

# Spirit of Grace

ELCA UMC



December 3rd, 2023

*Advent I*

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Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Advent I Litany

The Hope of God-With-Us does not come as guaranteed outcome, or predetermined plan, or promise of a happy ending.

**Hope cannot be imposed from on high. Hope cannot be commanded.**

The Hope of God-With-Us is courageous, risky, unfolding, indeterminate.

**The Hope of God-With-Us is collective, liberating us from deadly complacency.**

Hope is gestating in darkness; it comes unexpectedly.

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

Prepare the way, for hope with courage.

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

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel...

Advent Prayer & Candle Lighting

Praise to you, O God, our salvation who is near. You hold us in our waiting and keep us awake to the world. You show up in our lives at unexpected times. Bless us as we light this candle to keep vigil for your arrival. We trust that even though we do not know the day or the hour, you hurry to gather all people to your peace.

**Amen.**

Candle Lighting

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

***Light one candle to watch for Messiah: let the light enter our world  
He shall bring salvation to creation, God fulfills the promise.***

## 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.**

Opening Hymn

People, Look East  
*UMH 202 – verses 1, 2, 3*

## 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.

God of hope, in a world of despair – where new tragedies await us around every corner – where we watch in horror how far your people have strayed from your way of Love – root us in the nurturing soil of your hope, that we might have the strength to keep awake through the night and see the glory of your kingdom that is to come. In the name of your son who dwelt among us, Jesus Christ, we pray.

**Amen.**

## First Reading: Isaiah 64:1-9

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,  
that the mountains would shake before you!

As fire kindles the brushwood  
and the fire makes water boil,  
make your Name known to your adversaries,  
and let the nations tremble before you!

When you did awesome things  
that we could not have expected,  
you came down,  
and the mountains quaked in your presence!

From ages past no ear has ever heard,  
no eye has ever seen any God but you  
intervening for those who wait for you!  
Oh, that you would find us doing right,  
that we would be mindful of you in our ways!  
You are angry because we are sinful;  
we have sinned for so long – how can we be saved?

All of us became unclean and soiled,  
even our good deeds are polluted.  
We have all withered like leaves,  
and our guilt carries us away like the wind.

No one calls upon your Name,  
there is none who clings to you,  
for you hid your face from us  
and delivered us into the hands of our sins.  
Yet you are our mother and father, YHWH;  
we are the clay and you are the potter,  
we are all the work of your hands.

Don't let your anger go beyond measure, O God,  
don't remember our sins forever,  
for we are all your people.

Word of God, Word of Life  
**Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 80 (from Nan C. Merrill's *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!**

You companion us through the wilderness,  
through the shadows created by fear.  
**You plant your Seed into each heart.  
You uproot the weeds of our sin.  
You cultivate the soil of our goodness.**  
Truly, in you, we become like a tiny acorn,  
holding the secret of a mighty oak.  
**You nourish us with the food of Love,  
with streams of Living Water.**

Be our strength as we break down walls  
that separate and divide;  
**let not our fear pluck away the gifts we would share.**  
Roll away the stones that become obstacles to growth,  
to producing a bountiful harvest.

**Receive our gratitude, O Heart of all hearts!**  
**Look upon us and see what Love can do;**  
**rejoice in the new birth that you create!**

Be glad where your Seed has found fertile soil.  
How much more the return of one healthy plant  
than ten thousand useless weeds!  
**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: Mark 13:24-37

The Holy Gospel according to Mark the 13th chapter.

Jesus said to his disciples,

“But in those days, after that time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will fall from the sky and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Promised One coming in the clouds with great power and glory; then the angels will be sent to gather the chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

“Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that the Promised One is near, right at the door. The truth is, before this generation has passed away, all these things will have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

“But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it – neither the angels of heaven, nor the Only Begotten – no one but Abba God. Be constantly on watch! Stay awake! You do not know when the appointed time will come.

“It is like people traveling abroad. They leave their home and put the workers in charge, each with a certain task, and those who watch at the front gate are ordered to stay on the alert. So stay alert! You do not know when the owner of the house is coming, whether at dusk, at midnight, when the cock crows or at early dawn. Do not let the owner come suddenly and catch you asleep. What I say to you, I say to all: stay alert!”

Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller

Hymn of the Day

God Almighty, We Are Waiting  
*W&S 3047 – verses 1-3*

## 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.*

Call your church into holy fellowship as we await the restoration of all things. Reenergize your faithful people to live with hope and compassion, especially those who serve as missionaries near and far. Center us on your promise to come among us and make all things new.

Merciful God,

**Receive our prayer.**

All creation signals your presence, O God: the vastness of the cosmos, the turn of the seasons, and living things that both rest and flourish. Rekindle our commitment to care for the earth.

Merciful God,

**Receive our prayer.**

Let the nations tremble at your holy presence, that justice and liberation prevail in all corners of the earth. Restore peace to nations in conflict, teach righteousness to corrupt leaders and systems, and bring stability to areas facing uncertain futures.

*We pray to you especially in this time of war, oppression, and persecution in the Holy Land. Help us in our confusion, and guide us in our actions and responses. 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.**

Enrich the spirits of all who feel hopeless, fearful, or despairing. Stay close to those who await healing or relief of body, mind, or spirit.

Merciful God,

**Receive our prayer.**

Be with those who keep awake at night: nurses working overnight shifts, caregivers of newborns and aging adults, stargazers, those who are anxious, or those who are traveling. Reveal to all that the dark can be a place of calm and comfort filled with your presence.

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](#)

## Offertory Prayer

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,  
through Jesus Christ our Savior.  
**Amen.**

## ***-The Meal-***

Preface – sung to the tune of “Adeste Fideles”

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

Generous God,

in bread and cup you have revealed your glory

for all people to see together.

Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim

your good news of liberation and release,

brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**

Sending Song:

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

*ELW 244 – verses 1, 3, 4*

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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[www.hoodriverchurch.org](http://www.hoodriverchurch.org)

**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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