



# Good News of Great Joy



# CHRISTMAS DAY

**GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST!**

December 25, 2023



# GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

## ***God's Word for Christmas***

How can an omnipresent God be held in his mother's arms? How can an all-powerful God be too weak to walk? This is the mystery of the incarnation—that God took on human flesh. We cannot comprehend the mystery. But the Spirit enables us to grasp that this incomprehensible truth is very good news! This is the Savior we need! As true man, he was born under God's law, all the commandments that we have broken. Where we have failed, Jesus was perfect. As true God, when he laid down his perfect life, it was a sacrifice valuable enough to pay for the sins of the world, so that we might be adopted as God's children. Let us marvel at this good news of great joy!

## ***Before Worship***

Take time for prayer and to review the lessons and the service notes.

## ***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.

## ***Serving in Worship***

Music / Violin: 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***

Address: 6788 FM 115 - Scroggins, TX 75480  
Phone: 903-860-3749  
Website: [www.graceneearthelake.com](http://www.graceneearthelake.com)  
Email: [graceneearthelake@gmail.com](mailto:graceneearthelake@gmail.com)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/graceneearthelake1](https://facebook.com/graceneearthelake1)  
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.*



# CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP SERVICE

## *Christmas Day Prayer*

Dearest Jesus, the virgin Child of long ago, you came to earth and became poor that we might become rich with you. You come to us and remove our sins, our fears, our doubts, our weaknesses—and fill our hearts with joy and peace. We thank-you Jesus. We celebrate your birth and look forward to the day when we will see you face to face. Let the worship service this morning inspire us, encourage us, motivate us and give us the wonderful assurance of your boundless love and presence in our lives. Accept our prayers and accept our praise. In the Name of our Triune God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## *Lighting of the Advent Candles & the Christ Candle*

 *The Advent Candles and the Christ Candle are lit:*

Great Joy is ours, for the Lord has come!

**We light these candles, in honor of Jesus, the Light of the world and the Light of our lives.**

As these lights shine here in God's house, so the light of His truth and grace shines in our hearts and through us — out to the world.

**We praise the One who has broken the curse and darkness of sin, and who has opened God's home to us all.**

He is our Immanuel — God with us.

**Oh, come, all ye faithful and celebrate! Let us glorify Jesus Christ, the child of Mary, the everlasting Son of God is born this day!**



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O  
 2 God from true God, and Light from Light e - ter - nal,  
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,  
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;



come ye, O come\_ ye to Beth - le - hem!  
 born of a vir - gin, to earth he comes!  
 sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav'n a - bove!  
 Je - sus, to thee\_ be all glo - ry giv'n!



Come and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels:  
 On - ly - be - got - ten Son of God the Fa - ther:  
 Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the high - est:  
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:



O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

### **Blessing**

The grace of our Lord † Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you. Today we rejoice that God has kept all His promises and sent to us a Savior – He is Christ the Lord!**

## ***Christmas Repentance & Forgiveness***

Sisters and brothers in Christ: there was a time when the world sat in darkness, separated from God because of sin. Since we human beings were unable to find God in that darkness, He came near to us as a baby, born of a virgin, bringing with him the great light of our salvation.

I encourage you to come near to God, open your hearts to him, and confess to Him your sins, doubts, weaknesses, and failures:

*Silence for meditation and reflection*

Heavenly Father,

**We confess that we have sinned against you in our thoughts, words, and deeds. The world has tempted us in this Christmas season to put our delight and joy in material things, to be envious of others, and to center our celebrations around ourselves rather than on you. Thus we have sinned against you, and against one another.**

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. *Psalms 51:17*

**The celebration you desire is the worship of the heart. Forgive our sins, O Lord, for the sake of the Babe of Bethlehem, Jesus Christ, who lived and died and rose again – for us. Decorate our hearts with repentance and joy that our Christmas celebration may be pleasing to you.**

This Child, whose birth we celebrate, came among us to live perfectly in our stead, to give his life in full payment for our sins. He rose from the grave for our justification, and grants us forgiveness and eternal life. In His name and at His command, I as a called servant of the Word, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Let us join the angels in singing praise to our Newborn King:

### 350 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

CW 350



1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born King;  
2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,  
3 Hail, the heav'n - ly Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Right-eous-ness!



peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"  
late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.  
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.



Joy - ful, all ye na - tions rise, join the tri - umph of the skies;  
Veiled in flesh the God - head see, hail th' in - car - nate De - i - ty!  
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that man no more may die,



with th' an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
Pleased as man with man to dwell, Je - sus, our Im - man - u - el!  
born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them sec - ond birth.

#### *Refrain*



Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born King!"

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, alt.  
Tune: Felix Mendelssohn, 1809–1847  
Text and tune: Public domain

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

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

Let us pray:

Almighty God, grant that the birth of your only Son in the flesh may set us free from our old bondage under the yoke of sin; 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***

Micah 5:2–5a

<sup>2</sup>“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
though you are small among the clans of Judah,  
out of you will come for me  
one who will be ruler over Israel,  
whose origins are from of old,  
from ancient times.”

<sup>3</sup>Therefore Israel will be abandoned  
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,  
and the rest of his brothers return  
to join the Israelites.

<sup>4</sup>He will stand and shepherd his flock  
in the strength of the LORD,  
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.  
And they will live securely, for then his greatness  
will reach to the ends of the earth.

<sup>5</sup>And he will be our peace.

## 98B Joy to the World

Psalm 98B



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -  
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let men their  
3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow nor thorns in -  
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her King; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him  
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings  
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his right - eous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture  
plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing  
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

## Second Reading

Galatians 4:4-7

<sup>4</sup>But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup>to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. <sup>6</sup>Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." <sup>7</sup>So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.



**Alleluia. But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law. Alleluia.**

**346 Angels We Have Heard on High**

CW 346 sts. 1, Ref

1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,  
and the moun - tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.

*Refrain*  
Glo - - - - ri - a  
in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo - - -  
- - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

Text: tr. The Crown of Jesus, Part 2, 1862, alt.; French  
Tune: French  
Text and tune: Public domain

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

<sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— <sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup>(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' ") <sup>16</sup>Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.



1 What child is this who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is  
 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox - en now are  
 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to



sleep - ing, whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while  
 feed - ing? Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the  
 own him. The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let



shep - herds watch are keep - ing? This, this is  
 si - lent Word is plead - ing. Nails, spear shall  
 lov - ing hearts en - throne him. Raise, raise the



Christ the King, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;  
 pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
 song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
 hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
 joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898, alt.  
 Tune: English, 16th cent.  
 Text and tune: Public domain

## Sermon

Micah 5:2-5a *“Merry Christmas – Expect the Unexpected!”*

# 333 O Little Town of Bethlehem

CW 333



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!  
2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove  
3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!  
4 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;  
while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.  
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.  
cast out our sin and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.  
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,  
No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,  
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad ti - dings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.  
and prais - es sing to God the King and peace to all the earth.  
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.  
O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893, abr., alt.  
Tune: Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908  
Text and tune: Public domain

## Acknowledgments

Setting Six (American) from Christian Worship

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## ***Apostles' Creed***

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

**I believe 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.**

**From there 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 everlasting. Amen.**

## ***Offering***

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

Eternal Father, we give you thanks and praise on this holy day for sending your one and only Son to share our humanity, carry our guilt, and become for us the perfect Lamb who takes away the sin of the world.

**Lord, we praise you.**

Keep our faith in your Son alive and strong. Nourish us with your Word and sacraments and by your Holy Spirit give us strength to overcome Satan's power and empty promises. Help us to withstand the temptations the world and our sinful natures put in our path.

**Give us faith and courage.**

Remember ministers of the gospel throughout the world who on this day are proclaiming that a Savior has been born. We especially commend to your care the missionaries we have called as members of the Wisconsin Synod. Since they cannot enjoy the fellowship of their extended families this Christmas, grant to them the inner joy that comes with service in your kingdom.

**Protect all those who proclaim the gospel in our place.**

We pray for our community, for our neighborhoods and subdivisions, and for all who live and work here. Give to the leaders of government wisdom to make and uphold laws that promote the good of society. Restore to our nation peace, health, and prosperity that we may have the opportunity and resources to spread the good news to all people.

**Govern and prosper your people according to your will.**

Fill us with kindness and arouse us to do good to all people, especially those who are less fortunate than we. Bring your healing to those who are sick or diseased in body or mind and comfort those who are mourning the death of someone they love. We especially pray for our brothers and sisters who are setting aside their celebration today to serve you in noble ways.

**Sustain those who serve on our behalf, and those who endure the troubles of life.**

As you sent your Son to bring peace to all people on earth, so we pray for all people, that those in darkness would come to know you, and that your children would let their light shine.

**We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, the greatest Gift of all. Amen.**

### ***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.**

### ***361 Go, Tell It on the Mountain***

CW 361



Go, tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills, and ev - 'ry - where;



go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born.



1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,

2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo, a - bove the earth

3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born,



be-hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.  
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## ***Merry Christmas!***

Thank-you to all who participated in our Christmas worship services this year / to all who brought poinsettias / to all who came to worship with us yesterday and today. Please stick around and enjoy some food and fellowship after the service.

## ***Bible Classes***

During the week of Christmas and the week following Christmas our regular midweek Bible Classes will be on hold.

## ***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	11:00 am	Christmas Day Worship + lunch
Dec. 31	9 / 10 am	Bible Class / Christmas 1 Worship