

Spirit of Grace ELCA UMC



January 7th, 2024
Epiphany of Our Lord

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship

People of God, arise, shine,
for your light has come!
The light of Christ has come into the world.
Immanuel – God with us!

So arise, shine, for your light has come!
And we will follow the light–
when it shines brightly in the night sky,
when it glows dimly on the horizon.

We will follow the light–
when it leads down familiar paths to expected destinations,
when the road is unfamiliar
and the star rests above a dubious-looking home.
We will lift up our eyes and look around.
And when we see the Christ child,
may our hearts be overwhelmed with joy.

When we are in the presence of Immanuel,
may our knees bend in worship.
When our journey brings us, finally, to the heart of God,
May our hands open in generous sharing;
May our mouths open in generous praise.

Centering Hymn

God is Here Today
ACS 993

Confession & Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
creator of darkness and light,
word of truth,
wind sweeping over the waters.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God, our rock and refuge,
we pour out our hearts before you.
We have known you but have not always loved you.
We have wounded one another
and sinned against you.
We have not always recognized the Holy Spirit
dwelling in each of us.
Remember your covenant.
Renew your creation.
Restore us,
that we might proclaim your good news to all.
Amen.

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters.
God has spoken:
The time of grace is now.
In Jesus, the reign of God has come near.
By the authority of † Jesus Christ,
your sins are forgiven.
You are God's beloved.
Amen.

Opening Hymn

Angels From the Realms of Glory
ELW 275 – verses 1, 3, 4

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.

Almighty and ever-living God, you revealed the incarnation of your Son by the brilliant shining of a star. Shine the light of your justice always in our hearts and over all lands, and accept our lives as the treasure we offer in your praise and for your service, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

“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 –
your daughters and 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 Ephah;
everyone in Sheba will come,
bringing gold and incense
and singing the praise of YHWH.

Word of God, Word of Life

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 72:1-7 (from Nan C. Merrill's *Psalms for Praying*)

Bring justice to the peoples, O Beloved,
and your mercy to all generations!
**May the people be known for mercy,
rendering justice to the poor!**
Let their spirits soar as the eagle,
let joy abide in every heart!
**May we heed the cry of the poor –
the young and the old,
helping to free all those in need,
awakening the souls of the oppressors!**

May we know oneness with You
as long as the sun endures,
as long as the stars shine,
throughout all generations!
**May we acknowledge You in the rain
falling on the fields,
like showers that water the earth!
In our day may justice flourish,
and peace abound,
throughout all the nations!**

May every heart open to your Love
from sea to sea,
from the River of Life out to the universe!
**May fears that paralyze the people
rise up from the depths
into Your Light!**

May the leaders of nations from all the earth,
listen to Love's Voice;
May they spend time in Silence before they counsel!
May the leaders surrender to your Love,
and the nations serve the Most High!
**For You heed the needy when they call,
the poor and those who have no friend.**
You have compassion on the weak,
the downtrodden,
giving them strength and hope.
**From injustice and oppression,
You redeem their life;
and precious are they in your Heart.**

Long may You live in our hearts,
may praises be sung to You!
**May our prayers rise up before You
and blessings of love be freely rendered!**
May we be ever grateful for the grain of the fields,
for the fruits of the vine to be shared with all;
And may the people blossom forth in the cities,
diverse like flowers in the meadow!
**May your Name live on forever,
your Love endure as long as the sun!
May the people bless themselves in knowing You,
and all nations call You blessed!**

Blessed be the Beloved, the One
who dwells in open hearts,
who guides us along the way.
**Blessed be You, who come in the Name of Love;
may your glory fill the earth!
Amen and amen!**

Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 2nd chapter:

After Jesus' birth — which happened in Bethlehem of Judea, during the reign of Herod — astrologers from the East arrived in Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the newborn ruler of the Jews? We observed his star at its rising and have come to pay homage." At this news Herod became greatly disturbed, as did all of Jerusalem. Summoning all the chief priests and religious scholars of the people, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

"In Bethlehem of Judea," they informed him. "Here is what the prophet has written:
'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
are by no means least among the leaders of Judah,
since from you will come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Herod called the astrologers aside and found out from them the exact time of the star's appearance. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, after having instructed them, "Go and get detailed information about the child. When you have found him, report back to me — so that I may go and offer homage too."

After their audience with the ruler, they set out. The star which they had observed at its rising went ahead of them until it came to a standstill over the place where the child lay. They were overjoyed at seeing the star and, upon entering the house, found the child with Mary, his mother. They prostrated themselves and paid homage. Then they opened their coffers and presented the child with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

They were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so they went back to their own country by another route.

Word of God, for the People of God.
Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller

Hymn of the Day

A Star Shone Bright
W&S 3051 – 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

Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

A brief silence.

Humble the hearts of your faithful people, that we seek to be servants of your gospel and witnesses to your mysteries. Give us boldness in faith, that we make the good news of Christ's birth known to all people.

God of grace,

Receive our prayer.

Establish justice on earth for all its inhabitants. Lead us to protect fragile ecosystems and endangered species. Empower the work of all who research, engineer, and make accessible alternative and renewable sources of energy. Make us careful stewards of your creation.

God of grace,

Receive our prayer.

Nations shall come to your light and kings to your dawning. Remove corruption and fear from the hearts of leaders and authorities. Lead governments to expand policies and resources that care for refugees and all migrants. Strengthen the work of resettlement agencies

God of grace,

Receive our prayer.

Defend the cause of all who are in need, all facing poverty, and all who are oppressed. Come quickly to those who feel that their lives and livelihoods are fragile. Give them strength and lead them forth with hope.

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.

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.**

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](#)

Offering Prayer

God of abundance,
receive and bless these gifts we have offered.
Join our hearts with the song of the angels,
and gather us at your table of celebration.
Strengthen us to share with all the world
the abundance of your grace upon grace,
poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.
Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise...

...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,



heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -



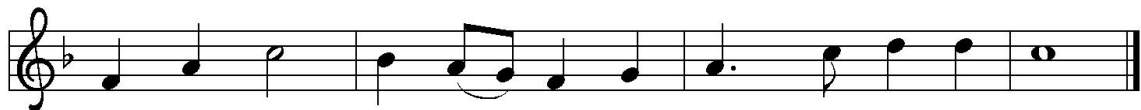
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who



comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

Holy One,, the beginning and the end, the giver of life...

...Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:



Christ has died. Christ is ris - en. Christ will come a - gain.

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 Creation,
Word of God incarnate,
Power of the Most High,
one God, now and forever.
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.**

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

God our redeemer,
you have fed us at this table
with gifts of grace, truth, and life.
As you have gathered us in joy,
send us forth as messengers of your peace.
Make us shine with the good news of your glory,
born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

Sending Song:

This Little Light of Mine
ELW 677 – verses 1-3

Blessing

God bless you and keep you,
✠ Jesus grant you grace and truth,
and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts,
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

Attributions

Call to Worship: written by Joanna Harader, and posted on the Spacious Faith blog.
<http://spaciousfaith.com/>

*Greeting + Prayer of the Day, Confession and Forgiveness, Prayers of the People, Prayer of Thanksgiving, and
Benediction - copyright Augsburg Fortress, 2023*