

# *Spirit of Grace* ELCA UMC



December 29th, 2024  
*Christmas Hymn Sing*

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Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Blessing for Beloved Christmas Hymns

Advent was brief and flew away  
with one, maybe two renditions.

Christmas is for all the verses,  
a chorus of people gathered in  
by forces of faith unseen, preaching  
Joy to the World and Silent Night.

Christmas is for anthems that wait  
all year long in the dark depths  
of our lungs for a time such as this,  
to revive the world with hope that sings.

Christmas Hymn

Joy to the World  
*UMH 246 – verses 1, 2, 4*

## Christmas Litany

We are here  
because we have heard a promise of peace  
**and we have faith its day will come.**

We have heard a rumour of justice  
**and we have faith its day will come.**

We have heard a whisper of hope  
**and we have faith its day will come.**

We have heard a hint of love  
**and we have faith its day will come.**

We have heard of the birth of the Christ-child  
**and we have faith his day is here.**

Welcome to Christmas  
Welcome to worship

## Christmas Hymn

Angels, from the Realms of Glory  
*ELW 275 – verses 1-3*

## Christmas Prayer

God of the Sun and Moon and Stars, your vast universe consumes us with beauty and unknowing. We are so small and yet, you call us to understand, to know and to find our place in our calling for justice and peace. Keep us humble, o God, but also keep us curious so that we may know the wonders of your world. **Amen.**

## Christmas Hymn

'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime  
*ELW 284 – verses 1, 2, 4*

## Blessing for Shepherds

This blessing keeps watch  
with the ones who work  
in the fourth watch and late nights,  
who fight wolves and skip showers  
and love God's creatures by name.

This blessing keeps watch  
with the ones we take for granted,  
who center the outskirts and  
feel stormy weather in their joints,  
who are often the last to hear

but the first when news is this good.

## Christmas Hymn

The First Noel  
*ELW 300 – verses 1, 2, 4*

## Blessing for Angels

Perhaps they looked like cherubs,  
like pageant children dressed  
in tinsel and tulle and white robes  
with voices so sweet and pure  
the shepherds sighed and smiled.

But I like to think they frightened  
those men out of their own skin,  
roaring in octaves foreign and fierce  
creatures with talons and wings  
more curious than any beast on earth.

I'd like to think they proclaimed  
good news that shook the whole field,  
a haunting pronouncement that  
God in flesh would be untamable  
and the world was already turning.

## Christmas Hymn

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing  
*ELW 270 – verses 1-3*

## Blessing for Glory

There is glory  
in the way you  
tell the truth with love  
laugh from your belly  
glow with gratitude  
decline with autonomy  
honor the silence  
stand in tension  
dance and twirl in chaos  
feel the weight with another  
resist by being present  
come home to yourself  
crowned by the One  
who claims you wild and free.

## Christmas Hymn

O Little Town of Bethlehem  
*ELW 279 – verses 1, 2, 4*

## Blessing for Wonder

It is no small thing  
to be surprised by  
the sudden admiration  
of a pleasant scene  
set in a moment beyond  
your own control.

May something  
about this season  
cause you to step back,  
to shift your whole weight  
while you take in the fullness  
of what is still possible  
so your gaze is bent by cosmic time  
and the sneaking suspicion  
that, in the end,  
beauty needs no explanation

## Christmas Hymn

What Child is This?  
*ELW 296 – verses 1+3*

## Blessing for Home

There is One who journeys  
all the way here to live with us,  
who finds unlikely refuge  
in mangers and mother's breast,  
in foreign exile and Temple,  
who watched foxes in holes  
and wonders aloud whether  
he has a place in this world,  
who shakes the dust off his sandals  
and breaks bread as a guest,

whose breath is broken  
by the powers of this world  
that tell him to stay in the grave,  
that he belongs only to death,

who rises to announce  
his love for this world and a plan  
to make his body a home  
on heaven and earth for all  
who are hungry for refuge.

## Christmas Hymn

Once in Royal David's City  
*UMH 250 - verses 1-3*

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:41-52

The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 2nd chapter

The parents of Jesus used to go every year to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when Jesus was twelve, they went up for the celebration as was their custom. As they were returning at the end of the feast, the child Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, unbeknownst to Mary and Joseph. Thinking Jesus was in their caravan, they continued their journey for the day, looking for him among their relatives and acquaintances.

Not finding Jesus, they returned to Jerusalem in search of him. On the third day, they came upon Jesus in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. All who heard Jesus were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

When Mary and Joseph saw Jesus, they were astonished, and Mary said, "Son, why have you done this to us? You see that your father and I have been so worried, looking for you." Jesus said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I had to be in my Abba's house?"

But they didn't understand what he told them. Then Jesus went down with them to Nazareth and was obedient to them. Mary stored these things in her heart, and Jesus grew in wisdom, in years, and in favor with God and people alike.

Christmas Hymn

O Come, All Ye Faithful  
*ELW 283 – verses 1, 3, 4*

Blessing for Promise

Every time God makes  
a covenant with creation –  
the people and the nations,  
the divine is leaning in.

Limitless power  
declares limits for itself,  
choosing a real connection  
over and against everything else.

Heaven keeps coming near,  
until one day, God is feeding  
at the breast of one who whispers  
sacred promises right back.

Christmas Hymn

In the Bleak Midwinter  
*ELW 294 – verses 1+2*

Joys & Concerns

*A moment of silence is held as we lift up the prayers of our community*

Prayer for Ruth Akiyama

Eternal God, your love is stronger than death, and your passion more fierce than the grave. We rejoice and give thanks for the life of Ruth, whom you have drawn into your eternal embrace. Keep us in joyful communion with her until we join with all the saints of every people and nation, gathered together in your everlasting presence and feasting at the banquet of your abundant love and grace. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Christmas Prayer

Holy Listener, hear our prayers through our whispers, our laments, our praises, and our screams. You, oh God, are always with us. Make yourself known to us so that we can feel your presence, know of your love, and fully understand where you would have us to go.

**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

Creator God,  
you made the whole world,  
even the farthest stars,  
and you draw near to feed us with your Holy Word.  
We thank you for coming among us,  
for leading us into peace.  
We thank you for showering us with mercy,  
for sending us into the world.  
Come, Loving Jesus, and go with us  
as we pursue your pathways of  
hope, peace, joy, and love everlasting.  
**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.***

## Blessing for Twelve Whole Days

This love is brewed in slow trimesters,  
taking time to be born even while  
we spend the day at a reckless pace.  
This love is a tide, one dozen days  
pulling, a season stirring the earth  
  
from moments to movements.  
There is One who builds Life  
in our hopes and fears,  
who is revealed in our restlessness  
so that we cannot box up or hide away  
the sacred revolution God has planned –  
it is already accomplished and on the way.



Christmas Hymn

Go Tell It On The Mountain  
*ELW 290 – verses 1-3*

Closing Litany

Glory to God in the highest!  
**And hope to every discouraged heart.**  
Glory to God in the highest!  
**And peace to every conflicted soul.**  
Glory to God in the highest!  
**And joy to every downcast spirit.**  
Glory to God in the highest!  
**And love to everyone.**  
Let us sing praises to our God.  
**Let us offer this light against the darkness.**

Let us pray,  
Holy God of Love,  
There is light in our lives  
because of the abundance of your steadfast love.  
A love so vast, so deep, so real,  
that you became one of us.  
May we live within the power of this love,  
the song alive in our hearts,  
And may we share its light with a world  
where too many dwell in darkness.  
**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

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**Linda Boris, Pastoral Assistant**

Tuesday 10-1

**Attributions**

Christmas Litany: written by Cheryl Lawrie, on her blog [hold this space] <http://holdthisspace.org.au/>,  
accessed via re-worship.blogspot.com

Christmas Prayers: from "Boundless: An Anticolonial Advent Devotional," via justiceunbound.com

Blessings: from "Ordinary Blessings for the Christmas Season" by Meta Herrick Carlson

Closing Litany: written by Joanna Harader, and posted on Spacious Faith. <http://spaciousfaith.com/>,  
accessed via re-worship.blogspot.com