

Welcome to Grace Lutheran Church

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

GraceLutheranHatfield.org



December 19, 2024 7 p.m.

Winter Solstice, Dec. 21 at 4:19 a.m.

**Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
40 N. Main St., Hatfield PA 19440
Pastor Nancy M. Raabe**

In a culture that thrives on Christmas cheer, the darkness that surrounds us at the Winter Solstice invites us to slow down and open our hearts to God. Family and friends we have loved and lost, disappointments we have endured, hopes that remain yet to be realized: Gather these sorrows tonight and lift them into God's care as we focus our awareness on the light of Christ, the light that shines in the darkness, the light which the darkness can never overcome.
"Let every heart prepare him room."

The service begins in darkness.

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

The first system of the musical score is for the first line of the hymn. It consists of a treble and a bass staff, both in the key of D major (one sharp). The treble staff begins with a G4 chord, followed by a G4-A4 dyad, a G4-A4-B4 triad, and a G4-A4-B4-C5 quartet. The bass staff begins with a G2-B2 dyad, followed by a G2-A2-B2 triad, and a G2-A2-B2-C3 quartet. The lyrics "Wait for the Lord, whose day is near." are written below the notes. The system ends with a double bar line and a sharp sign.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

The second system of the musical score is for the second line of the hymn. It consists of a treble and a bass staff, both in the key of D major. The treble staff begins with a G4 chord, followed by a G4-A4 dyad, a G4-A4-B4 triad, and a G4-A4-B4-C5 quartet. The bass staff begins with a G2-B2 dyad, followed by a G2-A2-B2 triad, and a G2-A2-B2-C3 quartet. The lyrics "Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!" are written below the notes. The system ends with a double bar line and a sharp sign.

Text: Taizé Community

Music: WAIT FOR THE LORD, Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994

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RESPONSIVE READING: John 1:1-3, Genesis 1:1-3, 1 John 1:5

In the beginning was the Word

The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God.

All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth,

the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Carol: O Little Town of Bethlehem (*stanzas 1 and 3*)

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.

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.

Greeting

Prayer of the Day

LIGHTING of the FIRST CANDLE

L. The shadows lengthen.

C. The evening is here.

L. This is the darkest night of the year.

**C. Let our faith flicker
against our incomprehension.**

The first candle is lit.

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.**

LIGHTING of the SECOND CANDLE

L. Small stars glow above.

C. We ponder the signs here today.

L. We await news of the Savior born far away.

**C. Stars whisper old light
on a night of new love.**

The second candle is lit.

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.**

LIGHTING of the THIRD CANDLE

L. Candlelight leaps upward.

C. We raise our hearts to God.

L. The Spirit's wings are open broad.

C. Hover over chaos; speak your holy Word.

The third candle is lit.

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.

READING: Wild Geese, by Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

PRAYING with LIGHT

As you gather the concerns of your heart and lift them to God, you may come forward, choose a taper, light it from the pillar candle, and set it in the sand.

*“Let my prayer rise before you as incense,
the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” (Psalm 141:2)*

Carol: In the Bleak Midwinter



1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,
2 Heav - en can - not hold him, nor . . . earth sus - tain;
3 What . . . can I give him, poor . . . as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
heav'n and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign;
If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed
if I were a wise . . . man I would do my part;



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
the Lord . . . God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.
yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

LIGHTING of the FOURTH CANDLE

L. In quiet dimness,

C. Heartbeats keep time.

L. In deepening vigil, we wait for a sign.

C. Jesus, end our waiting. Come into our midst.

The fourth candle is lit.

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.**



PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

LORD’S PRAYER

BLESSING

L. 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

L. Go in peace. Let Christ's light shine through you.

C. Thanks be to God.

Please extinguish your candles as you depart. A blessed and peaceful Christmas to all.

Serving tonight:

Leader, Pastor Nancy Raabe

Reader:

Usher: Lisa Boyer Acolyte: Jaime Kaler



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