

Grace Lutheran Church, School, ECC

Oak Creek, Wisconsin
www.graceoakcreek.org

*Celebrate
Teach
Share
God's Grace*

Christmas Day

December 25th, 2023

“By His Grace you are saved through faith”
Ephesians 2:8

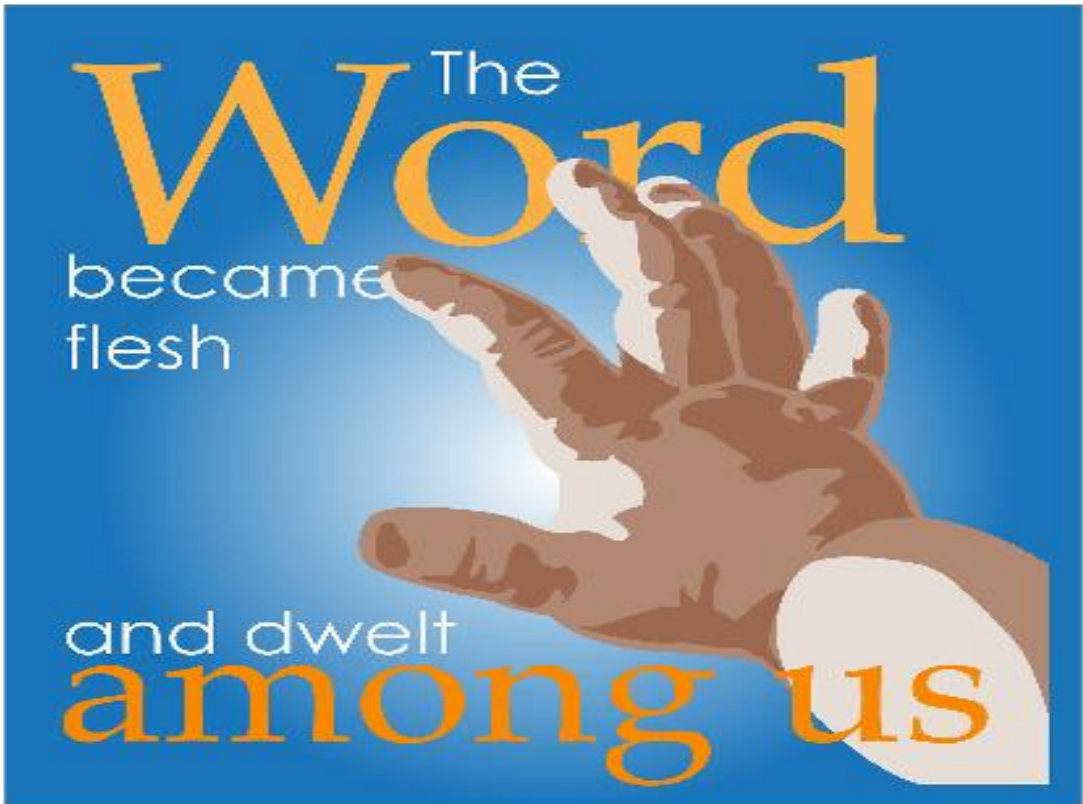


Image: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

Welcome to Grace! We're Glad You've Joined Us!

WORSHIP NOTES FOR OUR GUESTS

Worship bulletins & worship activity bags (age 2-8) are available for your children to use during the service. Please see an usher if you need assistance finding them.

Children are **always** welcome - we don't want anything to keep families from attending! From time to time a child will naturally have a difficult moment in worship. If that happens and you feel a need to step out, please make use of our church narthex and entrance, so you may still be able to follow along in worship until your child is ready to return again! If your child is using the bathroom during the worship service, we ask that you monitor them so that they are using it in a timely manner. We are glad that you're here!!!

If you would like to include a **prayer for someone** in our worship today, please add it to the **Prayer Request Sheet** found on the podium in the narthex.

We're glad you're with us. Please introduce yourself to Pastor Taggatz. If you are in search of a new church home, or are interested in learning more about Grace, we would be happy to visit with you. We hope you'll be back and give us an opportunity to know you!

As We Gather "*Christmas, as John Writes It*"

The world hears a sentimental story, a typical account of an underdog hero who has come to fight against all sorts of wrongs. Today we hear from John the same story but with the revelation that the Child is the Word, that this is no ordinary birth, but the Word made flesh, and that this story is not about sentiment but salvation. In the midst of this all is the reality that the world lies in the darkness of sin and death—*but not all of it*. To those who believe on His name, the light shines and the darkness has not and cannot overcome it. Here is where we are. We see the Word by faith, hear His promise of salvation by faith, live in His light by faith, and rejoice that we are the sons and daughters of God by faith.

We invite a moment of silence during the prelude for Prayer

As our organist begins the prelude we move from our regular conversations and the happenings of the world around us in order to turn our attention to worship. **Please take these moments as an opportunity to focus on prayer.** Make use of this time to look through our service in anticipation of the scripture we will share and the hymns we will sing. God richly bless us as we gather in God's presence today! We hope you will take these moments as a time to transition into worship as we have entered into God's presence through Word and Sacrament.

Order of Service...as outlined in your bulletin

✠ PREPARATION ✠

OPENING HYMN “Joy to the World” (LSB 387 vs. 1-4)

Stand

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES *Psalm 43:4; 124:8*

Pastor: I will go to the altar of God,

People: to God my exceeding joy.

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the LORD,

People: who made heaven and earth.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Recalling our sin and God’s mercy, let us examine our lives and consciences.

Silence for self-examination

People: I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed by my fault, by my own fault, by my own most grievous fault; wherefore I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

Pastor: The almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, forgiveness, and remission of all your sins. In the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I, a called and ordained servant of the Word, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. The peace of the Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Sit

Grace Choir “All Because Jesus is Born”

✠ WORD ✠

SALUTATION & PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. O Word of God made flesh of the Virgin, full of grace and truth, enlighten the hearts and minds of Your people that we may feast upon Your Word by faith and be reborn by Your power as the children of God; whom with the Father and the Son You are one God and one Lord, both now and forevermore.

People: Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Isaiah 52:7-10* (*The Lord comforts His people.*)

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. 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.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE LESSON *Hebrews 1:1-6* (*Now He has spoken through His Son.*)

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

For to which of the angels did God ever say,

"You are my Son,
today I have begotten you"?

Or again,

"I will be to him a father,
and he shall be to me a son"?

And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,

"Let all God's angels worship him."

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Grace Choir “We Bring Glad Tidings”

Stand

HOLY GOSPEL *John 1:1-14*

(The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the first chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

CREED *Apostles' Creed*

People: I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life T everlasting. Amen.

Sit

SERMON HYMN “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” (LSB 384 vs. 1-4)

SERMON “Christmas, as John Writes It” (John 1:1-14)

OFFERING/ATTENDANCE As the offerings are being passed to you by the ushers, we ask that you take this time to fill out the attendance pads located in your pews so that we can acknowledge your presence with us today. We are so glad that you have joined us in worship here at Grace!!! We also thank you for your generosity and support of Jesus Christ our Lord’s Kingdom work!!! God bless you!!!

You can now give online. It’s easy, fast, and secure. If you’re able, we also encourage you to set up recurring giving by texting: **graceoc** to 206-859-9405, use this QR Code or head to our website at: graceoakcreek.org. You may give a onetime gift or set up your regular weekly or monthly offering. Those using this method of giving may still bring their envelope if they wish and simply write ‘*online giving*’ on the outside and place it in the offering plate.



Stand

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

For the faith to greet the news of the Word made flesh with joy and peace, for the obedience of faith to walk in the light of His ways, for the strength to be steadfast in this faith, and for speedy feet to proclaim this message to the world, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For voices to proclaim faithfully the Word of God, for listening ears that we grow in knowledge and faith by the preaching of the Word, for those who deliver to us the Means of Grace in which we behold God's glory and receive it with joy and thanksgiving, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the Church, here and throughout the world, for every place where the Word has planted hope and displayed God's saving glory to the nations, and for the homes in which we teach this Word to our children and live it out in holy lives, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For peace in the world, for an end to violence, for the restoration of hope and lives still suffering from the effects of the pandemic, for justice, for the will to protect life from its beginning to its natural end, and for those in need, let us pray of the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For grace to believe the Word we hear, for repentant hearts to receive worthily the grace of Christ's body and blood in this Holy Communion, for our strong unity in doctrine, and for our harmony in our life together as the Body of Christ, the Church, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For those who suffer any need of body or soul, for the sick, for the aged, for the grieving, and for those in their last days, [*especially. . .*], that the Lord be their healing, strength, comfort, and peace, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the saints who endured in the holy confession of Your name, for the martyrs whose sacrifice inspires us still, and for all the saints who rest from their labors, that we join them on that promised day when Christ shall join the faithful as one in the marriage supper of the Lamb in His kingdom without end, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, O Lord.

Silence for meditation

Pastor: For all things needful to this body and life and for all things profitable to our salvation, let us pray in the name of Christ, the Word made flesh, in whom we behold the glory of the eternal Trinity, now and to the end of the ages.

People: Amen.

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

PREFACE

Pastor: The Lord be with you. *Timothy 4:22*

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts. *Colossians 3:1*

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. *Psalms 136*

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

Pastor: With joy and great thanksgiving, we greet the Word made flesh, in whom the Father has manifested the fullness of His saving glory, for us and for all people, that beholding the glory of His incarnate Son, we may believe in Him whom the Father has sent and, believing, have life in His name. Now, therefore, with all the hosts of heaven and with the faithful throughout the earth, with angels and archangels to lead our praises, let us join their endless song of praise:

SANCTUS LSB 195

C Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth;
heav'n and earth are full of Thy glory.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Holy Lord and mighty God, from the beginning You have displayed Your glory in mercy, bringing from nothing all that is and still sustaining Your creation. Tainted by sin and scarred with death, Your creation lived in darkness until Your Word became flesh. He dwelt among us full of grace and truth and has shown forth the light of hope and salvation for all the world. Rejoicing in the promise of His grace, we have, by the Holy Spirit, confessed Him as Lord and been absolved of our sins that we might receive Him here with good conscience. Grant us to be strengthened by this blessed communion and equipped to bear in our lives the fruits of His redeeming love, serving You with all our heart, mind, body, and strength, and loving our neighbor as Christ has loved us.

People: Amen.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD *Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25*

Pastor: 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 CHRIST

Pastor: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. *1 Corinthians 11:26*

People: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. *Revelation 22:20*

Pastor: Let Your Word made flesh dwell richly among us, that, faithfully eating His body and drinking His blood, we receive the fullness of Your grace and truth in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

LORD'S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9-13*

People: 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

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.

AGNUS DEI *LSB 198*

C O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.
O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.
O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, grant us Thy peace.
Amen.

Sit

Distribution

We celebrate the Lord's Supper

Members of our sister LC-MS congregations are invited to join us for communion. Guests to our Lutheran Church are invited to first speak with Pastor before joining at our Lord's Table. We hope you will learn more about us as we gather to "*Celebrate, Teach, and Confess*" the Good News of God's Grace! In the Bible, the Apostle Paul wrote: *Let a person examine himself and so eat of the bread, and drink of the cup (1 Cor. 11:28)*. Before attending the Lord's Supper, ask yourself the following questions:

1. *Do I believe that I am a sinner, and am sorry for my sins? (Prov. 28:13; Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8-9)*
2. *Do I believe that Jesus Christ by His death, offers me forgiveness for all my sins? (Romans 5:8; Col. 2:13; Heb. 9:28; 1 John 1:7)*
3. *Do I believe that I receive the body and blood of Christ in, with, and under the bread and wine (not merely symbolically present?) (Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:16; 1 Cor. 11:24-25)*
4. *Do I desire to turn from my sinful ways and live a God pleasing life by the power of the Holy Spirit? (Isaiah 1:16; John 8:11; Rom. 6:12)*

If you are unable to answer yes to these questions, please talk to the pastor before communing, as participating without a proper understanding of Holy Communion can be spiritual harmful (1 Cor. 11:27-29). If you can answer yes to these questions, then come with a repentant heart and join us in the reception of the Lord's Supper. Adults and children not yet instructed about Holy Communion are invited to come forward to receive a blessing.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION PRACTICE—We are offering altar/rail communion as our communion practice. While you are at the altar, please let us know if you would like to receive the Common Cup. Individual communion cups are also available to you. You also have the option to kneel or remain standing during altar/rail communion. Gluten Free communion wafers are also available upon request. If it is physically difficult for you to commune at the altar rail, please speak to the Pastor or an elder about receiving communion in your pew.

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

- "A Great and Mighty Wonder"* (LSB 383 vs. 1-5)
- "Let All Together Praise Our God"* (LSB 389 vs. 1-7)

Stand

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE "Nunc Dimittis" LSB 199

C Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word,
for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all
people,
a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty God, Creator of all things, we give You thanks that on this day You gave Your Word in flesh to be our Savior and Redeemer. Grant us eyes to see His glory and ears to hear His voice that we may behold that glory and not depart from its light even to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICAMUS

Pastor: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: 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. *Numbers 6:24-26*

People: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” (LSB 380 vs. 1-3)

Pastor: Go in Peace and Serve the Lord

People: Thanks be to God!!!



“THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND
MADE HIS DWELLING AMONG US.”
HAVE YOU MADE ROOM IN YOUR
HEART FOR HIM?

“She gave birth to her firstborn, a Son. She
...placed Him in a manger, because there
was no room for them in the inn” (Luke
2:7).



Holiday Worship Schedule for 2023

“Jesus: The Son of David, the Son of Abraham”

Monday Dec. 25th 9:30am—Christmas Day: “Christmas, as John Writes It” (John 1:1–14)

No Thursday evening worship on Thursday December 28th

Sunday December 31st 9:30am New Year’s Eve Worship— Guest Pastor Jim Klug

Sunday January 7th 8am & 10:30am Services— “People Who Don’t Belong” (Matthew 2:1–12)

SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS

We have gathered today to celebrate the most precious gifts and treasures our Lord gives us: His forgiveness, life and salvation. It would be our honor to have you join us again next week as we “Celebrate, Teach, and Share” the Good News of God’s Grace among all people.

Grace is committed to supporting families through our Early Childhood Center, Day School, and High School. We are blessed to be a member of the Lutheran High School Association of Milwaukee.

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Choir Director	Mrs. Kathy Kolb	
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