

First Sunday of Advent

November 30, 2025 10:30 AM

Advent - Hope is on the way!

be
ready

for the Son of Man is
coming at an hour when
you do not think He will come

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church



NORTH AMERICAN
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

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Sandi Tallant – Organist Todd Childers – Administrative Assistant

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 9am to 1pm

Tuesday and Thursday 12pm to 4pm

WELCOME TO ALL WHO WORSHIP at Grace Church this morning as we gather to worship the Father, + Son and Holy Spirit in truth. As you entered the sanctuary today, you received this bulletin containing the order for worship and announcements. Please also notice the Prayer List where you will find a listing of all the known prayer concerns. You are invited to use this as a guide for your personal prayers throughout the coming week. If you need information about our congregation or if you'd like to update your information, make sure to fill out the yellow Worship Today Form and place it in the offering plate at the time of the offering. If you have a prayer concern, indicate that on your Worship Today Form at the bottom or on the reverse side. If you are seeking a Church Home or would like more information about Grace, please contact Pastor Doug (980) 234-8848.

**Stand Hymnals in Pew Rack: LBW = Green WOV = Blue TCH = Burgundy*

PRELUDE *Please observe silence for meditation and prayer.*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*** BRIEF ORDER OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P: In this season of intentional waiting and watching for the return of Christ, we are gathered together to worship in the name of the Father, Son, + Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

P: A voice cries in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a pathway for our God." Let us come humbly before our Lord, asking for forgiveness and mercy for our sins, known and unknown, trusting in God's promise of reconciliation and new life in Christ. (Isaiah 40:3)

(Silence for self-reflection and examination)

P: God of grace,

C: We confess that we have not been attentive to the call to prepare for the coming of your Son. We have focused our vision on things of the moment and neglected to wait and watch for his return. We have neglected to notice the plight of our neighbors near and far, and instead we have thought more of ourselves rather than others. Grant us, we pray, the gift of your forgiveness and mercy, that we may be restored to a new and right relationship with you. Amen.

P: Our Father who loves us with an everlasting love promised of old that he would send us a sign saying, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." God is with us in Christ our Lord, the word made flesh, hears our

confession and grants us undeserved mercy; be confident in his forgiveness, in the name of the Father , and of the Son + of the Holy Spirit. (Isaiah 7:14)

C: Amen

*** GATHERING HYMN “Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers!”**

LBW 25

LITURGY FOR LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

L: Today is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent means “coming” and in this season we prepare for the coming of Christ. One of the ways we prepare for his coming is by making an Advent wreath and lighting its candles to remind us of the gifts Christ brings to the world. The Advent wreath includes many symbols to help us think about Christ and his gifts. The wreath itself is in the shape of a circle. A circle has no beginning and no end. This reminds us that there is no beginning and no end to God and that God's love and caring are forever. The light from the candles - which grows stronger each Sunday in Advent, reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world. The candles remind us of God's gifts in Christ: Hope, Peace, Joy, Love, and Presence. Today we light the candle of hope.

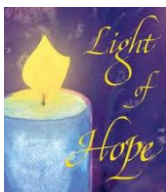
L: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

C: those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined.

L: We join with sisters and brothers around the world, lighting candles to mark our steps in this Advent journey.

C: Today, we light the candle of Hope and give thanks for God's gift of hope.

We light the Candle of Hope as we sing “A Candle is Burning” by Sandra Dean
(Tune: Away in a Manger)



**A Candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
a candle of hope in December's dark night.
While angels sing blessing from heaven's starry sky,
our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.**

L: Even though the world seems dark and cold, we know that the light of Christ is shining in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it. The face of our Lord shines upon us and we are saved!

C: Hope is like a light shining in a dark place. We celebrate the hope we have in Jesus Christ and our calling to share this hope with the world by letting our light shine before others.

L: Let us “always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” (1 Peter 3:14)

C: We continue to hope in God's promise that Christ will come again to fill our lives and the lift of the world with love and joy and peace.

L: Let us pray: Stir up your power, O Lord and come, that by your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by your mighty deliverance. We thank you God for the hope you give us. We ask that as we wait for the fulfillment of Your promises and for Christ to come again, that you would remain present with us. Help us today, and every day to worship you, to hear your word, and to do your will by sharing your hope with each other. We ask it in the name of the one who was born in Bethlehem, Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C: Amen.**

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING Isaiah 2: 1-5

¹The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. ²It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, ³and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. ⁵O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.

L: The Word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God**

PSALM 33: 1-4, 18-22

Shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright.

² Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings!

³ Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

⁴ For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness.

¹⁸ Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love,

¹⁹ that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine.

²⁰ Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.

²¹ For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name.

²² Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.

SECOND READING: Romans 15: 1-13

We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.² Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.³ For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.”⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁷ Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.⁸ For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,⁹ and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, “Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name.”¹⁰ And again it says, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.”¹¹ And again, “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him.”¹² And again Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope.”¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

L: The Word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God**

The congregation is invited to stand.

*** GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Gospel Acclamation: O Come O Come Emmanuel Verse 1

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.

***GOSPEL: Matthew 24: 36-44**

P: The holy gospel according to St. Matthew. **C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

³⁶{Jesus said,} “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.³⁷ For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark,³⁹ and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left.⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left.⁴² Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.⁴³ But know this, that if the master

of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

L: The Gospel of the Lord. **C: Praise to You O Christ!**

The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

SERMON



*“We Begin Our Faith ADVENTure: A Thrill of Hope a Weary World Rejoices”
Pastor Doug Hefner*

***HYMN OF THE DAY** “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

TCH 244

***THE APOSTLES’ CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He 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, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again 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**

Response at the end of each petition. P: Lord in your mercy, **C: Hear our prayer.**

***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

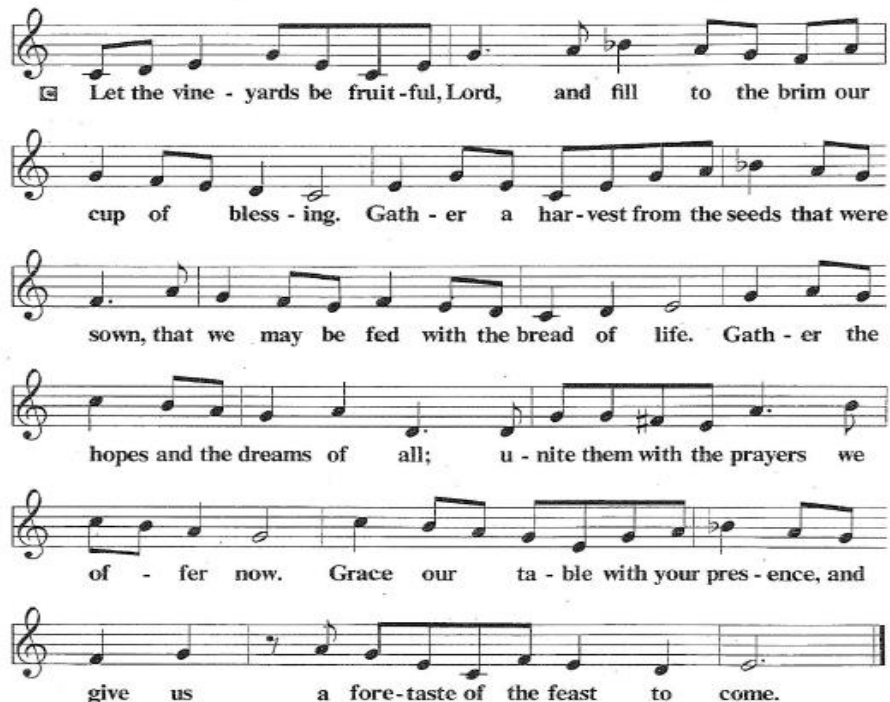
P: The peace of Christ be with you always. **C: And also with you.**

Worshippers may greet one another with “the Peace of Christ.”

The assembly may be seated.

* **OFFERING** In response to God's blessings, we offer our tithes to the Lord
HOLY COMMUNION – MEAL OF GRACE

* **OFFERTORY** Let the Vineyards



* **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

P: Merciful Father, C: we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us – ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of Him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

* **DIALOGUE AND PREFACE**

P: The Lord be with you. C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts. C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:
Heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na, Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

*** WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

*** LORD'S PRAYER**

*** INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: The Gifts of God for the People of God. C: Thanks be to God!

The assembly may be seated.

All are invited to receive Holy Communion.

COMMUNION SONG Lamb of God

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

The congregation is invited to stand.

*** COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER**

P: We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace. Amen.

***SENDING HYMN “Hark, the Glad Sound!”**

LBW 35

***DISMISSAL**

P: As we go in peace, may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope as we love and serve one another in Jesus' name! **C: Thanks be to God!**



In the Grace Church Family:

Jeffry Bivens, Rick & Cindy Bivens, Glenda Childers, Pat Dietz, Lisa Childers Fox, Allen and Kay Hatchett, Larry Heavner, Lorene Heavner, Larry & Brenda Jarrett, Martha Johnson, Faye Lane, Harvey Leatherman, Phil & Malinda Leatherman, Tim Leatherman, Betty Matheson,

Joe Momier, Jane Moss, Christine Norman, Michael Norman, Tricia and Dan Panek, Mike, Debi & Stephen Pisko, Helen Smith, Ethan Starnes, Sandi Tallant, Libby Travis, Shirley Warlick, Ken & Tirzah Welch, Scott & Carolyn Whisnant, and Nancy Willis.

Nursing Home: Juanita Haas (Trinity Village), Ted Whisnant (Trinity Village)

Friends and Relatives in our Prayers: Pray for Peace in Israel and the World, New Covenant Lutheran Mission Church, Ashlee Bumgardner, Clinton Childers, Evelyn Childers, John Lentz, Chris Medlin, Randy & Rita Neill, Ray Porter, Anita Sabino, Scott Speagle, and Donald Smith. Prayers for world peace and for our church, the United States of America, and especially the families of those who have given their lives in the service of our country and those who continue to protect our freedoms and for all members of our Armed Forces

HAPPY NOVEMBER BIRTHDAY TO:

November 23 – Alan Shull

COMING UP AT GRACE THIS WEEK

Today: First Sunday of Advent

9:30am – Sunday School

10:30am - Worship Celebration

Wednesday

12:00 Fred T. Foard Seniors Luncheon at Sardis Lutheran Church

6:30pm – Midweek Advent Service

Saturday

9:00am – Breakfast with Santa in Fellowship Hall

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 30 First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 10, 17 Midweek Advent Services 6:30 pm

December 6 Breakfast with Santa (Community Event) 9:00am at Fellowship Hall

December 13 Wreaths Across America at 11:00 am at Union Church

December 14 Congregational Meeting immediately after Worship

December 24 (Wed.) Christmas Eve – Candlelight Service & Holy Communion 4:00 pm

SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING



There will be a special congregational meeting immediately following worship on Sunday, December 14th. The purpose of the meeting is to vote on a proposed amendment to the Constitution which was approved by the Board at the regular November meeting on November 17th. A motion was made and seconded to amend the bylaws of the Constitution such that the following portion of section B12.02 line 2 be stricken: “Immediate family members (family of

origin = parent/child; husband/wife; siblings/blood or step; grandparents/grandchildren) shall not serve on the Board at the same time.”

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

**Sat. Dec 6 at 9am Pancakes,
Crafts, Santa Pictures**



Grace is hosting a Breakfast with Santa celebration for the community on Saturday, Dec. 6 at 9am. We will have pancakes with the trimmings. We will share the Christmas story and enjoy a craft, Christmas music and games, and a picture with Santa. If you would like to help with this celebration, please sign up by calling/emailing the office or the sign-up sheet in worship.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA



Please join us on Saturday, December 13th at 11:00am at Union Church for a brief service to honor our veterans laid to rest in Grace Cemetery. After the service, a wreath will be laid at the grave of each veteran. Families are encouraged to participate in helping to honor their members who served in our Armed Forces. No matter where they served or how, Wreaths Across America strives to ensure that no one is forgotten.

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS PLAY



During worship on Sunday, Dec. 21 at 10:30am, Grace members will present Silent Night: Celebrating Christmas in the Luther Household. This play will feature Martin Luther and his wife Katie and their children as they celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus. Luther loved the beautiful meaning of Christmas and wrote hymns and started traditions to help his family receive the Good News of God's love in Christ at Christmas. Pastor Doug will be playing the part of Martin Luther. We will need 3 or 4 children/youth to participate along with someone to play Katie Luther. If interested, please let Pastor Doug or Stormy know as soon as possible so that we can get you the script and set up a practice. The congregation will join in singing some of the Christmas hymns that are a part of the play.

Ministers of Grace – All the People of Grace

Pastor – Reverend Doug Hefner Board President – Tim Eckard

Lector – Stormy Shull Youth Leader – Stormy Shull

Altar Preparation – Cindy Bivens

Communion Assistants – Cindy Bivens & Shelly Scronce

Ushers – James Hall & Jack Wilfong

Offering Counters – Todd Childers & Sheila Drum

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

First Sunday in Advent – November 30, 2025

“³⁶[Jesus said,] ‘But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.’”

- Matthew 24:36-39 -

One thing I don't like is to feel caught off-guard. I like to feel well-prepared, especially if something big is about to happen. But that isn't always how life presents itself. God warned Noah that he would bring a flood down on the earth, and God told Noah how to be well prepared for said event. Back in September 2019, I was serving a two-point rural parish in Southeast South Dakota. Earlier in the week, Sioux Falls had experience four tornadoes in one night. Later that week, we were planning to celebrate Homecoming in our town. But the weather report turned everyone's plans upside down.

One of the dams had broken up North of where we were located. We'd had lots of rain waters, and we were receiving word that the Jim River, which runs close to the small country church I served, would soon be filled with raging water, and we should expect the worst for flooding. Our time was limited, but people in the community came together to sandbag and help put up a levy to keep the flood waters from damaging the little stone church. We didn't have a lot of time to prepare, but we had just enough. The waters came, but the church was safe. The news of flood waters coming our way, however, caught us off-guard. We had to drop whatever it was we were doing and heed the warnings of others.

Jesus tells us that we will not know the day or the hour of when he will return to us. No one knows. Not the angels. Not even Jesus himself, the Son of God. However, God has given us plenty of time to prepare for that unexpected moment when Jesus will come back again. God has given us his gifts of grace, forgiveness of sin, and eternal life through the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. We wait for Jesus' imminent return, and as we do so, we witness the pain and heartache around us. We bear witness to conflict, violence, disease, and death. But we also bear witness to the promise that God is always with us. He comes to us through the waters of baptism and the bread and wine of Holy Communion. Thanks be to God! Come, Lord Jesus!

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