

Second Sunday of Advent

December 7, 2025 10:30 AM



Grace Evangelical 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, and 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)

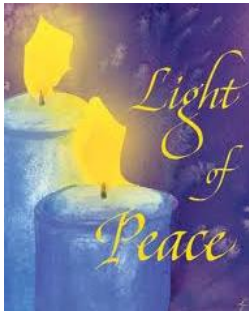
C: Amen

*** GATHERING HYMN “Prepare the Royal Highway”**

LBW 26

LITANY FOR LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES: THE CANDLE OF PEACE

L: Last Sunday we lit the first candle in our Advent Wreath, the candle of hope. It has been lit again as we remember that Christ, who was born in Bethlehem is our hope. Our hope is that Christ will come again and fulfill all of God’s promises. The second candle of Advent is the Candle of Peace. Through the cross, Christ reconciled us to God and brought peace with God which enables us to be reconciled or at peace with one another. When Christ comes again He will bring everlasting peace. The prophet Isaiah called Christ “the Prince of *Peace*”. “And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of *Peace*.” (Isaiah 9)



C: “Of the increase of his government and *peace* there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.”

L: When Jesus was born the angels proclaimed the good news as they sang about God’s gift of peace to the earth.

C: “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth *peace* to those on whom his favor rests.” (Luke 2.14)

L: When Jesus came he taught people the importance of being peace makers and called for them to live as peacemakers.

C: He said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5.9)

L: Our Lord Jesus is our peace and has broken down the dividing wall between God and people. He bore our sins as he was crucified on the cross to bring reconciliation and *peace* to us all.

C: But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us *peace* was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

L: On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead to bring victory over sin and death and to bring *peace* to all. Jesus appeared to the disciples and showed them his hand and side and said to them, C: “***Peace* be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”** ²² **And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” (John 20)**

We sing “A Candle is Burning” (tune: Away in a Manger) as we light the Candle of Peace

*A Candle is burning, a candle of peace, a candle to signal that conflict must cease:
for Jesus is coming to show us the way; a message of peace humbly laid in the hay.*

L: Let us pray... O God of Peace, we thank you for Your gift of Peace in Jesus Christ our Lord who lived, died, and rose again so that we might have peace with You and one another. Fill us with your Holy Spirit that we may be instruments of your peace. Help us to live in peace with one another and seek to be peacemakers in this broken and darkened world by shining the light of Christ's love into all the world. As we live as peacemakers may the world see in us our glorious Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray. **Amen**

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING Isaiah 11: 1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

²The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; ⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. ⁶The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. ⁷The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

⁹They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

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

PSALM 85: 1-2, 8-13

¹You have been gracious to your land, O LORD; you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

²**You have forgiven the iniquity of your people and blotted out all their sins.**

⁸I will listen to what the LORD God is saying; for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to you.

⁹**Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you, that your glory may dwell in our land.**

¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

¹¹Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

¹²The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, and our land will yield its increase.

¹³Righteousness shall go before the LORD and shall prepare for God a pathway.

SECOND READING: Ephesians 2: 14-22

¹⁴For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. ¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.
L: The Word of the Lord. C: **Thanks be to God**

The congregation is invited to stand.

*** GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

O Come O Come Emmanuel Verse 3

**O come, O Branch of Jesse, free your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save, and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

***GOSPEL: Matthew 3: 1-12**

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

¹In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ²“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” ³For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’” ⁴Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁷But when he saw many of the Pharisees and

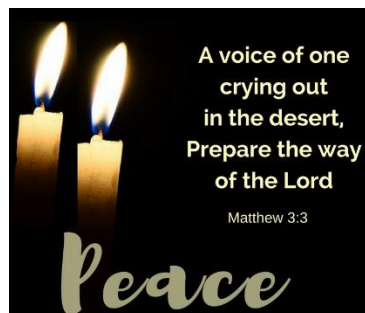
Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

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

The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

SERMON



“All I Want for Christmas is . . . Jesus, the Prince of Peace and the World Changing Peace He Brings”

Pastor Doug Hefner

***HYMN OF THE DAY** “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day”

TCH 267

***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

Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our
cup of bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were
sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the
hopes and the dreams of all; u - nite them with the prayers we
of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence, and
give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

* **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

P: Good and loving God, C: we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts that we offer now with thanksgiving, let them be blessing for others. We rejoice to be invited to your table of grace and with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, 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: Gracious God, in this meal of grace you give us a foretaste of the everlasting peace of Christ our Lord when sin, sorrow, and death will be no more. Send us forth to be peacemakers and to make known your deeds and the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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 “On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”**

LBW 36

***DISMISSAL**

P: As we go to prepare the way of the Lord through repentance and bearing fruit, may the peace of Christ which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in Him as He empowers us to be peacemakers. **C: Thanks be to God!**



In the Grace Church Family:

Jeffrey Bivens, Rick & Cindy Bivens, Glenda Childers, Pat Dietz, 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, Sonya Elliott & family (car accident, recovering at Baptist in Winston-Salem), family of John Lentz, Chris Medlin, Randy & Rita Neill, 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 DECEMBER BIRTHDAY TO:

December 3 – Dan Panek, Matthew Hefner December 4 – River Stainback
December 22 – Susan Setzer December 25 – Faye Lane
December 28 – Kim Parker

COMING UP AT GRACE THIS WEEK

Today: Second Sunday of Advent

9:30am – Sunday School 10:30am - Worship Celebration

Wednesday – 6:30pm – Midweek Advent Service

Friday – 10:00 am Volunteers to place flags on Veterans' graves

Saturday

9:00am – Grace Prayer Breakfast at Four Peas in a Pod – Conover

11:00am – Wreaths Across America at Union Church

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

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

ADVENT VESPERS WEDNESDAYS at 6:30pm (12/10 and 12/17)

For our Bible Study Sermon time we are using "Faithful: Christmas Through the Eyes of Joseph" by Adam Hamilton. Please join us as we worship, pray, sing, and reflect on God's Word.

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 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.”

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.

OFFERING ENVELOPES

There remain a number of boxes of offering envelopes for next year on the back pew. Please take yours if you haven't already done so. Also, if you could deliver a box to someone you know that would also be appreciated. Thank you!

Ministers of Grace – All the People of Grace
Pastor – Reverend Doug Hefner Board President – Tim Eckard
Lector – Tim Eckard Youth Leader – Stormy Shull
Altar Preparation – Cindy Bivens
Communion Assistants – Sheila Drum & Lula Ingle
Ushers – Jeff Scronce & Jason Yoder
Offering Counters – Todd Childers & Jason Yoder

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Second Sunday in Advent – December 7, 2025

“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. ²And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.”

- Isaiah 11:1-2 -

The botanical life of most trees is amazing. Often when a tree is damaged and the trunk is cut down, a new shoot will come up out of the stump or roots. So long as the roots are healthy, it will try to live. It will put out new shoots and eventually try to flower and reproduce. It keeps adapting to its circumstances and tries its best to thrive.

One of my favorite activities is to be out in nature, especially walking or hiking through a forest. Ever since I was a young girl, I spent a lot of time in Fontenelle Forest of Bellevue, Nebraska, where I grew up. I hiked with my parents and grandparents. My husband and I had our engagement photos taken in Fontenelle Forest. And now, when I go back to visit, I take my kids to the forest. I had a very special relationship with my maternal grandfather. I loved holding his hand as we walked the trails, and later on, we walked the boardwalk through the forest as his body didn't allow him to walk on the uneven trails anymore. My grandpa knew a lot about nature and God's creation.

One time we were walking along, and I noticed how several trees had been cut down. My grandpa said it could be that they were diseased, or they were at risk of falling over on the boardwalk. I mentioned it was a little sad to see them cut down, but then I saw something. It was bright green, and it appeared to be growing out of the crack in the middle of the stump. Grandpa said it was a new shoot. The roots were continuing to produce, and out of what appeared to be dead, well, there was new life. Grandpa said it would eventually grow into its own tree.

I think of that moment every time I revisit these words from Isaiah 11. Jesse, his son David, and David's son Solomon were gone. What appeared to be left of that family tree was nothing but a dead stump. But wait! Isaiah says God will grow a brand-new shoot out of that stump. It will produce a Branch. And the Branch will produce fruit. This Branch would eventually be known to us as the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The lineage of David would continue on as God would give us a brand-new David in Jesus Christ. In Him there is life and salvation, and we know that death no longer has its grip on us.

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