

# Spirit of Grace

ELCA UMC



December 18th

*Advent IV*

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## - Gathering -

Prelude

*Spirit of Grace Bell Choir*

Welcome

Advent IV - Love

The Love of God-With-Us does not come as mere feeling, or sentimental fluff.

**Love cannot be imposed from on high. Love is our greatest commandment – tending tenderly to God, to other, and to self.**

The Love of God-With-Us is love in action, radical love practices: redistribution of resources and risks, solidarity with those most exposed to threat, hospitality to caravans, refugees, migrants, and sojourners, caring for those we've been taught to despise, or fear. This love is fierce, and tender. It defies unjust rules and flattens hierarchies of value.

**The Love of God-With-Us is collective, liberating us from deadly alienation.**

Love is gestating in darkness; it comes unexpectedly.

**Love invites our expectation, and demands our participation.**

Prepare the way, for Love enfleshed.

**May Love be birthed among, within, and through us this Advent.**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel...

Advent Prayer & Candle Lighting

Praise to you, O God, who lives with us, sharing our flesh and bones. As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed, so we wait and dream for you. Bless us and let your face shine upon us, more radiant than these candles, and more dear than all else we seek. Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good, and banish all our fears. We pray in the name of Emmanuel, your promised child and our savior.

**Amen.**

Candle Lighting

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

***Light four candles to watch for Messiah: let the light enter our world  
He is coming, tell the glad tidings. Let your lights be shining!***

Confession & Forgiveness

Blessed be YHWH, the God of Israel,  
who alone does wondrous things.  
**Blessed be God's name forever.  
Amen.**

Beloved, now is the time to wake from sleep.  
Let us confront our sins,  
and confess them to the one who is merciful and just.  
*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God of new beginnings,  
**we confess that we have not welcomed your holy reign.  
We have strayed from your paths.  
We prepare for war instead of peace.  
We dishonor one another and your creation.  
Purify us with your refining fire  
and set us again on your way of love,  
that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance,  
and welcome your coming among us.  
Amen.**

People of God,  
a new thing is growing in our midst,  
a tender branch,  
a living sign.  
By water and the Spirit you are joined to this wonder.  
You have put on  $\oplus$  Christ,  
and your sins have been washed away.  
Rejoice in the way of the Lord.  
**Amen.**

Opening Hymn

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel – ELW 257  
verses 1+5

## Greeting & Prayer of the Day

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

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

Heavenly God, you sent your son to embody your presence among us – to show us what Divine Love truly looks like. Guide our hearts to look for your star of light in the darkness, leading us in the way of your hope, peace, joy, and love here on earth. In the name of Jesus – the Christ Child – Immanuel – God-with-us, we pray.

**Amen.**

Special Music

*Spirit of Grace Bell Choir*

**- Word -**

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16

Once more YHWH spoke to Ahaz and said, “Ask for a sign from YHWH your God; let it be deep as the netherworld, or high as the sky!”

But Ahaz answered, “I will not ask! I will not put YHWH to the test!”

Then Isaiah said, “Listen, O House of David! Is it not enough for you to weary those around you, must you also weary my God? Therefore, the Holy One will give you a sign: this young woman will become pregnant and will give birth. You will name the child Immanu-El. This child will be living on curds and honey by the time it knows how to refuse evil and do good. But before that time – before the child knows how to refuse evil and do good – the land of the two rulers you dread will be laid waste.”

Word of God, Word of Life

**Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 (translation by Nan C. Merrill, "Psalms for Praying")

Eternal Listener, give heed to your people,  
You, who are our Guide and our Light!  
**You, who dwell amidst the angels,  
shine forth into the heart of all nations!**  
Enliven your people with compassion  
that peace and justice might flourish.

**Restore us, O Holy One;  
let your face shine upon us,  
teach us to love!**

Gentle Teacher, help us to turn to You in prayer,  
fasting from our negative thoughts.  
**In your steadfast Love, You weep with our tears,  
tears that rise from fear, doubt, and illusion.**  
You uphold us when we feel the sting of pride,  
when our anxiety threatens to paralyze us.

**Restore us, O Holy One;  
Let your face shine upon us,  
teach us to love!**

May those who have borne the fruit of love  
radiate your Spirit into the world!  
**May we always walk and co-create with You;  
receive the gratitude of our hearts  
as we share in the Great Plan!**

Restore us, O Holy One!  
Let your face shine upon us,  
teach us to love!

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 1st chapter.

This is how the birth of Jesus came about:

When Jesus' mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her husband, an upright person unwilling to disgrace her, decided to divorce her quietly.

This was Joseph's intention when suddenly the angel of God appeared in a dream and said, "Joseph, heir to the house of David, don't be afraid to wed Mary; it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She is to have a son, and you are to name him Jesus – 'Salvation' – because he will save the people from their sins."

All this happened to fulfill what God has said through the prophet:

"The virgin will be with child  
and give birth  
and the child will be named  
Immanuel"

– a name that means "God is with us."

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of God had directed, and they went ahead with the marriage. He did not have intercourse with her until she had given birth; she had a son, and they named him Jesus.

Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller

Hymn of the Day

People, Look East – UMH 202  
*verses 1+3*

## Affirmation of Faith – The Apostles' Creed

*Please stand as you are able as we confess our faith in God together using the words of our common creed:*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins, t  
he resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## Joys & Concerns

*If you have any joys, concerns, or prayer requests to share, please type them into the comment section of the livestream so that we may lift them up together as a community.*

## Prayers of the People

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

*A brief silence.*

God our source, awaken us to the beauty of the earth and the marvelous variety of life. Unite humankind in repairing and caring for your creation. Protect creatures and habitats in peril due to rising seas and warming temperatures.

God in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

God our shepherd, let your Spirit move with power throughout the church. Give discernment and wisdom to our bishops, pastors, deacons, and lay leaders. Take away our fear, so that we serve and love, confident that you are guiding us.

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**Hear our prayer.**

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God in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

God our Emmanuel, you are with us in our life together. We give you thanks for gathering us in worship and fellowship, and we remember those who cannot be present. Watch over those who travel. Heal the sick and speed their recovery.

God in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

God our helper, come to the aid of all who cry out to you. Shelter migrants, refugees, and those fleeing war and famine. Bring relief to individuals and families experiencing hunger, homelessness, or impoverishment. Comfort any who are isolated or lonely.

God in your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God of our longing, you know our deepest needs and prayers, those spoken aloud and held silently within. By your Spirit, gather all our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children, across time and space. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

Offering

*At this time, if you are willing and able, please consider giving to Spirit of Grace Church to support our ongoing ministry. Checks can be mailed to 1140 Tucker Road, Hood River OR, 97031. Online Donations can be made through the link below:*

[Spirit of Grace Church](#)

**- Meal -**

Offering Prayer

Eternal God,  
you make the desert bloom  
and send springs of water to thirsty ground.  
Receive these simple gifts,  
and make us messengers of your mercy and love  
for all in need of your healing and justice.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Savior.  
**Amen.**

Preface – sung to the tune of “Adeste Fideles”

*The Lord be with you.*  
**And with you, His servant.**  
*Oh come, let us lift our hearts unto the Lord.*  
**With hearts uplifted thanks to Him we render:**  
**with joy we come before Him,**  
**in gratefulness implore Him,**  
**with thankful hearts adore Him evermore!**

Great Thanksgiving

Thanks and praise be to you, almighty Creator, God of promise and fulfillment. Of old, your faithful people waited for the day of your visitation, manifest at last when the time had fully come and you sent forth Jesus Christ, your Son. You comfort your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Sanctus – sung to the tune of “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”

***Holy, holy, holy Lord! God of hosts, by all adored! Heav’n and earth cannot contain all the glory of Your name! Hail, hosana, God most high! Blest is He who now draws nigh in the name of God the King! Hallelujahs glad we sing: hail, hosanna! Praises due be forever, Lord, to You!***

The Consecration

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:  
Blessed are you for the birth of Creation.  
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.  
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.  
Blessed are you in the prophets’ hopes and dreams.  
Blessed are you for Mary’s openness to your will.  
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Together, we proclaim the mystery of faith:  
**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup, we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

The Disciples' Prayer – *sung to the tune of "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"*

***Our Father, Lord on heav'n's high throne, most holy be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth – in heav'n the same. Give us this day the food we need; forgiven may we be; into temptation do not lead; from evil set us free.***

***Yours is the kingdom; unto You in grateful love we bow; and Yours the pow'r; Lord, let us view your mighty presence now. The glory Yours; Your praise be sung by angel hosts and all in ev'ry land, by ev'ry tongue forevermore! Amen.***

*Instructions for Communion*

This table of bread and wine has now been made ready.  
So come to this table,  
You who have much faith  
and you who would like to have more;  
you who have been here often  
and you who have not been here long  
you who have tried to follow Jesus,  
and you who have failed;  
Come and eat. It is Christ who invites us all to meet him here.

*Communion Distribution*

Prayer after Communion

Faithful God,  
in this meal you have remembered your mercy, bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ. As we wait for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled, sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery. Guide us toward your promised future, coming to birth in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## - Sending -

Announcements

Sending Song:

Canticle of the Turning – ELW 723  
verses 1+2

Benediction & Dismissal

God the eternal Word,  
who dwells with us in Jesus,  
and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit,  
✠ bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

Go in peace, the Spirit of God is alive in you!

**Thanks be to God!**



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**Church Office Hours**  
**Closed on Fridays**

**Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller**  
M-Th 9-1, or by appointment  
[spiritofgracepastor@gmail.com](mailto:spiritofgracepastor@gmail.com)

**Linda Boris, Pastoral Assistant**  
Tuesday 10-1

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Prayer of the Day:

Hymn of the Day:

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