



Our church exists to help people **know** God's Son, **fellowship** with God's people, **worship** in God's church, **grow** in God's grace and **serve** in God's world.

The Lord's Day | December 24, 2023

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome

Please silence your electronic device before the worship service begins.

Preparation for Worship

Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"

Call to Worship

Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. Isaiah 40:9-11

Invocation

Doxology

Doxology means "glory words." We lift our hearts up to give God his glory for all he has done.

+O Come, All Ye Faithful

Advent Candle - Love

Pastoral Prayer followed by the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come; your 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

+The First Noel

+Christmas Offering

Children's Moment

+Scripture Reading

[1] There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. [2] He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

[9] After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. [10] She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. [11] And she vowed a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head."

[12] As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. [13] Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman.

[14] And Eli said to her, "How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you." [15] But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. [16] Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation." [17] Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him." [18] And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your eyes." Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

[19] They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. [20] And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked for him from the LORD."

⁵In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. ⁷But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

⁸Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, ⁹according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. ¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

¹⁸And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." ¹⁹And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my

words, which will be fulfilled in their time." ²¹And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. ²²And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. ²³And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

²⁴After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, ²⁵"Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

Luke 1:5-25

Sermon Rev. Doug Serven

Silent Confession

Corporate Confession

Most High, we sing your praises, for your love endures forever. The Virgin Mary bore the ultimate revelation of your divine love, the baby Jesus. And now we thank you for the privilege of bearing your love in the world. We confess that often we have failed you in this commission. At times, we have questioned this call, saying "How can this be?" Other times, we have failed to offer love out of fear of rejection or self-involvement. Send your Holy Spirit upon us. Strengthen us and show us where revealing your love can bring new life. Amen.

Declaration of Pardon

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1:29

Believe the good news of the gospel: In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

Pastor: Your sins are forgiven. Your dignity is restored. Your shame is taken away—all by the life and sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. At the time of the banquet, he sent his servant to say to all those who were invited, "Friends, your spot at the table is set. He has made a place for you."

People: **Thanks be to God!**

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic* church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

*universal

Invitation to the Table

The Lord's Supper

This is a sign and symbol for those who believe in Jesus Christ. It's not for good people. It's for you if you believe and embrace that you are worse and more messed up than you ever dare to admit; and yet you are more loved and accepted than you had ever dared to hope - because of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus for you. You will be invited to come forward. The dark liquid is wine and the light liquid is grape juice. We have gluten free crackers on the table if you need them instead of the bread. After you are finished, please place your empty cup in one of the baskets at the front. Feel free to stay and pray with the pastor or elders.

Children are welcome to come with their parents. Each child should talk with a pastor or elder about his or her belief in Christ before taking the Lord's Supper for the first time. Please make an appointment to do this at a future date.

Pastor: The Lord be with you!

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts!

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us lift up our hearts to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Pastor: Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.

+Go, Tell it on the Mountain

Announcements

+Benediction

God sends us out with his blessing. A benediction is not a prayer. We don't bow our heads. We lift them up and even lift up our hands, in a spiritually ready position so that the blessing God is giving us will fully hit our whole selves, and we'll be sent out for mission.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

2 Corinthians 13:14

Dismissal

Pastor: Let us go forth to serve the world as those who love our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

People: Thanks be to God!

**If able, please stand*

Prayers During the Lord's Supper:

Prayer for Those Searching for the Truth: Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way the truth and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me and open me to the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads me to the life you promise. Amen.

Prayer of Belief: Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever dared admit, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt on the cross, taking what I deserved in order to offer me complete forgiveness. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Amen.

Prayer of Struggling Against Sin: Lord Jesus, grant that I may see in you the fulfillment of all my needs, and may I turn from every false satisfaction to feed on you, the true and living bread. Enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely to me and run with perseverance the race you have set before me, looking only to you, the pioneer and champion of my faith. Amen.

Prayer of Commitment: Lord Jesus, you have called us to follow you in baptism and in a life of committed discipleship through membership in your church. Grant that I may take the necessary steps to be one with your people and live in the fullness of your Spirit. Amen.

Announcements

Save the date! 2024 VBS is coming. The dates are June 24 to 28. Please be praying about how you can be involved.

Taking Down The Tree: Saturday, January 6 at 10am join us as we take down our Christmas decorations. Let Joan know if you are available to help.

SWES is in particular need of peanut butter and jelly, any type of pasta, tuna fish, macaroni and cheese, soup, black beans and pork and beans

Nursery/Children's Church Rotation Today: Jenn, Janet Next week: Angie, Darlene

Weekly Schedule

SUNDAY

Sunday School: 8:50 - 9:45 AM **Adults and Teens** in Trailer **Children 4-9** in classroom in the church.

Worship Service: 10 AM

Nursery (infant -3yrs.) in Toddler Room during service (2nd-5th Sunday)

Children's Church (infant-8 yrs., 2nd-5th Sunday)

MONDAY

Women's Discipleship Group: 7 PM, 2nd Monday of the Month, in person and on Zoom.

WEDNESDAY

Conversational English Classes: 9:30 -11:30 AM during the school year.

Zoom Praying Meeting: 7:30-8:30 PM

SATURDAY

Men's Discipleship Group: 7 AM, 1st Saturday of each month at the church.

Thank you for worshipping with us!

If you would like to have your name added to our communication list for announcements and events, please scan the code.



Thank you for your generous giving to help us support the mission and vision of Grace Church. You can make a one-time gift or set up regular giving. Visit grpca.org or scan the code.



Church Leadership

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