

# Welcome to Grace Lutheran Church

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

[GraceLutheranHatfield.org](http://GraceLutheranHatfield.org)



**December 21, 2023 7 p.m.**

**Winter Solstice, 10:27 p.m.**

**Rev. Nancy M. Raabe, Pastor  
Kevin Freaney, Minister of Music  
Lou and Cathy Farrell, Healing Touch Ministers**

For many people Christmas is a time of great joy and light, but those who have lost loved ones or are experiencing grief may struggle to find their voice. This gentle service of reflection and remembrance is intended to open up avenues of expression for that pain, in the context of the yearning for the coming of Christ that lies at the heart of this season.

## **Prelude**

### **Call to Worship**

P. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.

**C. All things were made by God, and without God nothing came to be.**

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

**C. 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.

## LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE: Lighting of the Advent wreath

*The first candle is lit.*

*Leader:* 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.

**C. 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 you, O Israel.**

*The second candle is lit.*

*Leader:* 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.

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

*All sing:*

**O come, O Wisdom from on high, embracing all things far and nigh:  
In strength and beauty come and stay; teach us your will and guide our way.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

*The third candle is lit.*

P. 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.

**C. 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 is 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; O Sun of justice, now draw near. Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

*The fourth candle is lit.*

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.

**C. 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, O King of nations, come, O Cornerstone that binds in one: Refresh the hearts that long for you; restore the broken, make us new. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**



## PSALM 80

*Verses: Cantor; Refrain: All*

Sue Furlong



God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on  
us and we shall be saved.

O shepherd of Israel, hear us, shine forth from your cherubim throne.

O Lord, rouse up your might, O Lord, come to our help.

***Refrain***

God of hosts, turn again, we implore, look down from heaven and see.

Visit this vine, and protect it, the vine your right hand has planted.

***Refrain***

May your hand be on the one you have chosen, the one you have given your strength.

And we shall never forsake you again; give us life that we may call upon your name.

***Refrain***

### **ANOINTING and HEALING TOUCH**

*During this time you may come forward for anointing with oil and a blessing; go back by the font to experience healing touch; or light a candle in memory of a loved one and inscribe a prayer card. Or if you prefer you may do all these.*

*After all have returned to their places, the presider may say:*

May God bless you with the healing power of the Holy Spirit,  
release you from suffering, and restore you to wholeness and strength.

**READING: Luke 2:8-20**

HYMN: Christmas Come Close



1 Christ-mas come close in a child's crump - led face, to the  
 2 Christ-mas come close to the place where we are, in our  
 3 Christ-mas come close to a world that is bleak, giv-ing  
 4 Christ-mas come close in - to fo - cus and frame, to hu -



rag - ged and raw in a harsh birth - ing place, in a  
 long - ing for peace, for a sign, for a star, for a  
 hope a new home, mak-ing pro - phe - cy speak: so the  
 man - i - ty's heart for the child to make claim: for the



surg - ing of joy, in a bun - dle held tight, in a  
 cer - tain - ty born in un - cer - tain - ty's space, for a  
 an - gels will sing, and the wise will be heard, and the  
 poor to be served, for the rich to kneel low, for Mag -



breath, in a cry, through the dark of the night.  
 mys - ter - y grasped that our blind - ness can trace.  
 powers will take heed of this child and his word.  
 ni - fi - cat now in the Christ - mas we know.

Text: Shirley Erena Murray  
 Setting, Nancy Raabe

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*To the petition "Lord, hear our prayer," please respond,  
"And in your merciful love, answer."*



## LORD'S PRAYER

## BLESSING

The blessing of Almighty God, † the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever.

*For those with wax candles, please tip yours into the flame being offered. For those with electric candles, please light yours as your row is lit.*



## HYMN: Silent Night, Holy Night!

ELW 281

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.

2 Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight;  
glories stream from heaven afar,  
heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!

Christ, the Savior, is born!  
Christ, the Savior, is born!

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.

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace to love and serve as Christ. **C. Thanks be to God.**

*Please extinguish your candles as you depart in silence.*



## Serving today – Thank You!

Presider, Rev. Nancy M. Raabe  
Minister of Music, Kevin Freaney  
Healing touch, Cathy and Lou Farrell  
Video and sound, Harold Schaefer



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### Coming up at Grace

- ❖ **Christmas Eve, December 24:**
  - **4:00 and 9:00 p.m.:** Worship with Holy Communion and carols by candlelight
  - **11 p.m.:** “Worship Under the Stars”
- ❖ **No service on Christmas Day**
- ❖ **December 31: One service at 9:15 a.m. (Carol Sing)**



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, sign up for electronic giving at [gracelutheranhatfield.org/give-to-grace](http://gracelutheranhatfield.org/give-to-grace), text a gift to 844.613.0815, or use this QR code now. If you do not yet have offering envelopes and would like them, please ask.



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