

Welcome to Grace Lutheran Church

To glorify God, to grow in faith,
to give in service, together in Christ
gracelutheranhatfield.org



**Thursday, December 16, 2021
at 6:00 p.m.**

Rev. Nancy M. Raabe, Pastor
Kevin Freaney, Minister of Music
Lynn Fasick, Office Administrator
Jessica Moran, Stepping Stones Director

Please pick up some colorful stars as you enter and an electric candle.

Cathy and Lou Farrell will be available throughout the service to offer the healing touch of Reiki for anyone who desires it. Please feel free at any point to go to them back by the baptismal font.

Asterisks denote those parts of the service in which the congregation is invited to stand.*

We gather in silence.

***Call to Worship**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by God, and without God nothing came to be.

What came to be through God was life, and this life was the light of the world.

The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.



***Carol: "O Little Town of Bethlehem"**

1 O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

2 For Christ is born of Mary,
and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond'ring love.

O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all the earth!

3 How silently, how silently
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming;
but, in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him,
still the dear Christ enters in.

The First Reading: Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

¹For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

²a time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

³a time to kill, and a time to heal;

a time to break down, and a time to build up;

⁴a time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

⁵a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

⁶a time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to throw away;

⁷a time to tear, and a time to sew;

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

⁸a time to love, and a time to hate;

a time for war, and a time for peace.

⁹What gain have the workers from their toil? ¹⁰I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. ¹¹He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Silence for reflection

Psalm 22 (selected verses)

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from helping me, so far from the words of my groaning?

**O my God, I cry by day but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest.”**

In you, our ancestors trusted.

They trusted and you delivered them.

It was you who brought me from the womb,

you who kept me safe on my mother's breast.
Since my mother bore me, you have been my God.

Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

You do not despise the poverty of the afflicted.

Neither do you hide your face from me.

When I cry out, you hear me.

The poor shall eat and be satisfied.

Let those who seek you give you praise!

Psalm 23

Refrain: All

Nancy Raabe



The Lord is my shep-herd, I



shall not want, he makes me down to lie___ in



ver - dant pas-tures he lead - eth me the qui - et wa-ters by.___



¹The LORD¹ is my shepherd;
I shall not | be in want.

²**The LORD makes me lie down | in green pastures
and leads me be- | side still waters.**

³You restore my | soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways | for your name's sake.

⁴Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall | fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they | comfort me. R

**⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence | of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is | running over.**

**⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days | of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the | LORD forever. R**

Silence for reflection

The Second Reading: Isaiah 40:1-5

**¹Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.**

**²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.**

³A voice cries out:

**"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.**

**⁴Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.**

**⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."**

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Music interlude and memory stars

During this interlude you are invited to write concerns for yourself or for others onto the stars you were given as you entered. You may hang these on the tree next to the Advent wreath.



LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE

The first candle is lighted.

Officiant: We light this first candle to remember those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember clearly, their faces, their voices, their bodies. We embrace and give thanks for the memories that bind them to us in this season of expectation, when all Creation waits for the Light.

We remember them with love. May God's eternal love surround them.

All sing:

**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.**

Silent reflection

The second candle is lighted.

Officiant: We light this second candle to remember the pain of loss: loss of relationships, loss of trust, loss of jobs, loss of health, loss of faith, the loss of joy. We acknowledge and embrace the pain of the past, O God, and we offer it to You, asking that into our wounded hearts and open hands You will place the gift of peace, shalom.

**We remember that through You all things are possible.
Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into Your future.**

All sing:

**O come thou Wisdom from on high, who orderest all things mightily.
To us the path of knowledge show, and teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Silent reflection

The third candle is lighted.

We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time.
We pause and remember the past weeks, months, and for some of us years, that have been heavy with our burdens.
We accept and lay before you, God, the sharpness of memory, the sadness and grief, the hurt and fear, the anger and pain.
We accept and lay before you the ways we feel we have fallen short, and the times we have spent blaming ourselves, and you, for all that we have suffered.
We accept and lay before you the time we have walked alone, in darkness; and in knowledge of our own mortality.

We remember that though we have journeyed far, and that, while lost, we may have turned away from you, that you will never fail us. Though winter be upon us and the night is long, we pray that you be present with us in the darkness of your great mystery. For even the darkness is not dark to you.

All sing:

**O come thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thy advent here.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Silent reflection

The fourth candle is lighted.

We light this fourth candle to remember faith, the gift of light and hope that God offers to us in the stories of Hanukkah and of Christmas, which both also began in abandonment, insecurity, and humbleness, in a time of war and in a poor stable.

**We remember that the loving God who kept the light shining in the temple and who came to share this life with us promises us comfort and peace.
We remember the One who shares our burdens, who shows us the way to the Light, and who journeys with us into all our tomorrows.**

All sing:

**O come Desire of Nations, bind in one the hearts of humankind.
Bid then our sad, divisions cease, and be thyself our King of Peace.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

***Prayers of the People**

God of wisdom, we come to you this Christmas Season tired, in turmoil, and in pain. As the nights have grown longer, so has darkness grown and wrapped itself around our hearts. In this season of longest night, we ask your healing blessings upon all that we carry in our hearts, sorrow we fear may never end, wounds we cannot even put into words.

Lord, hear our prayer,
And in your merciful love, answer.

God of mercy and compassion, there are those among us who are grieving over what might have been. Death or loss or terrible hurt has changed our experience of Christmas. We remember that once it was a special day for us, too, but someone or something precious has gone away from us in this life.

We have lost a beloved, a job, a goal, a cause, a dream. We find ourselves adrift and alone. We are weary from the journey, and we have found no room at the inn. We come to you seeking rest, and peace, and shelter from the storm.

Lord, hear our prayer,
And in your merciful love, answer.

God of grace, in the spirit of the season, grant us all that we need to comfort us as we journey through this Christmas season. We ask that you shelter and sustain all those of us, both here and throughout the world, who wander or want or weep or are heavy laden, that we may be lifted up in courage and journey on in thy peace.

Lord, hear our prayer,
And in your merciful love, answer.

God of love, in this Christmas season we embrace and offer up to you all that used to be which is now lost to us, and cannot be again. With celebration all around us, memories of what was, and fears of what may be, weigh heavily on our hearts. Please hold us close in your embrace, be near to us this night, until the light returns and morning comes.

Lord, hear our prayer,
And in your merciful love, answer.

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give thine angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for thy love's sake.

Amen.

Third Reading: Luke 2:1-7

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.



*Hymn: "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" (ELW 282)

Stanzas 1-3 only



- 1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,
- 2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come with peace - ful wings un - furled,
- 3 And you, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,
- 4 For lo! The days are has - t'ning on, by proph - ets seen of old,



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
and still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world.
who toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and slow:
when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,



"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all - gra - cious king."
A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing,
look now, for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing;
when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.
and ev - er o'er its ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.
oh, rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - gels sing!
and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876

Music: CAROL, Richard S. Willis, 1819-1900

Let us pray.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech you, O God; give us light in the night season; and by your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night. Amen.

**Gentle God of love, help us reach out together for the light of faith,
for renewal and recovery and a new day coming.
Grant that hope may come to rest in our hearts,
and let it go forth with us into the darkness,
this night and in the nights to come, until we see the dawn.**

The lights are dimmed.

***Carol: Silent Night**

You may light your electric candle by twisting at the top or bottom.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace. | Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born! |
| 2 Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia! | 3 Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from your holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth. |

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we thank you for your constant love and for the blessings of this night.

We know that even when we cannot see or feel you, still you are there.

Help us to remember you and to listen for your voice in the words of family, friends, and strangers.

Kindle our hearts and awaken hope, that we may know you as you reveal yourself in the world and in our lives.

Let the light of your holy Spirit shine like these candles in the darkness, lighting the way for all who feel despairing, lost, or forgotten, and grant that peace may come to dwell deeply in all our hearts.

***Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.

***Dismissal**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
And also with you.

Please extinguish your candles and leave them on the table as you depart.



Serving today

Presider, Rev. Nancy M. Raabe

Minister of Music, Kevin Freaney

Guitarist, Harold Schaefer

Lector, Jean Shaffer

Video and sound, Harold Schaefer, Dan Sarm, Tami Sarm

Copyrights and permissions

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” (ELW 279): Text by Phillips Brooks (1835-1893), music (ST. LOUIS) by Lewis H. Redner, 1831-1908. Public domain.

Psalm 23 refrain by Nancy Raabe. Used with permission.

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (ELW 257): Text, German Catholic Psalter, 1710; music, French processional, 15th century. Public domain.

“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” (ELW 282): Text by Edmund Sears (1810-1876), music by Richard S. Willis (1819-1900). Public domain.



It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

W	W	E	A	R	Y	P	R	O	P	H	E	T	S
N	H	S	C	M	S	A	S	R	L	S	H	N	Y
C	A	A	T	S	B	U	S	V	U	G	E	L	L
L	O	N	A	I	O	A	C	L	I	I	T	N	P
O	L	O	G	I	L	I	B	N	S	F	H	H	I
V	S	N	R	E	S	L	D	E	I	U	A	O	N
E	Y	O	I	U	L	I	N	W	L	G	R	V	M
N	L	E	M	B	M	S	S	E	M	E	P	E	E
G	H	E	A	V	E	N	G	O	S	G	S	R	L
U	E	L	U	F	E	C	A	E	P	S	P	I	O
S	E	G	C	G	R	A	C	I	O	U	S	N	S
S	P	S	V	G	N	I	B	M	I	L	C	G	N
P	G	V	E	M	P	A	I	N	F	U	L	A	H
O	C	R	U	S	H	I	N	G	O	L	D	E	N

HEAVEN
 GRACIOUS
 PEACEFUL
 STILLNESS
 CLOVEN
 ANGELS
 WEARY
 HARPS
 PROPHETS
 HOVERING
 PAINFUL
 CRUSHING
 GLORIOUS
 BABEL
 CLIMBING
 SWIFTLY
 MUSIC
 SOLEMN
 MIDNIGHT
 GOLDEN

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/3121294/>

Grace Lutheran Church
Pastor Nancy M. Raabe

40 N. Main St., Hatfield, PA 19440 215-855-4676

Pastor: pastorgracehatfield@gmail.com

Office: graceassistant40@gmail.com

Stepping Stones: steppingstonesoffice@verizon.net, 215-368-2052



We rely on your gifts to sustain Grace and all its ministries! Please leave your offering in the basket at the rear of the sanctuary, or sign up for electronic giving on the new online giving page at gracelutheranhatfield.org/give-to-grace. If you do not yet have offering envelopes and would like them, please just ask.

If you are in need of pastoral care or need a helping hand for any reason, contact Pastor Raabe by email; in the office at 215-855-4676; or anytime on her cell phone, 614.214.2639 (texting is good!). Talk with her about prayer requests, illnesses and hospital stays, weddings, funerals, baptisms, and joyful events in your life.



Coming up at Grace:

- ❖ **Christmas Eve, December 24: “Night of Silence,”** worship with Holy Communion and carols by candlelight, at 4, 6:30 and 9 p.m. The 6:30 p.m. service will be livestreamed; find the link on the Online Worship page of our website.
- ❖ **Watch our Sunday School’s Virtual Christmas Pageant starting December 17.** See our kids as the holy family, shepherds, angels, animals, all caring well for Baby Jesus. Find it under the Worship menu of our website.
- ❖ **You may view Pastor Raabe’s Christmas message also starting December 17** in the same place. (This is different from her Christmas Eve sermon.)
- ❖ **Pastor Raabe’s daily Advent podcast continues through December 23.** Find the link under the Worship menu of our website, where these short daily devotions are also printed.
- ❖ **December 26, one service at 9:15: Christmas Carols by Request.** Wear your gaudiest Christmas sweater or outfit and come with a list of carols you’d like to sing. It would be helpful if they were in one of our worship books, but if not we’ll do our

best!