



Gracehill
CHURCH

November 28, 2021

ORDER OF WORSHIP First Sunday of Advent

Song of Gathering *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
and with fear and trembling stand.
Ponder nothing earthly minded,
for with blessing in his hand
Christ our God to earth descendeth
Our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary,
as of old on earth he stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture
in the body and the blood,
he will give to all the faithful
his own self for heav'nly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven
Spreads its vanguard on the way,
as the Light of light descendeth
from the realms of endless day
That the pow'rs of hell may vanish,
as the darkness clears away.

At his feet the six-winged seraph,
cherubim with sleepless eye,
veil their faces to the Presence,
as with ceaseless voice they cry,
"Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia, Lord Most High!"

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.

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² 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, ³³ 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*

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.

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."

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.

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)*

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.

from the Book of Common Prayer

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. 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.

Sermon Title

Wonderful Counselor

Central text Isaiah 9:2-7

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.

³ You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

⁴ For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God!

Prayer

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.

Communion

Song of Communion

Come Light our Hearts

For You, O Lord our souls in stillness wait
For You, O Lord our souls in stillness wait
Truly our hope is in You
Truly our hope is in You

O Lord of life, our only hope
Your radiance shines
On all who look to You in the dark
Emmanuel come, come light our hearts

Oh Joy above, all other loves
In You we find, more than enough
We come as we are, O heal and restore,
Come light our hearts

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, or if you have specific prayer requests, please contact Ben Seneker at: 616-227-8813, 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

Women of Gracehill's Christmas Party: Hello ladies! We'd like to invite you to join us on December 6th from 7 to 9pm at the Buists' home for a time of Christmas season fellowship. Please bring an ornament to exchange during a game of White Elephant. It does not have to be a new ornament; it can be from your own closet or thrifted! Also, feel free to wear your favorite Christmas outfit and bring a Christmas mug. There will be tea, cocoa, snacks, and deserts. You are welcome to bring a dish to pass if you'd like, but there will be plenty of food. Please let Janae, Lois, or Brice know if you can make it. The Buists are located at 1844 4 Mile Rd. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525 (this is a private drive called Woodview Lane, and they are the second house on the right).

Advent Meditation

Many of us are no longer children, and so wonder and astonishment are not often part of our lives. A good poem can help, as long as, like our sister Mary, we ponder it in our hearts (Luke 2:19). God's grand particularity is in His becoming human; an advent poem is a small particularity that celebrates the large one. Read it slowly, more than once, and maybe out loud. That is, Ponder.

Advent Visitation, by Lucy Shaw

Even from the cabin window I sensed the wind's
contagion begin to infect the rags of leaves.
Then the alders gilded to it, obeisant, the way

angels are said to bow, covering their faces with
their wings, not solemn, as we suppose, but
possessed of a sudden, surreptitious hilarity.

When the little satin wind arrived,
I felt it slide through the cracked-open door
(A wisp of prescience? A change in the weather?),

and after the small push of breath—You
entering with your sir of radiant surprise,
I the astonished one.

These still December mornings
I fancy I live in a clear envelope of angels
like a cellophane womb. Or a soap bubble,

the colors drifting, curling. Outside
everything's tinted rose, grape, turquoise,
silver—the stones by the path, the skin of sun

on the pond ice, at night the aureola of
a pregnant moon, like me, iridescent,
almost full-term with light.