**Grace Lutheran Church**

493 Forest Avenue, Glen Ellyn IL 630.469.1555

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

**Fourth Sunday of Advent December 20, 2020**

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

***+ Serve Our Neighbors +***

**Introduction**

*God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David’s throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel’s greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, “Count me in.” We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, “Count us in.”*

*Helpful Reminders for House Church:*

* *For House Church via computer, set your screen to Speaker View.*
* *Mute your mic during hymns.*
* *You may unmute for all group responses. Remember that your host can mute you but cannot unmute you; you must unmute your mic yourself.*
* *If you are joining by phone, move the mouthpiece away from your mouth unless you are speaking, to avoid broadcasting your breathing.*
* *Avoid background conversations when your mic is unmuted.*
* *THANK YOU FOR WORSHIPPING WITH US!*

**Gathering**

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

**Prelude**

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

**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 Hymn *(Please mute your mic)*** ELW#257 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel; sts. 7, 8

 

**7 O come, O King of nations, come,**

 **O Cornerstone that binds in one:**

 **refresh the hearts that long for you;**

 **restore the broken, make us new.  *Refrain***

**8 O come, O come, Emmanuel,**

 **and ransom captive Israel,**

 **that mourns in lonely exile here**

 **until the Son of God appear. *Refrain***

**Lighting the Advent Candle: Peace**

Holy God, your peace passes all understanding.

*Shalom*, *Salaam, Paz, Ruhe, Amani, Peace.*

All over the world, we pray for peace. We pray for peace and then choose not to live it.

But you promise us that Peace will come, and will dwell within us.

You promise us that Peace will restore our hearts and our communities.

In the lighting of these candles, we remember. (*Light 4 candles here.)*

Only your wholeness can center us, fill us, settle us.

Only your Word can change us.

Only your promise can heal this struggling world.

We long for your peace.

We wait for your peace.

We are ready for your peace.

***(You may unmute your mic to join in the responses.***

**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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Word**

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

**First Lesson 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16**

*Instead of David building a house (temple) for God, God promises to establish David’s house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the messiah, God’s anointed.*

1Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, 2the king said to the prophet Nathan, “See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.” 3Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.”
  4But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: 5Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? 6I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. 7Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” 8Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; 9and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. 10And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, 11from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. 16Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

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

**The Psalm** *Read responsively by verse* **Luke 1:46b-55**

*You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (Lk. 1:52)*

46bMy soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, 47my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
48**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.** **From this day all generations will call me blessed:**
49you, the Almighty, have done great things for me and holy is your name.
50**You have mercy on those who fear you,** **from generation to generation.**
51You have shown strength with your arm and scattered the proud in their conceit,
52**casting down the mighty from their thrones** **and lifting up the lowly.**
53You have filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

54**You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,** **to remember the promise of mercy,**
55the promise made to our forbears, to Abraham and his children forever.

**Second Lesson Romans 16:25-27**

*Paul closes his letter to the Romans by praising God because, in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God has revealed the promised, divine plan of salvation for all humanity. Paul proclaims this gospel of Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.*

25Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages 26but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—27to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

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.**

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

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

**Gospel Luke 1:26-38**

*In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little known places. This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in this gospel.*

26In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” 29But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” 34Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” 35The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37For nothing will be impossible with God.” 38Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

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

**Sermon**  The Rev. Melody Eastman

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

**Prayers of Intercession**

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

*A brief silence.*

Gracious God, all generations call you blessed. In this holy season we pray for our neighbors of other denominations and faiths. Inspire the faith of their people. Cultivate understanding among us and strengthen us in love and service to our community. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creator God, you scatter the proud. Everything we have belongs first to you. Bless and protect the seas, mountains, plains, forests, skies, and soils that surround us. Give us humility as we tend them. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Righteous God, you humble the powerful and lift up the lowly. We pray for the leaders of all nations, that they amplify the voices of people in need. Guide all people entrusted with leadership, to create societies in which everyone can flourish. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Compassionate God, you fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty. Nourish those who lack access to adequate food and nutrition. Bless the work of advocates, community organizers, and food pantries. Encourage others to provide for their neighbors in need. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Healing God, you pour out mercy to all who cry out to you. Surround everyone in need of healing in body, mind, or spirit with your tender presence, especially Dorothy, Marilyn, Sigrid, Chris, Anita, Evelyn, Norma, Carol, Dorothy, and those we name before you now. . . Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Eternal God, you are faithful to the promises you made to our forebears. We give thanks for the ministry of Katharina von Bora Luther and other ancestors who organized, planned, dreamed, encouraged, and reached out as they served you. We give thanks for the bold leadership of female leaders in our own time. Inspire others with their steadfast witness. 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** Ecumenical Version

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

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. 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 #251 My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness

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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**

Marilyn Goodrich Member Healing & Strength

Chris Danly Son of Mark & Pat Danly Healing & Strength

Sigrid Elliott Member Healing & Strength

Dorothy Tracy Member Healing & Strength

**Prayers for our homebound Members**

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

**Weekly Announcements**

**Midweek Advent Worship via Zoom** Wednesday at 7:00. A short (15-minute) contemplative service to help you center and prepare. Check *News from Grace* for the link, or contact the church office.

**All-Church Christmas Eve Worship via Zoom** Thursday, December 24 at 4:00 p.m. Join us to visit the beautifully decorated sanctuary, sing your favorite carols, hear a special version of the Christmas story, share communion and join in the Service of Candle Lighting! Prepare your home worship space with bread and wine/juice for communion, and a candle for each worshipper to light.

**With your strong year-end support we could end 2020 in the Black!** If you’ve gotten a bit behind but have the ability to catch up on your offerings, we would be very grateful. Please have all donations for 2020 in the church office by December 30—*THANK YOU!*

**Commitment Cards for 2021** have been mailed. Please return yours to the office, or you can submit your commitment on Grace’s website. Your support remains critical; thank you for your prayerful response!

Sign up for **AmazonSmile** and pick Grace Lutheran Church as your charity of choice:

Remember to shop at AmazonSmile when making purchases online. In order to browse or shop at AmazonSmile, customers must first select a charitable organization. Here is the link for Grace Lutheran: [**http://smile.amazon.com/ch/36-2496438**](http://smile.amazon.com/ch/36-2496438)

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**Every Member a Minister and Missionary!**

**Phone: 630-469-1555 Emergency Pastoral Contact: 630-674-2887**

**info@graceglenellyn.org**[**www.graceglenellyn.org**](http://www.graceglenellyn.org)

**Pastor**

Rev. Melody Eastman office ext. 14

meastman@graceglenellyn.org

**Minister of Music**

Bradford Thompson 219-718-8879

bradfordmthompson@gmail.com

**Ministry Associate**

Becky Ficarella office ext. 17

bficarella@graceglenellyn.org

**Office Manager**

Barbara Sudds office ext. 10

bsudds@graceglenellyn.org

**Parish Counselor**

Carole LoGalboM.S., LCPC 630-668-4594

carolelogalbo@yahoo.com