**Grace Lutheran Church**

493 Forest Avenue, Glen Ellyn IL 630.469.1555

[www.graceglenellyn.org](http://www.graceglenellyn.org)

**Third Sunday of Advent December 13, 2020**

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***+ Proclaim Christ + Build Community +***

***+ Serve Our Neighbors +***

**Introduction**

*“Rejoice always,” begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. “All God’s children got a robe,” go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God’s party.*

**Gathering**

**The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.**

**Prelude**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism,*

*as the worship leader begins.*

Blessed be God, Father, **☩** Son, and Holy Spirit,

whose forgiveness is sure

and whose steadfast love endures forever. **Amen.**

Together let us honestly and humbly confess

that we have not lived as God desires.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Loving and forgiving God,

**we confess that we are held captive by sin.**

**In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray.**

**We have not welcomed the stranger;**

**we have not loved our neighbor;**

**we have not been Christ to one another.**

**Restore us, O God.**

**Wake us up and turn us from our sin.**

**Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

People of God, hear this glad news:

by God’s endless grace

our sins are forgiven, and we are free—

free from all that holds us back

and free to live in the peaceable realm of God.

May we be strengthened in God’s love,

**☩** comforted by Christ’s peace,

and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

**Opening Rite for Advent *(Please mute your mic)*** ELW#257 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel sts. 5, 6

 

**5 O come, O Key of David, come,**

 **and open wide our heav'nly home;**

 **make safe the way that leads on high,**

 **and close the path to misery. *Refrain***

**6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;**

 **O Sun of justice, now draw near.**

 **Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,**

 **and death's dark shadow put to flight. *Refrain***

**Lighting the Advent Candle: Joy**

We wait for the promise of Joy.

Sheer glee, measureless mirth, belly laughs of delight, sighs of deep contentment.

We pray that Joy may come. We know that Joy has come, and will come.

In the lighting of these candles, we remember. (*Light 3 candles here.)*

We remember that joy is not to be confused with mere happiness.

Joy is knowing that God has got us, even when things look bad.

Joy surprises us even in the midst of grief.

God has given us the Body of Christ so that our siblings in Christ can hold Joy for us—

for you, for me—even when it feels like despair has a stranglehold on us.

Joy comes with justice and righteousness and the restoration of all things.

Joy will not be denied, no matter what. Because Joy (as C.S. Lewis said,)

is the serious business of heaven.

***(You may unmute your mic)***

**Greeting**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

**Prayer of the Day**

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**Word**

**God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.**

**First Lesson Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11**

*Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.*

1The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; 2to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; 3to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. 4They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

8For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. 9Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. 10I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. 11For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

**The Psalm** *Read responsively by verse* **Psalm 126**

*The Lord has done great things for us. (Ps. 126:3)*

1When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.
2**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.** **Then they said among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for them.”**
3The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.
4**Restore our fortunes, O Lord,** **like the watercourses of the Negeb.**
5Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.
6**Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,** **will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

**Second Lesson 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**

*Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ’s coming.*

16Rejoice always, 17pray without ceasing, 18give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19Do not quench the Spirit. 20Do not despise the words of prophets, 21but test everything; hold fast to what is good; 22abstain from every form of evil.
  23May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation**

 **Alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord! All flesh shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia.**

The holy Gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

**Gospel John 1:6-8, 19-28**

*John’s gospel describes Jesus as the “light of the world.” John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.*

6There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.
  19This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” 20He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” 21And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” 22Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” 23He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ ”as the prophet Isaiah said.
  24Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. 25They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” 26John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, 27the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” 28This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

***(Please mute your mic)***

**Sermon**  The Rev. Melody Eastman

***(You may unmute your mic)***

**Prayers of Intercession**

God of power and might, comfort your people and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

*A brief silence.*

God of preachers and messengers, you have entrusted your church with the work of proclaiming good news. Strengthen the witness of bishops, pastors, deacons, church musicians, lay leaders, and all people who contribute their prayers and talents to public worship. Embed your word in their hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of every living creature, you announce the year of your favor for all of creation. Extend your kindness and relief to endangered animals and plants. Strengthen the human beings who rely on the rhythms of nature to make their living. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all peoples and nations, you plant us as your oaks of righteousness and ask us to care for one another. Be present with the leaders of every nation as they govern. Give them a spirit of righteousness, that your goodness and mercy is revealed through their actions. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of exiles and wanderers, you repair what was once destroyed. We pray for people who have been displaced from their homes by fire, flood, earthquake, or storm. Support the work of Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response, and all disaster relief organizations in their recovery efforts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. Bestow your spirit upon this congregation and empower us to comfort the people who turn to us in times of need. Make your church a place of refuge and healing. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God of sinners and saints, you offer joy even in the midst of our grief. We are grateful for the beloved, imperfect people whose lives testified to your radiant love. Anoint all who mourn with the oil of gladness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

 *(If your House Church is celebrating Communion, refer to that liturgy here.)*

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

**Sending**

**God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.**

**Blessing**

The Creator of the stars bless our Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill us with love,

the unexpected Spirit guide our journey, **☩** now and forever. **Amen.**

**Sending Hymn *(Please mute your mic)*** ELW #264 Prepare the Royal Highway; sts. 1, 2, 3

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***(You may unmute your mic)***

**Sent to the World**

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

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**Current Prayer Requests**

**Name Relation to Grace Prayers For**

Helen Sladek Member Healing & Strength

Pr. Melody Eastman Pastor Healing & Strength

Ficarella Family Members Birth of Fiona Skye

Chris Danly Son of Mark & Pat Danly Healing & Strength

Sigrid Elliott Member Healing & Strength

Dorothy Tracy Member Healing & Strength

Elizabeth Amber Friend of Pr. Melody Healing & Strength

**Prayers for our homebound Members**

Anita Blakemore, Evelyn Elson, Carol Petersen, Norma Petersen, Dorothy Stein

**Weekly Announcements**

**Pr. Melody had successful shoulder surgery This week. In case of a pastoral emergency, please contact Pr. Joe Yucha from Faith Lutheran Church at 804-334-7128. Pr. Joe is on call through Saturday, December 12.**

**Advent Devotions:** Please join us **Wednesdays in Advent at 7:00pm** for 15 minutes or so of prayer, reflection and peace. Just a short gathering (over Zoom, of course) to focus your mind, quiet your spirit, and rest in promise. Your Beloved Friends in Christ are here to support you. By joining us, your presence will support them. We all need that these days. The link to the Zoom Advent Devotions will be sent in *News from Grace,* Grace’s weekly e-blast. Let’s “Prepare the Way” together!

**“Sounds of the Season,” A Virtual Event:**  Enjoy this FREE musical celebration from Chicago’s Premier Handbell Ensemble with family and friends from the comfort of your own home. **Saturday, December 12 at 4:00pm.**  A link to the concert will be available on their website in December.  [**www.AgapeRingers.org**](http://www.agaperingers.org/)

**House Church Worship via phone or internet every Sunday morning at 9:30am!** We currently have five “House Churches” of worshipping members (each House Church consisting of 6-8 members/families meeting via Zoom or calling in by phone.) If you are unsure how to sign on, go ahead and register and let us know you need some help; we’ll walk you through it! We would be so blessed to have you join us. Register online for a House Church at [graceglenellyn.org](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fgraceglenellyn.org%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR0Hfv_r7Lkk0l-PSfwxo5IuvGdumHQ3QCEP7v4ZvaR0WOJKVA5hbrjxKAE&h=AT1soNxFTUJFeYviMArEGKelFeVj5prKjMKXk0UJTSFn5xaDSLNHlHWl9jolaFvljgE6OlBV9vpq3vIE5HfsX4lEUbwYpfdYpMW57h6Tyc58-9jrGuramUJOJJ1Qd_RvJw&__tn__=-UK-R&c%5b0%5d=AT2EpYQU1esaMoWfP5JtqUBhBqXEjGx5atvDW6kLdBJviMugmDClI27DYHudyuPviP9Hv6sjAHveGxQGTojgtZKHh3Ar39pGN4cSEtsbiD_E96uHBoM53nY40A4mpgsxH7Ee_La5kZ5CLFMRaCbeBMrb7-BmRa8JDzOlS6vBJ2YxwbmuqBlPHi9nylzaWrSwmlhCSx9Ig0m3keY) (on the main page Announcements).

**Contributions to Grace:** You may continue to mail your contributions to the church office; have your bank mail your contribution to the church office; or contribute on-line through Grace’s website. Please know, pandemic or no, our mission continues! Thank you for your continued support of our ministries at Grace Lutheran.

**2020 Year-End Stock or Securities Gifting:** If you intend to gift stock or securities to Grace, for your year-end charitable donation, please do so **no later than December 15**. This allows for sales to close and monies flow into the books before the Holidays.  Also, the stock market is thinly traded the last week of the year, and causes price swings; good to avoid that.

**Financial Commitment Cards:** Please return your financial commitment/pledge to Grace for 2021 either by mail; through Grace’s website; or send an email to bsudds@graceglenellyn.org. Thank you. Only 28 cards have been returned to date.

**All-Church Christmas Eve Service:** Even though we’ll be worshipping together online, we will still have some special surprises to make your Christmas Eve worship special! Join us for an All Church Zoom Service on **Christmas Eve at 4:00pm** —complete with communion and candle-lighting. We will be sending out the link for this service through *News from Grace*, Grace’s weekly e-blast. Mark your calendar, keep your eye out for more info, and plan to help us receive our King on Christmas Eve!

The First Sunday of Christmas, **December 27**, is a **Service of Lessons and Carols** from the Metropolitan Chicago Synod. Login details will be provided as they become available.

**Reverse Advent Food Drive: The Reverse Advent Food Drive for the Glen Ellyn Food Pantry will begin a little earlier this year. We are asking you to begin collecting items each day starting November 25th. You may then bring your filled bags to the Food Pantry December 21st-23rd between 9 and 11am. Items: Day 1-Paper Towels; 2-Diced Tomatoes; 3-Ketchup; 4-Mustard; 5-Mayonnaise; 6-Boxed Cake Mix; 7-Dried Beans; 8-Pancake Syrup; 9-Sugar; 10-Flour; 11-Boxed Mashed Potatoes; 12-Flavored Rice a Roni; 13-Shampoo; 14-Conditioner; 15-Toothpaste; 16-Lipton Tea; 17-1lb Pre-ground Coffee; 18-Canned Pineapple; 19-Canned Mandarin Oranges; 20-Olive Oil; 21-Laundry Detergent; 22-Canned Chicken; 23-Pickles; 24-Canned Chili. You can also find the list on Grace’s Website at graceglenellyn.org.**

**The church offices will be closed Christmas Day through January 1.**

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**Every Member a Minister and Missionary!**

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