## December 31, 2023

First Sunday After Christmas



# GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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.org

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<u>Worship</u>: Divine Service

8:00, 9:30 & 11:00am

Adult Bible Study & Sunday School: 9:30 am (Grace Hall)

Pastor:

Richard Willsea

<u>Deaconess:</u> Karen Suter

<u>Organist</u> Patty Barnes

#### FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

December 31, 2023

## **→ PREPARATION →**

**Today we will observe The Lord's Supper...**The Lord's Supper is celebrated at Grace Lutheran Church in the confession and glad confidence that, as he says, our Lord gives into our mouths not only bread and wine but his very body and blood to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of sins and to strengthen our union with him and with one another. Our Lord invites to his table those who trust his words, repent of all sin, and set aside any refusal to forgive and love as he forgives and loves us, that they may show forth his death until he comes. Because those who eat and drink our Lord's body and blood unworthily do so to their great harm and because Holy Communion is a confession of the faith which is confessed at this altar, any who are not yet instructed, in doubt, or who hold a confession differing from that of this congregation and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and yet desire to receive the sacrament, are asked you first to speak with the pastor, an elder or an usher. (For further study, see Matthew 5:23f; 10:32f; 18:15-35; 26:26-29; I Cor. 11:17-34). Wine is used in the individual and common cup. It may also be received by intinction. A gluten free wafer is available upon request.

**PRELUDE** 

"Rejoice and Be Merry"
"Christmas Medley"

arr. T. Kendall arr. M. Rinehart

#### WELCOME

Stand

#### INVOCATION

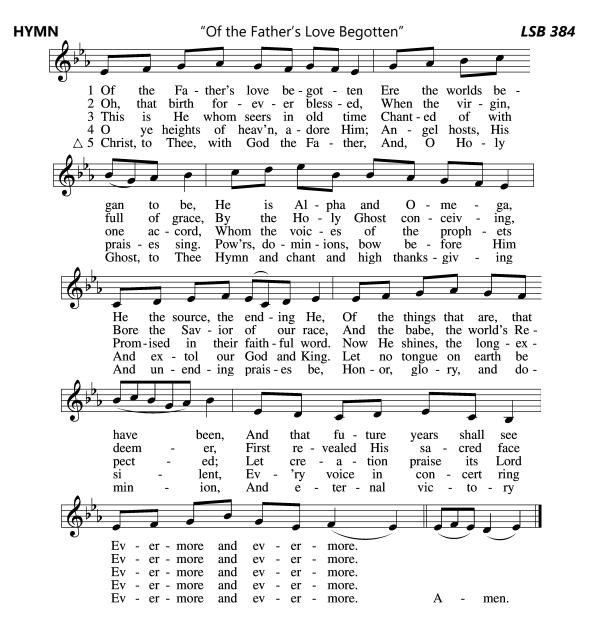
- In the name of the Father and of the 
   → Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C Amen.

#### **OPENING SENTENCES**

Psalm 89:1, 52; 71:19, 23

- **A** I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever;
- with my mouth I will make known Your faithfulness to all generations.
- P Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens.
- You who have done great things, O God, who is like You?
- A My lips will shout for joy, when I sing praises to You;
- my soul also, which You have redeemed.

- P Blessed be the LORD forever!
- Amen and Amen.



#### **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

People redeemed by the Lord, let us now make confession of our sins to God, our heavenly Father.

- Merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We repent of having sinned in thought, in word, and in deed. So often we have left undone those things which we ought to have done and have done those things which we ought not to have done. We sincerely repent of our sins and humbly ask for the grace and forgiveness that we know to be ours in Jesus, our Savior. By the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, lead us, heavenly Father, to change what is sinful in our lives so that each day we grow in righteousness and godly living to the glory of Your holy name.
- P God has promised pardon, life, and salvation because of the atoning sacrifice of His beloved Son, who has replaced slavery to sin with a priceless inheritance of freedom and joy. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit. As you believe, so may it be.
- **G** Amen.

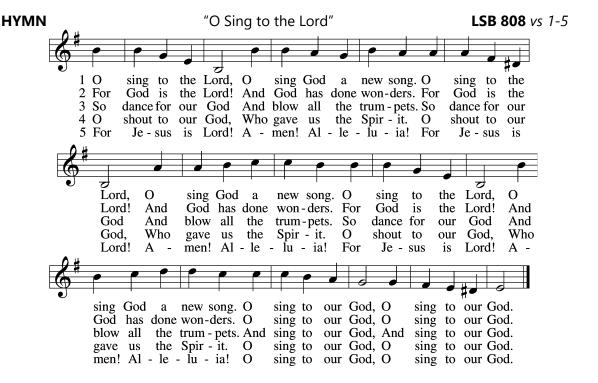
## **☆ SERVICE OF THE WORD ☆**

**INTROIT** I Left Side III Right Side

Psalm 98:1-4; Isaiah 52:10

- The LORD has bared His holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.
- Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for He has done marvelous things! His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him.
- III The LORD has made known His salvation; He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations.
- I He has remembered His steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
- Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!
- Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

The LORD has bared His holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.



## SALUTATION AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

- P The Lord be with you.
- And also with you.
- Let us pray. Gracious God of endings and beginnings, we commit to Your grace and forgiveness the year now being completed and commend to Your kindness and love the year about to begin. Throughout the coming weeks and months make the presence of Your Holy Spirit known in our lives, drawing us ever closer to Jesus and uniting all generations of Your faithful people in bonds of love and care, as we continue to grow in our baptismal grace and await the joy of eternal life in Your glorious presence. This we ask for the sake of Jesus, our Savior.
- Amen.

#### HYMN INTRODUCTION

Every day in the life of the Church brings opportunities for praise and celebration. We have so many reasons to celebrate, including the presentation of the Savior at the temple as well as the closing of another year of our Lord while we reflect on the continuing blessings experienced by each generation.

The last day of the calendar year brings us an opportunity to reflect on the changes in life that have come our way since last January. We have been gladdened at the birth of children and observed passages such as marriages, first jobs, and new homes. God has been a constant presence, blessing the generations with His everlasting love. Using words of faith penned by English hymn writer Isaac Watts as a paraphrase of Psalm 90, we proclaim God's faithfulness in ages past and for years to come.



- Time, like an ever-rolling stream,Soon bears us all away;We fly forgotten as a dreamDies at the op'ning day.
- O God, our help in ages past,
   Our hope for years to come,
   Be Thou our guard while troubles last
   And our eternal home!

Sit

## **OLD TESTAMENT READING**

Isaiah 61:10—62:3

The word is read...

- **A** This is the Word of the Lord.
- **C** Thanks be to God.

PSALM I LeftSide II Right Side

Psalm 111

P Praise the LORD!

- I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.
- I Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them.
- Full of splendor and majesty is His work, and His righteousness endures forever.
- III He has caused His wondrous works to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and merciful.
- He provides food for those who fear Him; He remembers His covenant forever.
- I He has shown His people the power of His works, in giving them the inheritance of the nations.
- The works of His hands are faithful and just; all His precepts are trustworthy; they are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.
- III He sent redemption to His people; He has commanded His covenant forever. Holy and awesome is His name!
- The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

**EPISTLE READING**Galatians 4:4-7

The word is read...

- **A** This is the Word of the Lord.
- Thanks be to God.

#### Stand

**GRADUAL** Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1a

- **P** To us a child is born, to us a son is given;
- and the government shall be upon His shoulder.
- P And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
- **©** Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

- P Sing to the Lord a new song,
- for He has done marvelous things!

HOLY GOSPEL Luke 2:22-40

- P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.
- **G** Glory You, O Lord.

The word is read...

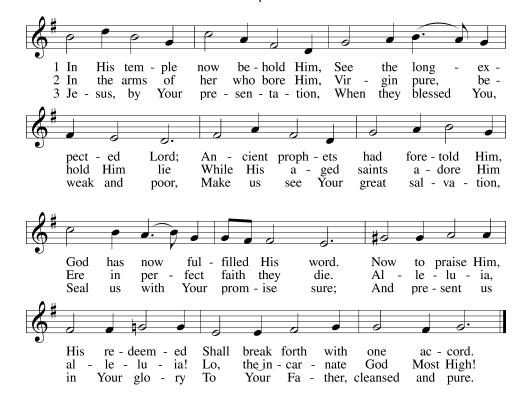
- **P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- Praise to You, O Christ.

Sit

## **HYMN**

"In His Temple Now Behold Him"

LSB 519



#### **SERMON**

#### Stand

#### ATHANASIAN CREED

- Today we are marveling at the grace of God in paying attention to us and saving us, although we are a seemingly insignificant part of His creation. The grace of God is also apparent as the Church has sought to confess the witness of Scripture. As we cannot comprehend the vastness of space, so we cannot understand God's nature as three persons in one Godhead. As you profess truths about our majestic God, I will follow with the offsetting realities that also must be true. We cannot explain God; we can only confess our faith within the limits of human understanding.
- Whoever desires to be saved must, above all, hold the catholic faith.

  Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally.
- And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity,
- **P** neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance.
- For the Father is one person, the Son is another, and the Holy Spirit is another.
- **P** But the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.
- Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit:
- the Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Spirit uncreated; the Father infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite; the Father eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal.
- And yet there are not three Eternals, but one Eternal,
- p just as there are not three Uncreated or three Infinites, but one Uncreated and one Infinite.
- In the same way, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Spirit almighty;
- **P** and yet there are not three Almighties, but one Almighty.
- So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God. So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord;

- and yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord.

  Just as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge each distinct person as God and Lord, so also are we prohibited by the catholic religion to say that there are three Gods or Lords.
- The Father is not made nor created nor begotten by anyone.
  The Son is neither made nor created, but begotten of the Father alone.
  The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding.
- Thus, there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

  And in this Trinity none is before or after another; none is greater or less than another;
  but the whole three persons are coeternal with each other and coequal, so that in all things, as has been stated above, the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity is to be worshiped.
- Therefore, whoever desires to be saved must think thus about the Trinity.
- P But it is also necessary for everlasting salvation that one faithfully believe the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Therefore, it is the right faith that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at the same time both God and man.
- He is God, begotten from the substance of the Father before all ages; and He is man, born from the substance of His mother in this age: perfect God and perfect man, composed of a rational soul and human flesh; equal to the Father with respect to His divinity, less than the Father with respect to His humanity.
- **Although He is God and man, He is not two, but one Christ:**
- one, however, not by the conversion of the divinity into flesh, but by the assumption of the humanity into God; one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ,
- who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the living and the

dead.

At His coming all people will rise again with their bodies and give an account concerning their own deeds.

And those who have done good will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil into eternal fire.

P This is the catholic faith; whoever does not believe it faithfully and firmly cannot be saved.

#### PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

- Eternal Lord God, in the fullness of time, You sent forth Your Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem us and give us the adoption as Your sons and heirs. Hear us, Father, as we call to You in His name. Give us grace to rejoice in Christ's blessed incarnation, and grant us a glad new year. Lord, in Your mercy,
- **C** hear our prayer.
- A Lead Your Church, Lord, to follow the example of blessed Simeon, that all baptized Christians would embrace the Christ Child by Word and faith, and so be ready to depart whenever they are called. Lord, in Your mercy,
- **©** hear our prayer.
- Heavenly Father, from whom all fatherhood on earth is named, bless Christian families with Your promises. Give parents diligence and delight in their work, and grant Your favor on all children, that they may grow in strength and wisdom. Bless widows, orphans and broken families also with Your mercy, and give them joy in the redemption You have won for us in Christ. Lord, in Your mercy,
- **C** hear our prayer.
- A Holy God, mighty Lord, You have given power to the nations and to those who govern for the good of their people. Bless our president, Congress, governor and all our leaders, that justice may prevail and Your people would be free to live at peace with all. Lord, in Your mercy,
- **C** hear our prayer.
- P Gracious Lord, receive our prayers for those who suffer from loneliness. Comfort them with the sure and certain knowledge that You will never forsake them. Give

them family and friends within the household of faith with whom they can find loving companionship. Lord, in Your mercy,

- **C** hear our prayer.
- hear our prayer.
- A Father of lasting peace, show Your mercy to those who receive the Lord's Supper this day, that they would behold their salvation in the very body and blood of Christ given for them and, with St. Simeon, be well-prepared to depart in peace according to Your Word. Lord, in Your mercy,
- **C** hear our prayer.
- Lord God, heavenly Father, we here remember the sufferings and death of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, for our salvation. Praising His victorious resurrection from the dead, we draw strength from His ascension before You, where He ever stands for us as our own High Priest. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers, deliver and preserve us, for to You alone we give all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- Amen.

The peace of the Lord is exchanged according to local custom.

Sit

**OFFERING** 

**VOLUNTARY** "Of the Father's Love Begotten" setting: Flor Peters

Stand

**OFFERTORY** "Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful" **LSB 955** 

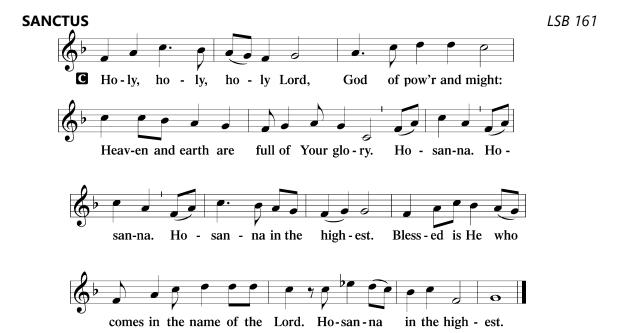


## **♣** SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT ♣

#### **PREFACE**

- **P** The Lord be with you.
- **And also with you.**
- **P** Lift up your hearts.
- **W**e lift them to the Lord.
- **P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- It is right to give Him thanks and praise.
- It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, the very Word made flesh who came to dwell among us, fulfilling Your

Word and bringing to earth the peace of heaven. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:



### PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

P Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

#### THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My 
→ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My + blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

#### PROCLAMATION OF OUR LORD

- P As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.
- Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.
- P O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

#### LORD'S PRAYER

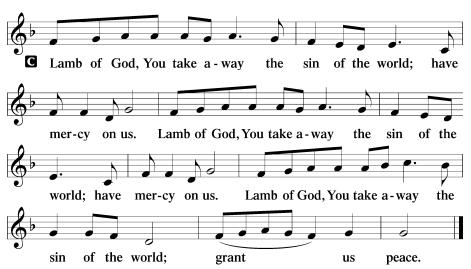
Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

## **PAX DOMINI**

- **P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.
- C Amen.

AGNUS DEI LSB 163



Sit "Angels from the Realms of Glory" DISTRIBUTION HYMN LSB 367 of glo-ry, a-bid-ing, 1 An - gels from the of Wing your flight o'er realms 2 Shep - herds in the field Watch - ing o'er your 3 Sa ges, leave your con tem - pla - tions, Bright - er vi - sions 4 Saints be - fore the al tar bend - ing. Watch - ing long in  $\triangle$  5 All join in prais - ing God Fa - ther. cre - a - tion, the who sang all the earth; Ye tion's sto - ry, cre a flocks by night, God with us is now re - sid - ing, Seek the great De - sire beam a - far; of na - tions, hope and fear. Sud - den - ly the Lord. de - scend - ing,

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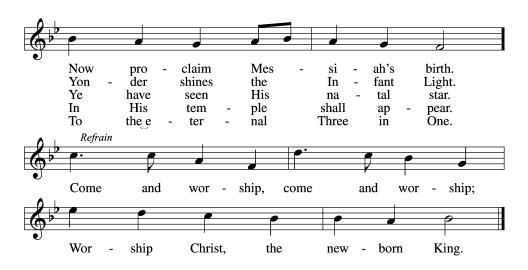
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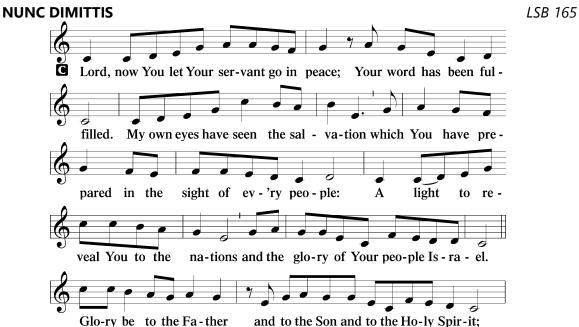
**VOLUNTARY** 

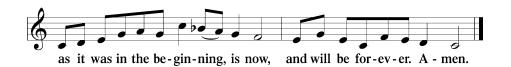
"Angels from the Realms of Glory"

"In the Bleak Mid-Winter"

setting: C.S. Lang Tune: Cranham, G. Holst

## Stand





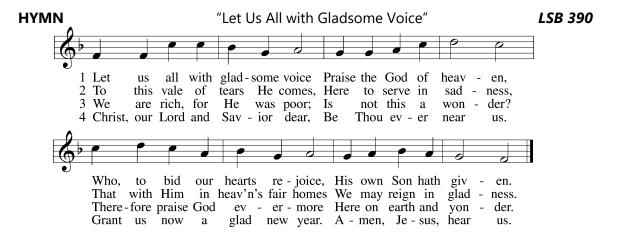
#### POST COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

- Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God, we thank You for having fed us with the body and blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ, assuring us thereby that we are truly members of His Body, the Church. And we ask that You would help us by Your Holy Spirit that we may continue in this fellowship and do the good works that You desire us to do, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, to whom with You and the same Spirit, be praise in all generations, forever and ever.
- C Amen.

#### **BENEDICTION**

- The Lord bless you and keep you.
  The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
  The Lord look upon you with favor and 

  → give you peace.
- C Amen.



## Sit

# **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DISMISSAL**

**P** Go in peace as you serve the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

**POSTLUDE** 

"The Opening Year"

L. Smith

# Acknowledgements

Creative Worship for the Lutheran Parish, Series B, Quarter 1.

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