



**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**PREPARE TO MEET HIM**

December 10, 2023



# GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

## ***God's Word for this week***

Scriptures teach that King Jesus is the Son of God in the flesh and the only hope for salvation. You do not approach meeting someone like that casually or carelessly. You prepare meticulously. What does that mean? What does a life of readiness—ready to meet such a King—look like? In one word: repentance. Throughout history, God has raised up called servants—like John the Baptist—to preach a message of repentance. Without repentance, the King's coming only terrifies. But all those who believe and repent can look forward to the coming of the King and the consummation of his everlasting kingdom.

## ***Before Worship***

Take time for prayer and to review the lessons and the service notes. For personal preparation for Communion, see Red Hymnal: p.156.

## ***General Information***

The restrooms are located in the fellowship hall. Visitors – welcome, and please take a moment and sign the guestbook in the fellowship hall. If you need special assistance for communion, please notify an usher and/or the pastor.

## ***Serving in Worship***

Music: Rachel Halldorson  
Ushers: Mike Jensen, Kurt Knurr  
Pastor: Wayne Halldorson  
Pastor's Cell: 903-717-1922  
Pastor's Email: grace.tx.pastor@gmail.com

## ***Church Information***

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Prayer Requests: [prayers.grace.wels@gmail.com](mailto:prayers.grace.wels@gmail.com) / text to 520-236-9673

### ***T-Loop Hearing Assistance***

*If you have a hearing aid with a T-coil, you can connect it to the T-Loop device installed throughout the church building. Headsets are available for anyone needing hearing assistance. Personal earbuds can also be used with a head set. See Kris Martinson if you need assistance.*



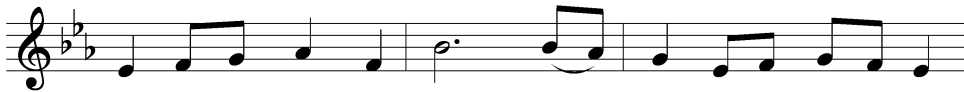
# WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION

## 308 *There's a Voice in the Wilderness Crying*

CW 308



1 There's a voice in the wil - der - ness cry - ing, a  
2 O — Chris - tians, you bring — good ti - dings; get  
3 But the Word of our God is e - ter - nal; the



call from the ways un - trod: Pre - pare in the des - ert a  
up to the heights and sing! Pro - claim to a des - o - late  
arm of the Lord is strong. He stands in the midst of the



high - way, a high - way for our God!  
peo - ple the com - ing of their King.  
na - tions, and he shall right the wrong.



The — val - leys shall be ex - alt - ed, the  
Like the flow'rs of the field they — per - ish; like  
He shall feed his — flock like a shep - herd, the



loft - y hills brought low; make straight all the crook - ed  
grass their works de - cay. The pow'r and — pomp of  
lambs shall gent - ly hold, to pas - tures of peace shall



plac - es where the Lord our — God — may go!  
na - tions shall — pass like a dream — a - way.  
lead them, and — bring them — safe to his fold.

## ***Invocation***

During this season of repentance, hope, patience, and perseverance – we gather in God’s House in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

## ***Lighting of the Advent Candles***

The first Advent candle is called the candle of Prophecy. It symbolized the Old Testament prophecies of the Advent, or coming, of the world’s Savior.

**You came first in humility to save us dear Lord, come again in glory according to your promise.**

 *The First Advent Candle is Lit:*

The second Advent candle is called the Bethlehem candle. It represents the coming to earth of Jesus, the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary.

**You took on human flesh and made a permanent bond between God and humanity.**

 *The Second Advent Candle is Lit:*

## ***Confession & Absolution***

CW 172

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just  
and will forgive us our sins  
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord:

**Holy God, gracious Father,  
I am sinful by nature  
and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.  
I have not loved you with my whole heart;  
I have not loved others as I should.  
I deserve your punishment both now and forever.  
But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins  
with his innocent suffering and death.  
Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

*Silence for meditation and reflection*

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

***Lord, Have Mercy***

CW 174

In peace let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above, for our salvation, and for the salvation of many more souls, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For calm during a busy and hectic season of the year where we can often become distracted and get our priorities mixed up:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise,  
let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**Amen.**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

### ***Prayer of the Day***

Let us pray:

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the way for your only Son. By his coming, give us strength in our conflicts, and shed light on our path through the darkness of this world; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **THE WORD**

### ***First Reading***

Isaiah 40:1–11

<sup>1</sup>Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

<sup>2</sup>Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her  
that her hard service has been completed,  
that her sin has been paid for,  
that she has received from the LORD's hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup>A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare  
the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert

a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be raised up,  
every mountain and hill made low;  
the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.

<sup>5</sup>And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,  
and all people will see it together.  
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

<sup>6</sup>A voice says, “Cry out.”  
And I said, “What shall I cry?”

“All people are like grass,  
and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.

<sup>7</sup>The grass withers and the flowers fall,  
because the breath of the LORD blows on them.  
Surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup>The grass withers and the flowers fall,  
but the word of our God endures forever.”

<sup>9</sup>You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain.  
You who bring good news to Jerusalem,  
lift up your voice with a shout,  
lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah,  
“Here is your God!”

<sup>10</sup>See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power,  
and he rules with a mighty arm.  
See, his reward is with him,  
and his recompense accompanies him.

<sup>11</sup>He tends his flock like a shepherd:  
He gathers the lambs in his arms  
and carries them close to his heart;  
he gently leads those that have young.

### 312 Comfort, Comfort All My People

CW 312 sts. 1, 4



1 "Com - fort, com - fort all my peo - ple; speak of peace," so  
4 Then make straight the crook - ed high - way; make the rough - er



says our God. "Com - fort those who sit in dark - ness, groan - ing  
plac - es plain. Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, read - y



from their sor - rows' load. Speak to all Je - ru - sa - lem  
for his ho - ly reign. For the glo - ry of the Lord



of the peace that waits for them; tell them that their  
now o'er earth is spread a - broad, and all flesh shall



sins I cov - er, that their war - fare now is o - ver."  
see the to - ken that his word is nev - er bro - ken.

### 85A LORD, in Your Mercy, Hear My Prayer

Psalm 85A

You, LORD, forgave the iniquity of your people

**and covered all their sins.**

You set aside all your wrath

**and turned from your fierce anger.**

Show us your unfailing love, LORD,

**and grant us your salvation.**



I will listen to what God the LORD says;

**he promises peace to his people.**

Surely his salvation is near those who fear him,

**that his glory may dwell in our land.**

Love and faithfulness meet together;

**righteousness and peace kiss each other.**

### ***Second Reading***

2 Peter 3:8–14

<sup>8</sup>But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

<sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

<sup>11</sup>Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives <sup>12</sup>as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. <sup>13</sup>But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

<sup>14</sup>So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

### ***Verse of the Day***

Luke 3:4,6

**Alleluia. Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.**

**And all people will see God's salvation. Alleluia.**



C: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, <sup>2</sup>as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way” —  
<sup>3</sup>“a voice of one calling in the wilderness,  
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.’ ”

<sup>4</sup>And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

<sup>6</sup>John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup>I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

**Hymn of the Day**

CW 318



1 Hark! A thrill - ing voice is sound - ing! “Christ is  
2 See, the Lamb, so long ex - pect - ed, comes with  
3 So, when next he comes in glo - ry and the  
4 Hon - or, glo - ry, might, do - min - ion to the



near,” we hear it say. “Cast a - way the  
par - don down from heav’n. Let us haste, with  
world is wrapped in fear, he will shield us  
Fa - ther and the Son with the ev - er -



works of dark - ness, all you chil - dren of the day.”  
tears of sor - row, one and all, to be for - giv'n;  
with his mer - cy and with words of love draw near.  
last - ing Spir - it while e - ter - nal a - ges run!

### ***Sermon***

2 Peter 3:8-14 *“Combining Patience & Preparation”*

### ***Nicene Creed***

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one being with the Father.**

**Through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,  
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.**

**He suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.**

**He ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who in unity with the Father and the Son  
is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

### ***Prayer of the Church***

Eternal Father, throughout the centuries you repeated and affirmed your promise to send the offspring of the woman to crush the serpent's head. Through your prophets of old, you continually directed the eyes of your people to the advent of their Savior.

**We praise you, O Lord, for keeping your promise and sending your Son to destroy the works of the devil.**

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our King, use your mighty Word to shatter our pride and to rouse us from spiritual slumber and apathy.

**Move us to take to heart the words of John the Baptist: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."**

You sent your Son to redeem us from sin. Let this good news be our joy and strength. Use it to cheer the lonely, encourage the fearful, and give hope to the despairing. In these days before Christmas, spare us from the stress of deadlines and the frenzy of commercialism.

**Fill our lives with the message of your peace and the music of your grace.**

Direct our eyes not only to the manger but also to the skies, where we will see your Son coming again, not as a lowly child but as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

**Lift up our hearts in joyful anticipation of that day.**

Hold in your care, Lord, those who are experiencing physical and emotional pain and all who are afflicted by disease or facing death. Pour out your compassion on the grieving and comfort the mourners who miss someone they loved.

**Move us to pray for these brothers and sisters and to help when we can.**

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence about the things and the people that weigh upon our hearts:

*Silent prayer*

Come quickly, Lord Jesus, in your grace, in your power, and in your glory.

**Come, Lord Jesus, and take us all home! Amen.**

***Offering***

# THE SACRAMENT

## *Preface*

CW 183

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared when he called people to repentance and pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

## **327 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

CW 327 sts. 1, Ref

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som  
cap - tive Is - ra - el that mourns in lone - ly  
ex - ile here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.

*Refrain*

Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el  
shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

### ***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.**

### ***Words of Institution***

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**Amen.**

### 327 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

CW 327 sts. Ref, 2

2 O come, O Root of Jes - se, free your own from  
Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your  
peo - ple save, and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.

*Refrain*  
Re - jice! Re - jice! Em - man - u - el  
shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of five staves of music. The first three staves contain the main text, and the fourth and fifth staves contain the refrain. The lyrics are placed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The music features various note values including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and slurs.

Text: Latin, c. 12th cent., Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum, Köln, 1710; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866, alt.  
Tune: French, 15th cent., alt.  
Text and tune: Public domain



## ***Distribution***

*Grace Lutheran Church follows the practice of close communion. This means that all our members are in agreement with the teachings of our church body. We welcome members of our church synod, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod to partake of the Lord's Supper with us today. We respectfully and lovingly ask that other visitors speak with our pastor after the service if there are any questions about this practice.*

## ***Song of Simeon***



C: Lord, now you let your servant de - part in peace ac-cord-ing  
to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have pre-  
pared be - fore the face of all people, a light to light - en the  
Gen - tles and the glo - ry of your peo-ple Is - ra - el.

## ***Closing Blessing***

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

**Amen.**

# 327 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

CW 327 sts. Ref, 3-4



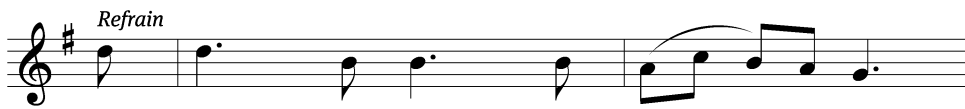
3 O come, O Day-spring from on high, and cheer us  
4 O come, O Key of Da - vid, come, and o - pen



by your draw - ing nigh; dis - perse the gloom - y  
wide our heav'n - ly home; make safe the way that



clouds of night, and death's dark shad-ows put to flight.  
leads on high, and close the path to mis - er - y.



*Refrain*  
Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el



shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

Text: Latin, c. 12th cent., Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum, Köln, 1710; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, alt.  
Tune: French, 15th cent., alt  
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## Acknowledgments

Setting Two from Christian Worship

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## ***Ladies of Grace / Church Council***

After worship today, the Ladies of Grace will gather in the fellowship hall, and the Council will gather in the church. Thank-you to all who serve our flock so faithfully.

## ***Christmas 2023***

This year Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, therefore we'll have worship (and Bible class) in the morning at the normal times, and we won't be having a Christmas Eve service in the evening.

On Christmas Day we'll have our worship at 11:00 am and a potluck luncheon to follow.

## ***Bible Classes***

Please take advantage of the Bible Classes now offered at Grace: Sunday morning 9 am / Wednesday afternoon 3 pm / the last Friday of the month at 10:30 am (the Parables Bible Class and monthly lunches out will resume in January). Talk to pastor if you'd like to join in one of the current BIC courses as well.

Pastor has just started a new Bible class on **Revelation** held Thursdays at 6:00 pm. You are most welcome to join the group if you are able to – and please invite friends and neighbors! If you can't make the class in person consider watching the course on Facebook (the posts of all our classes are up for 1 month.)

## ***A Look at our Church Library***

On Giving Advice to God - Part 1 & 2

Wanting to strengthen your devotional life? Are you looking for something meaty that challenges your spiritual growth? "On Giving Advice to God" Parts 1 & 2 by Daniel Deutschlander is available in the church library for you to check out. Developing the theme "The Wisdom of God and the Foolishness of Man", the author reminds the reader how far God's wisdom goes beyond our human thoughts and understanding. Part 1 takes us from Advent through Ascension,

following along the church year and the familiar accounts of Scripture we've come to anticipate year after year. The insights you are sure to gain will deepen your understanding and appreciation for God's wisdom and magnanimous love! Part 2 takes us through Pentecost and beyond. Once you get into it, you may even be tempted to buy a copy for your own personal library because you will want to come back to this again and again - one read through is not enough! It makes a great couples' devotion too, and offers plenty of discussion opportunities each time. Your devotional life will never be the same!

### ***Upcoming Schedule***

Today	9 / 10 am	Bible Class / Worship + Communion
Today	11:00 am	Council / Ladies of Grace
Dec. 13	3:00 pm	Genesis Bible Class
Dec. 14	6:00 pm	Revelation Bible Class
Dec. 17	9 / 10 am	Bible Class / Advent 3 Worship
Dec. 20	3:00 pm	Genesis Bible Class
Dec. 21	6:00 pm	Revelation Bible Class
Dec. 24	9 / 10 am	Bible Class / Worship + Communion
Dec. 25	11:00 am	Christmas Day Worship + lunch
Dec. 31	9 / 10 am	Bible Class / Christmas 1 Worship