



**GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

*To all who are spiritually weary and seek rest;  
to all who mourn and long for comfort;  
to all who struggle and desire victory;  
to all who sin and need a Savior;  
to all who are strangers and want fellowship;  
to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness;  
and to all who will come,  
this church opens wide her doors  
and offers welcome  
in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

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***Church Staff & Officers***

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**Brad Wright**  
*Lead Pastor*

**Kyle Bobos**  
*Associate Pastor*

**Jaime Jimenez**  
*Assistant Pastor*

**Caleb McDuffee**  
*Student Ministries*

**Elders**

*Brent Allmon*

*Dan Brink*

*Jon Green*

*Rob McIntosh*

*Mark Moore*

*Damon Webster*

*Andy Yung*

**Diaconal Ministry Team**

*Byron Bevers*

*Matt Bradshaw*

*Ann Green*

*Mark Hill*

*Scott Johnston*

*Jennifer McIntosh*

*Bev Moncla*

*Mike Ryan*

*Joe Tison*

*Sunny Yung*

Grace Church is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)

## Reflections

The Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as this truth of the Incarnation.

– J.I. Packer

“Christmas is fast approaching. And now that Christ has aroused our seasonal expectations, he’ll soon fulfill them all!”

– St. Augustine, *Sermon 51*

In [Jesus'] coming, a new age has dawned; nothing will ever be quite the same again.

– R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*

+ ADVENT + CHRISTMAS + EPIPHANY + LENT + EASTER + PENTECOST +

### ADVENT SEASON

Advent marks the beginning of the church calendar as we reenter the story of anticipating the birth of the promised newborn King. In Advent, we celebrate the beginning and ending of Christ's victory over the powers of evil. We call upon God to accomplish that victory in our own lives, to break in on us, to be born in our hearts, and to create us anew. The Older Testament looks forward to the coming of the King and we experience again waiting for him as Christmas morning approaches. Advent is marked by a spirit of expectation, anticipation, preparation, and longing.

# Grace Presbyterian Church

December 1, 2024

10:30 AM

*First Sunday in Advent*

## Prelude

## Words of Welcome<sup>1</sup>

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*Praise*

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## Call to Worship

- based on **Joel 2:1**

Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
Sound the alarm on my holy hill.  
Let all who live in the land tremble,  
For the day of the Lord is coming.  
It is close at hand.  
Come, let us worship God.

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<sup>1</sup> As a courtesy, please program all communication devices to silent mode. Thank you!

## Song of Praise

*Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*  
Rowland Hugh Prichard, Jacob Sooter, and Meredith Andrews

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,  
Day-spring 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,  
born within a cattle stall;  
this the everlasting wonder,  
Christ was born the Lord of all.

## Prayer of Adoration

## Lighting of the Advent Candle<sup>2</sup>

The Portillo Family

**Leader:** The Advent wreath is a circle with no beginning and no end. It is a symbol of God's unending love and faithfulness.

**People:** *The prophet Isaiah said, The Lord himself will give you a sign: the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*

**Leader:** The angel Gabriel said to Mary, "Greetings you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

**People:** *We rejoice that we, too, have found favor with God.*

**ALL:** *God's mercy extends to those who fear him from generation to generation.*

## Song of Response

*Come, Oh Redeemer, Come*  
Fernando Ortega

Father enthroned on high  
Holy holy  
Ancient eternal light  
Hear our prayer

Chorus:  
Come oh Redeemer come  
Grant us mercy  
Come oh Redeemer come  
Grant us peace

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<sup>2</sup> Lighting the Advent wreath originated in Germany in the nineteenth century, based on a Roman custom of the ceremonial entrance of a ruler to a province or city as his 'advent' (from the Latin *adventus*: 'arrival'). The wreath consists of four candles on the outside of the wreath and one candle in the center. One candle is lit the first Sunday of Advent. Two are lit the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, and so on. Each of the candles has special significance: The first is the prophecy candle; the second is the Bethlehem candle; the third is the Angel's candle; the 4<sup>th</sup> is the Shepherd's candle; and the center candle is the Christ candle, lit at Christmas.

## Call to Renewal

**Isaiah 11:1-3**

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;  
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.  
The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him —  
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and of might,  
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord — and he will delight in the fear of  
the Lord.

## Confession of Sin

*Minister &  
People:*

*O promised Christ:*

*We are a world at war.  
Our peace depends on your coming.  
We are a sinful people.  
Our pardon depends on your coming.  
We are full of good intentions but weak at keeping promises;  
our only hope of doing God's will  
is that you should come and help us do it.  
Lord Christ, Word made flesh,  
our world waits  
for your peace,  
for your pardon,  
and for your grace.  
Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*

## Private Reflection and Confession

## Words of Encouragement

—based on **Isaiah 40:1-2**

Minister: Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.  
Your sins are pardoned.  
The penalty is paid.

*People: Thanks be to God.*

## Song of Thanksgiving

*O Church Arise*

Stuart Townend and Keith Getty

O church arise and put your armor on  
Hear the call of Christ our Captain  
For now the weak can say that they are strong  
In the strength that God has given  
With shield of faith and belt of truth  
We'll stand against the devil's lies  
An army bold whose battle cry is love  
Reaching out to those in darkness

Our call to war to love the captive soul  
But to rage against the captor  
And with the sword that makes the wounded whole  
We will fight with faith and valor  
When faced with trials on every side  
We know the outcome is secure  
And Christ will have the prize for which He died  
An inheritance of nations

Come see the cross where love and mercy meet  
As the Son of God is stricken  
Then see His foes lie crushed beneath His feet  
For the Conqueror has risen  
And as the stone is rolled away  
And Christ emerges from the grave  
This victory march continues till the day  
Every eye and heart shall see Him



So Spirit come put strength in every stride  
Give grace for every hurdle  
That we may run with faith to win the prize  
Of a servant good and faithful  
As saints of old still line the way  
Retelling triumphs of His grace  
We hear their calls and hunger for the day  
When with Christ we stand in glory

### **The Prayers of the People** *(concluded 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!*

### **Peace of God**

Minister: May the peace of Christ be with you!

*People: And also with you.*

*If parents prefer, children 4 years old – 2nd grade  
are invited to attend Children's Church in the Education Building at this time.*

### **Doxology**

Thomas Ken & Bob Kauflin

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
In heaven above and earth below:  
Praise God the Father and the Son,  
Praise God the Spirit, three-in-one.

## Announcements

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### *Commitment*

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## The Offering

The offering is a way for members and friends of Grace Church to support the church's mission and ministry. If you are our guest today, please feel under no compulsion to give.

## Scripture Reading

**Matthew 1:18-25**

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. 19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means "God with us").

24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Minister: This is the Word of the LORD.

*People: Thanks be to God!*

*Joseph's Hope*  
**LIVING INTO ADVENT HOPE**

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*Communion*

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*Guidelines for Reception of Communion*

*Communion is the family meal for Christians. We welcome all committed followers of Jesus Christ to partake of this sacrament: those who are baptized members of a congregation which proclaims the gospel, who are at peace with God and with their neighbor, and who seek strength to live more faithfully for Christ. If you are not a Christian, or if you are not prepared to share in this meal, we encourage you to spend this time in prayer using the prayers that follow as guidelines. We hope that this time is helpful as you consider your relationship with Jesus Christ, and with his people, the church.*

**The Great Thanksgiving**

Minister:       Therefore, lift up your hearts.

*People:         We lift them up to the Lord!*

Minister:       Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

*People:         It is right to give him thanks and praise!*

Minister:       Together we proclaim the mystery of faith.

*All:             Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again!*

## Song of Communion

*All Must Be Well*

Mary Bowly Peters and Matthew S. Smith

Through the love of God our Savior all will be well  
Free and changeless is His favor all is well  
Precious is the blood that healed us  
Perfect is the grace that sealed us  
Strong the hand stretched forth to shield us  
All must be well

Though we pass through tribulation all will be well  
Ours is such a full salvation all is well  
Happy still in God confiding  
Fruitful if in Christ abiding  
Steadfast through the Spirit's guiding  
All must be well

## Prayer of Consecration and the Words of Institution

### Prayer for those not communing:

#### Prayer for Covenant Children (Not Yet Confirmed)

Lord Jesus, thank you for placing me inside your family, the church. Help me more and more to know you, to love you, and to follow you as your faithful disciple. Amen.

#### Prayer for Those Searching for Truth

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

#### Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but, through you, I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared to hope. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior. Amen.

Prayer for Those Struggling with Sin

Lord Jesus, grant that I may see in you the fulfillment of all my needs, and may 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, and run with perseverance the race set before me, looking only to you, the author and finisher 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 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.

## **Distribution of the Bread and the Cup**

Once the stations are ready, please come forward, row by row, to receive the elements. Once everyone has returned to their seat, we will stand together and sing the final verse from our Song of Commitment.

## **Song of Commitment**

*All Must Be Well*

Mary Bowly Peters and Matthew S. Smith

We expect a bright tomorrow all will be well  
Faith can sing through days of sorrow all is well  
On our Father's love relying  
Jesus ev'ry need supplying  
Yes in living and in dying  
All must be well

On our Father's love relying  
Jesus ev'ry need supplying  
Yes in living or in dying  
All must be well

## Benediction<sup>3</sup>

Romans 15:12-13

Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse shall come,  
the one who rises to rule the Gentiles;  
in him the Gentiles shall hope.”

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

## Dismissal

Minister: Now, let us go forth to serve this community and the world as those  
who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

*All: Thanks be to God!*

*The pastoral staff and other church leaders are available following the service to pray with  
you or to answer your questions about the Christian faith or Grace Church*

## Worship Music

Fang Daniels, cello  
Rae Moses, piano  
Jennifer Reddick, flute  
Stephanie Taylor, vocalist  
Tim Taylor, guitar, vocalist

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<sup>3</sup>The benediction is much more than a wish or even a prayer. It is a renewed ordination of the people of God to their service to each other, to their community and the world. God declares his own favor toward his people.

## \_\_\_\_\_ Welcome, Guests! \_\_\_\_\_

**Welcome to Grace Presbyterian Church!** If you would like us to keep you in the loop with what's going on at GPC, *please take a moment to fill out the visitor information form by using the QR code.* We would be happy to meet you!



**Ways to Connect at Grace** where you can explore, engage, and get involved throughout the week.

- **Church Center App** (GPC Woodlands), use this QR code for a quick link to the app.
- **Our church website**, <https://www.gracewoodlands.org/>



## \_\_\_\_\_ Announcements \_\_\_\_\_

**Our Grace Guest** wifi password is *GraceGuest*.

**Stewardship Update:** Grace thanks you so much for your generous gifts and offerings to our Savior for 2024.

### **General Fund Giving for October: \$64,898**

\$992,938: Jan. - Oct. 2024 General Fund Budget

\$915,632: Jan. - Oct. 2024 Actual General Fund Income

(\$77,306): 2024 Variance

\*2024 GF Budget \$1,191,526

### **Children's Ministries:**

- **Parents of Infants-Three-Yr Olds:** Our nursery classes (ages 8 weeks thru 3 years) provide a warm, nurturing, and well-supervised environment. Our Staff welcomes the opportunity to love your child! When using the nursery, please check-in and label all items (bags, cups, etc.) with your child's name. Contact our Families Pastor, Kyle Bobos, at [kyle@gpcwoodlands.org](mailto:kyle@gpcwoodlands.org) if you have any questions about the nursery.
- **Children's Church is for children ages 4 through 2nd grade.** During the passing of the peace, the children line up with their leader in the back of the sanctuary to exit worship. During the song of communion, children will rejoin their families to observe communion with the rest of the church body. We will gather in room 108 in the Education Building to sing songs, pray, and hear a children's sermon.

**Banners Explained:** Advent is the beginning of the Church Year for most churches in the Western tradition. The primary color is Purple. This is the color of penitence and fasting as well as the color of royalty to welcome the Advent of the King. This color is also the color of suffering and points to an important connection between Jesus' birth and death. Advent is marked by a spirit of expectation, of anticipation, of preparation, of longing.

The banner on the left comes from Isaiah 11:1 "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit." The prophet Isaiah looks forward to a time when Jesus, a king far mightier than David Jesse's son, would come to rule the world with justice, mercy, and love.

The banner on the right depicts an advent wreath. The green leaves and holly symbolize life brought to us in Jesus, and each Sunday, a candle is lit in preparation for the arrival of the Messiah. The white center candle is lit on Christmas Eve and symbolizes purity and truth.