



THE
BLESSING
OF *Hope*



Gracehill
CHURCH

The logo for Gracehill Church features a stylized graphic of a church building with three towers of varying heights, rendered in white lines. Below the graphic, the name "Gracehill" is written in a white, elegant cursive font, and the word "CHURCH" is written in a smaller, white, all-caps sans-serif font directly underneath.

November 29, 2020

ORDER OF WORSHIP
November 29, 2020
First Sunday of Advent

Song of Gathering *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks*

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground
An angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around

“Fear not!” said he; for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled minds
“Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind

To you in David’s town this day
Is born of David’s line
The Savior who is Christ the Lord
And this shall be the sign:

The heavenly babe you there shall find
To human view displayed
All meanly wrapped in swaddling bands
And in a manger laid.”

Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Christ is born!
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Christ is born!

“All glory be to God on high
And to the earth be peace
Good will henceforth from God to man
Begin and never cease.”

Welcome and Announcements

Song of Gathering: This first song of the service is meant to prepare our minds and hearts for worship. Feel free to sing along or simply meditate as we begin our time worshipping God.

Advent Reading *Luke 1:26-33*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Song of Praise

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

1. Come, Thou long expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear Desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

2. Joy to those who long to see thee
Dayspring from on high appear
Come, thou promised Rod of Jesse
Of thy birth we long to hear.
O'er the hills the angels singing
News, glad tidings of a birth
"Go to him, your praises bringing
Christ the Lord has come to earth."

3. Come to earth to taste our sadness,
He whose glories knew no end
By his life he brings us gladness,
Our Redeemer, Shepherd, Friend.
Leaving riches without number,
Both within a cattle stall;
This the everlasting wonder,
Christ was born the Lord of all.

4. Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Call to Worship: We worship because we are called to do so. This call, usually taken from a psalm, is an invitation into the presence of God; to worship and praise him.

Song of Praise: We enter into God's presence praising him for who he is, and delighting in his desire to be in relationship with us.

Prayer of Adoration *(concluding with the Lord's Prayer)*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Call to Confession *Psalm 139:23-24*

Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!

Prayer of Confession, *(followed by Silent Confession)*
from the Book of Common Prayer

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against your holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us.

O Lord, have mercy on us, for we have committed offenses against you. Spare those, O God, who confess their faults. Restore those who are penitent, according to your promises declared to humankind through Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

Prayer of Adoration: Praying is essential to worship. As we pray, we begin by adoring God for who he is and what he has done through his son Jesus. We conclude this prayer by reciting together the Lord's Prayer.

Call to Confession: As we praise God, and through the Spirit showing us, we become aware of our own imperfections in light of our perfect God. In love, God calls us to freely and openly confess our sins before him.

Confession of Sin: Sin is not only something that we've done wrong. Rather, it's a state of being that we're born into, and that we need saving from. It is impossible to conquer sin on our own, or make amends for it by our own actions. Our only hope is to turn to Christ, asking that he forgive and conquer sin for us, and - by grace alone and through faith alone - save us.

Assurance of Forgiveness *Romans 10:9-10*

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Song of Thanks *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times didst give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe.

O come, thou Dayspring from on high
And cheer us by thy drawing nigh
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

O come, thou Key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe the way that leads on high
And close the path to misery.

Assurance of Forgiveness: As we confess our sin, God offers us the assurance that, in Jesus, we are forgiven and loved regardless of what we've done in the past. Because of Jesus, we are no longer condemned by our sin, but are brought into new life by the Spirit.

Song of Thanks: Knowing that we are forgiven, and knowing that Jesus has reconciled us with God the Father, we sing with thankful hearts.

Central text *Ruth 1*

¹In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. ²The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. ³But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, ⁵and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

⁶Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the Lord had visited his people and given them food. ⁷So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. ⁸But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹The Lord grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. ¹⁰And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." ¹¹But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? ¹²Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, ¹³would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me."¹⁴ Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." ¹⁶But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. ¹⁷Where you die I will

Sermon: Though spoken by a person, we are to hear the sermon as God speaking to us. A sermon is a study in God's Word, the announcement of the good news in Christ, and an invitation to apply the truth of God's Word to our daily lives. At Gracehill, our sermons are not generally based on certain themes; rather, we study through individual books of the Bible.

die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you."¹⁸ And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

¹⁹So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?"²⁰ She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.²¹ I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?"

²²So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Song of Response *Angels We Have Heard on High*

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains.
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.

Chorus:

Gloria..... in excelsis Deo.

Gloria..... in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the new-born King.

See him in a manger laid
Whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
While our hearts in love we raise.

Song of Response: We sing in response to the hearing of God's faithfulness and love for his people, as revealed in his son Jesus.

Benediction

Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

If you'd like to meet to find out more about Gracehill, or ways to get connected, please contact Ben Seneker at: 828.656.3453, or email benseneker@gracehillgr.church; or contact elder Ken Morse at gkmorse60@gmail.com

Benediction: As we conclude the service, the benediction is a blessing by God, as found in Scripture, for us individually and as a united church. We take this blessing with us as we - carrying the light of the gospel - go out into a dark world, that others may see the Light.

Doxology: In the Greek - doxologia, a word (logos) of glory (doxa). The doxology is an ancient hymn of praise, and has been part of the worship service in many churches for centuries. It is sung in response to the Lord's abundant grace for us and his church.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

On-line services: Due to the recent spike in covid cases in Grand Rapids, we will suspend in-person worship services for the next few weeks. Services will be live-streamed on our YouTube channel (accessed from our website). Opportunities are available to stay connected through Zoom, and if you're interested in learning more, please email Ben at: office@gracehillgr.church.

Giving: Just like singing or praying, giving is an act of worship. When we give, we are joyfully recognizing that all we have is a gift from God, and returning a portion of that gift is both an act of obedience as well as dependence. During this time of on-line services, you can continue to give to this ministry by visiting our website (www.gracehillgr.church), clicking on the "Give" tab, and selecting "Give to Gracehill (General)" on the drop down menu.

