ask in the name of Christ who taught us to pray;

Amen.

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

MEAL

***THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

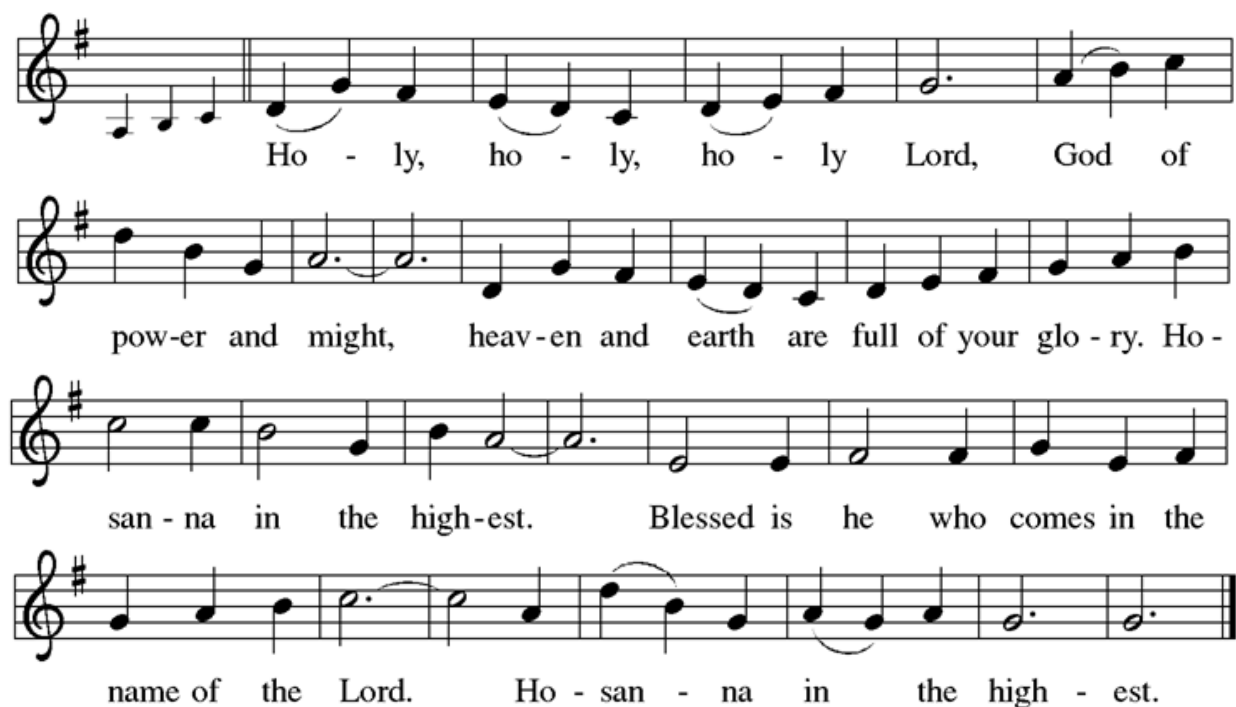
Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
who preached good news to the poor,
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

*In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, 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.*

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and
ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, now and forever.

Amen.

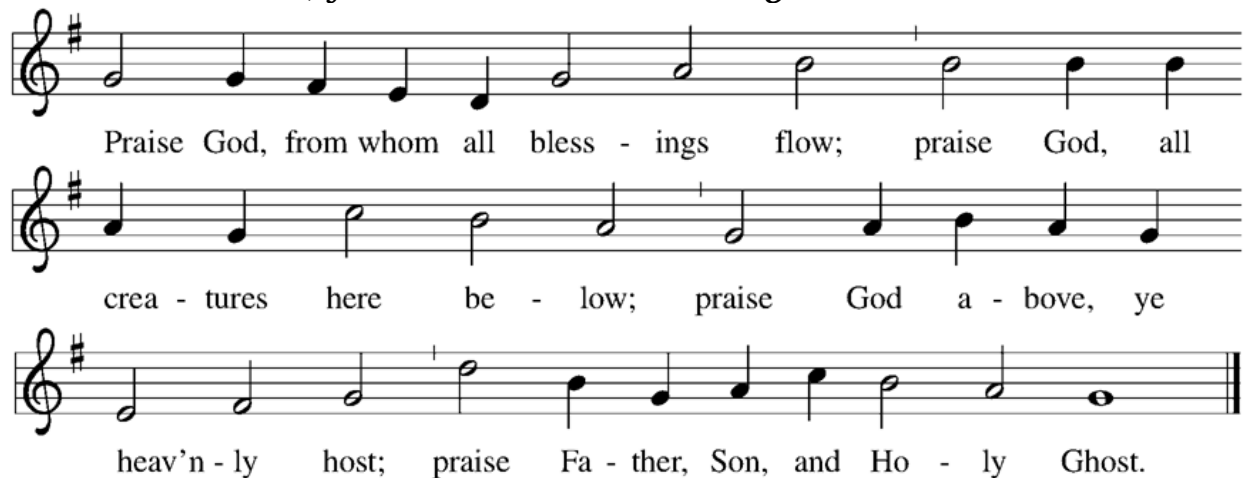
***LORD'S PRAYER**

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.

***DOXOLOGY**

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

ELW#885



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise God, all
crea - tures here be - low; praise God a - bove, ye
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

***INVITATION**

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Thanks be to God.

The assembly is seated.

Those communing in their seats and at home are invited to prepare their elements then to be led through eating and drinking the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine.

DISTRIBUTION MUSIC

The assembly stands as able.

*BLESSING AND PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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

Amen.

Let us pray. Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart, and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. Now send us forth to be your people in the world, and to proclaim your truth this day and evermore, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

SENDING

*CLOSING HYMN

Ubi Caritas et Amor

ELW#642

(1 time in Latin, 2 times in English)

The musical score is written for a single voice part, using a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of two systems of music. The first system contains the first two lines of the hymn, and the second system contains the next two lines. Each line of music is accompanied by Latin and English lyrics. The lyrics are: 'U - bi ca - ri - tas et a - mor, / Where true char - i - ty and love a - bide, / u - bi ca - ri - tas, De - us i - bi est. / God is dwell - ing there; God is dwell - ing there.' The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets indicated by a '3' over the notes. The final note of the second system is a whole note chord.

U - bi ca - ri - tas et a - mor,
Where true char - i - ty and love a - bide,

u - bi ca - ri - tas, De - us i - bi est.
God is dwell - ing there; God is dwell - ing there.

Text: Latin antiphon, 9th cent.; Taizé Community; tr. *With One Voice*

Music: TAIZÉ UBI CARITAS, Jacques Berthier, 1923–1994

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English text © 1995 Augsburg Fortress.

***BENEDICTION**

May the road rise up to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face, and the rains fall soft
upon your fields;
and until we meet again,
May you be held in the warmth of God's hand.

Amen.

SERVING TODAY IN WORSHIP

Presiding Minister	The Rev. Chad Butz
Assisting Minister	Randy Easton
Acolyte	Randy Easton
Lector	Patty Rohde
Director of Music	Kristopher Hartman
Sound	Larry Hoffman
Organist	Emily Hartman
Technology Operator	Chris Jury

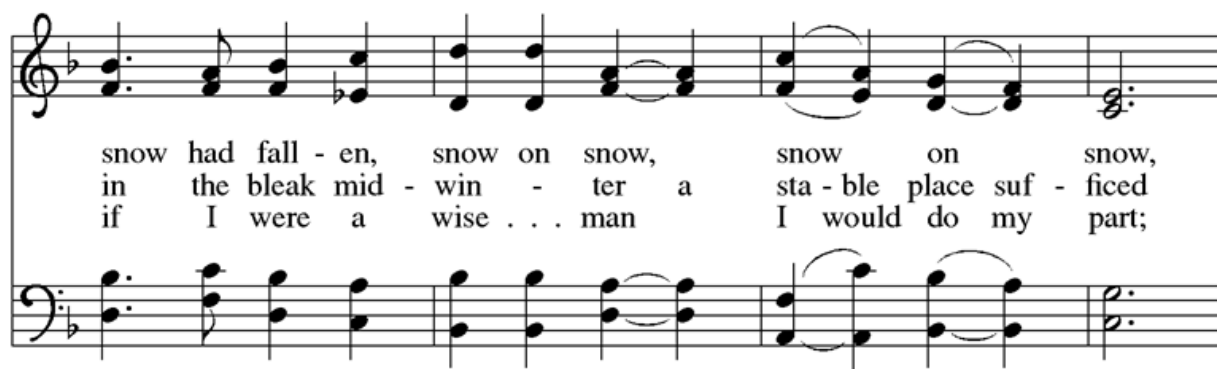
In the Bleak Midwinter



1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,
 2 Heav - en can - not hold him, nor . . . earth sus - tain;
 3 What . . . can I give him, poor . . . as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
 heav'n and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign;
 If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed
 if I were a wise . . . man I would do my part;



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
 the Lord . . . God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.
 yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

Our Story

Matthew 25:35-40: *For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”*

The purpose of Grace Lutheran Church is to make a difference by serving others through God’s love and our faith

Grace Church Staff

Senior Pastor	The Rev. Chad Butz 610.297.2514 (cell); pastorchad@gracecamphill.org
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Director of Music	Kristopher Hartman K.E.Hartman11@gmail.com
Organist	Emily Hartman K.E.Hartman11@gmail.com
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Administrative Specialist	Diane Deppen ddeppen@gracecamphill.org

To contact the church office: 717.737.0439; office@gracecamphill.org
Monday-Thursday 8:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

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