

Spirit of Grace

ELCA UMC



November 26th, 2023
Christ the King Sunday
-end of the liturgical year-

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

An Introduction to the Christian Church Year

We have been on a journey the past twelve months as we have traveled through the Christian Church Year. We have followed in the steps of Jesus as he was birthed in a stable, as he walked the dusty hillsides of Galilee, as he performed miracles of healing, as he taught the multitudes and the disciples, as he was crucified, and rose again. We have celebrated the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, reflected on the mission of the Church, and what it means to be a disciple of the Christ. Today is the last Sunday of that journey for this year. Next Sunday we begin celebrating Advent as we once again begin that journey to remind ourselves who we are and whose we are.

We do so knowing that the Kingdom of God that Jesus brought is a present reality in our lives. And yet we also know that there is a future Kingdom over which God will reign in Christ, a Kingdom in which the world will once again fully reflect its creator. Today we celebrate Christ as past, present, and future King over all creation, at the same time that we express our hope and our Faith in that coming Kingdom on earth.

So today we will look back at this past year's journey with Jesus. But we are also looking forward to our journey this coming year, as we express each week our Faith in the transforming power of God at work in our world, and in our Church, and in our lives to restore all of creation to his purposes.

Call to Worship

Thanks and praise to you, Jesus Christ, King and Lord of all,
given the name above every other name
Jesus, King and Lord of all, we worship and adore you.

King of righteousness, King of peace,
enthroned at the right hand of Majesty on high.
Jesus, King and Lord of all, we worship and adore you.

Great high priest, living forever to intercede for us;
Jesus, King and Lord of all, we worship and adore you.

Author of our salvation, you bring us to glory
through your death and resurrection;
Jesus, King and Lord of all, we worship and adore you.

Thanks be to Christ our King!
Alleluia! Come, Lord Jesus!

Confession & Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
in whose image we are made,
who claims us and calls us beloved.
Amen.
Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy One,
we confess that we are not awake for you.
We are not faithful in using your gifts.
We forget the least of our siblings.
We do not see your beautiful image in one another.
We are infected by sin
that divides your beloved community.
Open our hearts to your coming,
open our eyes to see you in our neighbor,
open our hands to serve your creation.
Amen.

Beloved, we are God's children,
and Jesus, our Beloved, opens the door to us.
Through † Jesus you are forgiven,
by Jesus you are welcome,
in Jesus you are called to rejoice!
Let us live in the promises prepared for us
from the foundation of the world.
Amen.

Hymn

Gather Us In
ELW 532 – verses 1+4

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:26-38

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke, the 1st chapter:

Six months later, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a young woman named Mary; she was engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. Upon arriving, the angel said to Mary, "Rejoice, highly favored one! God is with you! Blessed are you among women!" Mary was deeply troubled by these words and wondered what the angel's greeting meant. The angel went on to say to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. You'll conceive and bear a son, and give him the name Jesus – 'Deliverance.' His dignity will be great, and he will be called the Only Begotten of God. God will give Jesus the judgment seat of David, his ancestor, to rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will never end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have never been with a man?" The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you – hence the offspring to be born will be called the Holy One of God. Know too that Elizabeth, your kinswoman, has conceived a child in her old age; she who was thought to be infertile is now in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible with God." Mary said, "I am the servant of God. Let it be done to me as you say." With that, the angel left her.

Word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

Reflection: Advent

The royal color of Blue begins the Church Year in Advent, a word that means "coming". We pace this season of four Sundays hearing again the silence of the prophets, experiencing the breathless waiting of the Israelites hoping for a Messiah. We sing the song "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" with longing, not because we seek a

Messiah yet to come to the world, but because the Christ has come and we long for him to come to us again. The quiet pace of Advent is in direct contrast to the bustling commercialism of the secular holidays. And so we begin our new year in Advent, reminding ourselves that in the midst of the worldliness of our lives we are called to renew our relationship to this King who has come to turn the world upside down.

Hymn

Come Now, O Prince of Peace
ELW 247 – verses 1, 2, 4

Scripture Reading: John 1:1-14

A reading from the Gospel according to John, the 1st chapter:

In the beginning
there was the Word;
the Word was in God's presence,
and the Word was God.
The Word was present to God
from the beginning.
Through the Word
all things came into being
and apart from the Word
nothing came into being.
In the Word was life
and that life was humanity's light –
a Light that shines in the darkness,
a Light that the darkness has never overtaken.

Then came one named John, sent as an envoy from God, who came as a witness to testify about the Light, so that through his testimony everyone might believe. He himself wasn't the Light; he only came to testify about the Light – the true Light that illumines all humankind.

The Word was coming into the world —
was in the world —
and though the world
was made through the Word,
the world didn't recognize it.
Though the Word came to its own realm,
the Word's own people didn't accept it.
Yet any who did accept the Word,
who believed in that Name,
were empowered to become children of God —
children not born of natural descent,

nor urge of flesh
nor human will —
but born of God.
And the Word became flesh
and stayed for a little while among us;
we saw the Word's glory —
the favor and position a parent gives an only child —
filled with grace,
filled with truth.

Word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

Reflection: Christmas

In the season of Christmas we change the sanctuary colors to White and Gold, a celebration of the holiness of the infant who was born in a manger, and yet a King with all the splendor of God come to dwell with his people. Christmas Day is both the culmination of the waiting of the Advent season, and the beginning of twelve days of celebration as we rejoice in the gift of our Savior and the daily rebirth of grace in our own lives.

Hymn

Angels, from the Realms of Glory
ELW 275 – verses 1+4

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

A reading from the book of Isaiah, the 60th chapter:

“Arise, shine, for your light has come!
The glory of YHWH is rising upon you!
Though darkness still covers the earth
and dense clouds enshroud the peoples,
upon you YHWH now dawns,
and God's glory will be seen among you!
The nations will come to your light
and the leaders to your bright dawn!
Lift up your eyes, and look around:
they're all gathering and coming to you —
our daughters and your sons
journey from afar, escorted in safety;
you'll see them and beam with joy,
your heart will swell with pride.
The riches of the sea will flow to you,

and the wealth of the nations will come to you –
camel caravans will cover your roads,
the dromedaries of Midian and Ephaph;
everyone in Sheba will come,
bringing gold and incense,
and singing the praise of YHWH.”

Word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

Reflection: Epiphany

Epiphany means "to make known," and in the season of Epiphany we remember the ways and events through which God revealed himself through Jesus Christ. The colors of Epiphany are usually the colors of Christmas, White and Gold, the colors of celebration, newness, and hope that mark the most sacred days of the church year. In traditions such as ours that only observe a single day for Epiphany, the colors are often changed after Epiphany to the green color of Ordinary Time, until Transfiguration Sunday, the last Sunday before the beginning of Lent. The colors for Transfiguration Sunday are usually the colors of Holy Days, White and Gold.

As with most aspects of the Christian liturgical calendar, Epiphany has significance as a teaching tool in the church. The Magi who brought gifts to the infant Jesus were the first Gentiles to acknowledge Jesus as "King" and so were the first to "show" or "reveal" Jesus to a wider world as the incarnate Christ. This act of worship by the Magi, which corresponded to Simeon's blessing in the gospel of Luke that this child Jesus would be "a light for revelation to the Gentiles", was one of the first indications that Jesus came for all people, of all nations, of all races, and that the work of God in the world would not be limited to only a few.

The day is now observed as a time of focusing on the mission of the church in reaching others by "showing" Jesus as the Savior of all people. It is also a time of focusing on Christian fellowship, especially in healing the divisions of prejudice and bigotry that we all too often create between God's children.

Hymn

Christ, Be Our Light
ELW 715 – verses 1+5

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 53:1-11

A reading from the book of Isaiah, the 53rd chapter:

‘Who would have believed
what we have just heard?
When was the arm of YHWH revealed in you?

You grew up like a sapling before us,
like a root in parched soil!
You had no stately form or majesty to make us look at you,
there was no beauty to attract us.
You were rejected and despised by all;
you know suffering intimately,
and you are acquainted with sickness.
When we saw you, we turned our faces away;
we despised you and did not value you.
Yet you bore our illnesses
and carried our suffering.
We thought you were being punished,
struck down by God, and brought low —
but it was for our offenses that you were pierced,
for our sins that you were crushed;
upon you lies a chastening that brings us wholeness,
and through your wounds we are healed.
All of us, like sheep, have gone astray;
each of us goes our own way.
But YHWH has laid upon you
the guilt of us all.’
Though treated harshly, you bore it humbly
and never opened your mouth.
Like a lamb being led to slaughter, or a sheep before shearers,
you were silent and never opened your mouth.
Seized by force and condemned, you were taken away;
who would have ever foreseen your destiny?
You were taken from the land of the living
through the sin of my people, who deserved the punishment.
You were buried with evildoers
and entombed with the rich,
though you had done no wrong,
and deceit was not found in your mouth.
But YHWH chose to crush and afflict you;
if you make yourself a reparation offering,
you will see your descendants,
you will prolong your days,
and the will of YHWH will prevail through you.
Through your suffering,
you will see contentment and light.
By your knowledge, my Righteous One, my Servant,
you will justify many by taking their guilt upon yourself.

Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Reflection: Lent

As we gather to receive ashes on our heads in remembrance of our mortality during the service of Ash Wednesday, the sanctuary colors for Lent turn to a somber Purple, and then to Black at the end of Holy Week. Throughout the six weeks of Lent we pace the length of Jesus' three years of ministry. Throughout the weeks we relearn the faces and names of people who, like you and me, were sometimes faithful and sometimes selfish; people who heard the good news and responded and others who laughed and scorned; men, women, and children who heard Jesus' words and watched his life and came hungry and were fulfilled, or who walked away because they could not use him for their own ends. It is a season that calls us to stop and take a look at our life through the light of Christlikeness, and humble ourselves before our God. The season of Lent culminates in what modern protestants tend to refer to as "Holy Week." Starting with Palm Sunday and the joyful entry of Israel's Messiah-King into Jerusalem, by the end of the week those joyful praises have turned to shouts of "Crucify him, crucify him." In between these two days, the week's events are remembered with various services that pace the story of the Passion: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Holy Saturday Vigil, as we wait to greet the risen Christ.

Hymn

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded
ELW 351 – verses 1+3

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](#)

Offertory Prayer

God of all goodness,
generations have turned to you,
and shared your abundant blessings.
Number us among them
that, as we gather these gifts from your abundance,
and give thanks for your rich blessings,
we may feast upon your Word
and care for all that you have made,
through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant.
Amen.

Scripture Reading: Acts 10:34-43

A reading from the book of Acts, the 10th chapter:

So Peter said to them, "I begin to see how true it is that God shows no partiality — rather, that any person of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to God. This is the message God has sent to the people of Israel, the Good News of peace proclaimed through Jesus Christ, who is Savior of all. "You yourselves know what took place throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee with the baptism John proclaimed. You know how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how Jesus went about doing good works and healing all who were in the grip of the Devil, because God was with him. We are eyewitnesses to all that Jesus did in the countryside and in Jerusalem. Finally, Jesus was killed and hung on a tree, only to be raised by God on the third day. God allowed him to be seen, not by everyone but only by witnesses who had been chosen beforehand by God — that is, by us, who ate and drank with Christ after the resurrection from the dead. And Christ commissioned us to preach to the people and to bear witness that this is the one set apart by God as judge of the living and the dead. To Christ Jesus all the prophets testify, that everyone who believes has forgiveness of sins through this Name."

Word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

Reflection: Easter

Morning dawns and Mary Magdalene weeps at the tomb until she is told the good news "He is not dead! He has risen!" That call echoes down through the centuries as Christians around the world joyfully cry out "Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen indeed!" year after year on the highest and holiest day of the Christian calendar. Easter lilies and bright flowers adorn the sanctuary, the colors change to the brightness of White and Gold to portray the divinity and kingliness of our Risen Savior. There is no joy compared to an Easter Sunday after the solemn pace of Lent. Three days before, we buried our beloved Jesus; today He lives! We wept with Peter on the night he was crucified, and on Easter we are awed anew by the great news that Christ Lives! The fifty days of Easter ring jubilantly with the new life and new hope that the Risen Savior brings to us, to our world, and to all peoples who open their hearts to him. We listen in on the conversations of the disciples as they struggle to wrap their human hearts and minds around this new revelation. We watch as those who previously had persecuted the people of God now fall on their knees in awe and wonder. We experience anew for ourselves in this season the freedom and joy and the power, strength, and life that is our heritage as the people of God.

Hymn

Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds
ELW 367 – verses 1+3

Scripture Reading: John 20:19-23

A reading from the Gospel according to John, the 20th chapter:

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were locked in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Temple authorities.
Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Having said this, the savior showed them the marks of crucifixion.
The disciples were filled with joy when they saw Jesus, who said to them again, “Peace be with you. As Abba God sent me, now I’m sending you.”
After saying this, Jesus breathed on them and said,
“Receive the Holy Spirit,
If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven.
If you retain anyone’s sins, they are retained.”

Word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

Reflection: Pentecost

The Red of flames is the sanctuary color of Pentecost as we remember the great rushing wind and the dancing flames like fire, and the words of Jesus, baptizing his disciples with the Holy Fire of the Spirit. The disciples and followers of Jesus were one moment huddled in fear in a small upper room. Then the Holy Spirit came in power and they rushed out of the building and into the streets, telling everyone about the good news in ways that all could understand. Today, that same calling extends to each and every one of us. One day we are ordinary people, the next we are Christ’s preachers, and teachers, and pastors, and healers, and mercy-bringers, and the Body of Christ, redeemed by his blood, one in ministry to the entire world.

Hymn

God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind
ELW 400 – verses 1+4

Scripture Reading: John 15:1-9

A reading from the Gospel according to John, the 15th chapter:

Jesus said,
“I am the true vine,
and my Abba is the vine grower
who cuts off every branch in me that doesn’t bear fruit,

but prunes the faithful ones
to increase their yield.
You've been pruned already,
thanks to the word that I have spoken to you.
Live on in me,
as I do in you.
Just as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself
apart from the vine,
neither can you bear fruit
apart from me.
I am the vine;
you are the branches.
Those who live in me and I in them
will bear abundant fruit,
for apart from me you can do nothing.
Those who don't live in me
are like withered, rejected branches,
to be picked up and thrown on the fire and burned.
If you live on in me,
and my words live on in you,
ask whatever you want
and it will be done for you.
My Abba God will be glorified
if you bear much fruit
and thus prove to be my disciples.
As my Abba has loved me,
so have I loved you.
Live on in my love.

Word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

Reflection: Ordinary Time

Ordinary time includes the counted Sundays between Pentecost and Advent. This extended period serves to remind us of the ordinary times of life. The book of Acts and the Epistles give us a clear picture of ordinary people, going about ordinary lives, but doing extraordinary things that built the Kingdom of God. The Church was growing by leaps and bounds, both the individuals within it and the worldwide Church. So we use the color of Green to depict this growing time, and pray for the same thing within our ordinary lives. We hear again the Good News, we are instructed in the ways of the world and the Kingdom, and we are shown the vision of the Church and our responsibility within it. We hear afresh the voices of the gospel writers, the prophets, and the disciples, each exhorting us to respond anew to the call

to be God's people in a world that is hungry for the grace, love, and peace we bring into every minute of life, if we are walking in the Light, if we are "abiding in the vine." Through our lives God brings the living water to a thirsty world in our offerings of service and mercy that we offer to others on a daily basis. And this is the extraordinary way that God builds the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth - through ordinary people like us gathered here.

Hymn

Take, O, Take Me As I Am
ELW 814 – sung three times

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

Let us turn our hearts to God, our breath and life, as we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Holy God, from Christ we receive our call to feed, clothe, and welcome. Direct your church to respond to this call with faithfulness and generous love.

God of grace,

Receive our prayer.

In Christ, the rock of our salvation, we are brought into union with all of creation. With mountains, seas, dry lands, and animals of the field, we seek your guidance and protection.

God of grace,

Receive our prayer.

In Christ we know merciful judgment. Guide rulers of every nation in ways of humble leadership and wise decision-making. Allow aid to come to all who are underserved and care to any who are neglected. We pray especially this day for peace and justice in the Holy Land. Lead us in the way of solidarity with the oppressed and peace for all people – give us the strength we need to not stay silent in situations of injustice. Heal the hurt and harm, console the bereaved and afflicted, protect the innocent and helpless, and deliver all who are still in peril.

God of grace,

Receive our prayer.

In Christ we feel the depth of your love and care toward us. Nourish all who hunger, connect any who are isolated, and surround all who experience rejection or abuse. We pray for those who suffer pain of body, mind, or spirit.

God of grace,

Receive our prayer.

Holy God, in Christ we are welcomed home. We praise you for the faithful witness of those who have served you and extended your welcome and love to us, and are now at rest in you. Unite us with them as one body of Christ.

God of grace,

Receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Gathered together by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us, using the language you are most familiar with - the language of your heart.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Sending Hymn

The Lord Now Sends Us Forth
ELW 538

Blessing

May the God of all creation,
in whose image we are made,
who claims us and calls us beloved,
who strengthens us for service,
give you reason to rejoice and be glad!
The blessing of God,
Sovereign, ☩ Savior, and Spirit,
be with you today and always.
Amen

Dismissal

Go in peace. The Spirit of God is alive in you!
Thanks be to God!



1140 Tucker Rd. Hood River, OR 97031
541-386-3993
www.hoodriverchurch.org

Church Office Hours
Closed on Fridays
Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller
M-Th 9-1, or by appointment
spiritofgracepastor@gmail.com
Linda Boris, Pastoral Assistant
Tuesday 10-1

Attributions

Call to Worship – copyright © John Leach/administered by The Jubilate Group. Posted on The Jubilate Group website. http://www.jubilate.co.uk/liturgy/liturgy/kingship_call_to_worship - adapted by Rev. Bermes-Goller.

Confession and Forgiveness, Prayers of the People, Offertory, and Benediction - copyright Augsburg Fortress, 2023

Service Outline, Reading Selections, and Reflections: CRI/Voice, Dennis Bratcher, © 2015 - adapted for this service by Rev. Bermes-Goller