

Spirit of Grace

ELCA UMC



December 24th, 2023

Advent IV

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Advent IV Litany

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 defied unjust rules and flattens hierarchies or 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.**

***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 the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
who opens the heavens
and draws near to us with salvation.

Amen.

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance.
Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.
Silence is kept for reflection.

Everlasting God,
you love justice and you hate wrongdoing.
We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness
that make us reluctant to work against oppression.
We are complicit in systems of exploitation.
We choose comfort over courage.
We are careless with creation's bounty.
Look upon us with mercy.
Turn our hearts again to you.
Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways
for the sake of our waiting world.
Amen.

Hear these words of assurance:
God clothes you with garments of salvation
and covers you with robes of righteousness.
In the tender compassion of ☩ Jesus Christ,
your sins are forgiven.
God's covenant is eternal,
and God's blessing rests upon us all.
Amen.

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.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

ELW 257 – verse 1

Gospel: Luke 1: 26-55

The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 1st chapter.

Six months [after the angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah], 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, “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.

Within a few days, Mary set out and hurried to the hill country to a town of Judah, where she entered Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why am I so favored, that the mother of the Messiah should come to me? The moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who believed that what our God said to her would be accomplished!"

Mary said:

"My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,
and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior.
For you have looked with favor
upon your lowly servant,
and from this day forward
all generations will call me blessed.
For you, the Almighty, have done great things for me,
and holy is your Name.
Your mercy reaches from age to age
for those who fear you.
You have shown strength with your arm;
you have scattered the proud in their conceit;
you have deposed the mighty from their thrones
and raised the lowly to high places.
You have filled the hungry with good things,
while you have sent the rich away empty.
You have come to the aid of Israel your servant,
mindful of your mercy –
the promise you made to our ancestors –
to Sarah and Abraham
and their descendants forever."

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

Sermon

Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller

Hymn of the Day

Canticle of the Turning
ELW 723 – verses 1-4

Affirmation of Faith: A New Creed

Please stand as you are able as we confess our faith in God together:

**We are not alone
we live in God's world.
We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.
We trust in God.
We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our redeemer and our hope.
In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.
Thanks be to God. 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

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.

God of Love, you promise mercy to Abraham and Sarah and their descendants forever. Bring your church into thoughtful, caring, and collaborative relationship with those of other faiths. Strengthen our shared values, that we work together in caring for our world.

Merciful God,

Receive our prayer.

God of Love, you are pleased to make your home among us. Make our homecomings joyful as we gather with friends, families, and chosen families in celebration. Grant safety to all who travel. Sustain the work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and other ministries that assist in setting up new homes.

Merciful God,

Receive our prayer.

God of Love, you raise up the lowly and cast down the arrogant. Teach humility to all in positions of authority. Break down systems of oppression, especially systems that perpetuate inequity and exclusion. Do not allow wealth, power, or pride to become idols that obscure your call to justice.

Merciful God,

Receive our prayer.

God of Love, we pray to you especially in this time of war, oppression, and genocide 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 remain in peril.

Merciful God,

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.**

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](#)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God our provider,
by your merciful hand
abundance springs up from the earth.
Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty.
Let them be a sign of your steadfast love
and faithfulness for all people.
Nourished by your Word, send us out to proclaim
your good news of liberation and release,
brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.
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.

Sending Song:

O Come, O Come Emmanuel
ELW 257 – verses 1-8

Blessing

The God of peace bless you,
the love of Christ sustain you in hope,
and the anointing of the Spirit ☩ remain upon you
now and forever.

Amen.

Dismissal

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

Linda Boris, Pastoral Assistant

Tuesday 10-1

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