



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

It is now, at Advent, that I am given the chance to suspend all expectation... and instead to revel in the mystery.

— Jerusalem Jackson Greer

*A Homemade Year: The Blessings of Cooking, Crafting, and Coming Together*

All we could ever imagine, could ever hope for, He is.... He is the Prince of Peace whose first coming has already transformed society but whose second coming will forever establish justice and righteousness. All this, and infinitely more, alive in an impoverished baby in a barn. That is what Christmas means—to find in a place where you would least expect to find anything you want, everything you could ever want.

— Michael Card

*The Promise*

Christmas, then, is not a dream, a moment of escapism. Christmas is the reality, which shows up the rest of “reality.” And for Christmas, here, read Christianity. Either Jesus is the Lord of the world, and all reality makes sense in his light, or he is dangerously irrelevant to the problems and possibilities of today’s world. There is no middle ground. Either Jesus was, and is, the Word of God, or he, and the stories Christians tell about him, are lies.

— N.T. Wright

*For All God’s Worth*

+ **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 15, 2024

10:30 AM

*Third Sunday in Advent*

## Prelude

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

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*Praise*

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## Call to Worship

## Psalm 50

Minister: The mighty God summons the earth  
from the rising of the sun to where it sets.

*People: Our God comes and will not be silent.  
God calls, and we respond to his love.*

Minister: The heavens declare God's righteousness.

*People: We sing of God's glories!*

Minister: Offer up to God our thanksgiving.

*People: And our God will hear us, save us,  
and be with us forever.*

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

## Song of Praise

## *Hark The Herald Angels Sing*

Felix Mendelssohn and Charles Wesley

Hark the herald angels sing  
Glory to the newborn King  
Peace on earth and mercy mild  
God and sinners reconciled  
Joyful all ye nations rise  
Join the triumph of the skies  
With th'angelic hosts proclaim  
Christ is born in Bethlehem  
Hark the herald angels sing  
Glory to the newborn King

Christ by highest heav'n adored  
Christ the everlasting Lord  
Late in time behold Him come  
Offspring of the Virgin's womb  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see  
Hail th'incarnate Deity  
Pleased as man with men to dwell  
Jesus our Emmanuel  
Hark the herald angels sing  
Glory to the newborn King

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness  
Light and life to all He brings  
Ris'n with healing in His wings  
Mild He lays His glory by  
Born that man no more may die  
Born to raise the sons of earth  
Born to give them second birth  
Hark the herald angels sing  
Glory to the newborn King

## Prayer of Adoration

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

John and Lacy Byerly

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: Isaiah the prophet calls us to prepare for the coming of Jesus by making straight all that is crooked.*

Leader: A voice cries out in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God..."

*People: Then, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."*

Leader: Let us prepare for Jesus, the Christ, who is anointed by God to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release the prisoners.

*ALL: For a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before the nations.*

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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.

## Song of Response

*Come, Oh Redeemer Come*

Fernando Ortega

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

Lord save us from the dark  
Of our striving  
Faithless and troubled hearts  
Weighed down (chorus)

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

Look now upon our need  
Lord be with us  
Heal us and make us free  
From our sin (chorus)

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## *Renewal*

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### Call to Renewal

**Revelation 5:9-10**

You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.

### Confession of Sin

**Psalm 51:1-2, 12**

*Minister &  
People:*

*Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your unfailing love;  
according to your great compassion  
blot out my transgressions.  
Wash away all my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin.*

*Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*

*In Christ's name we pray, Amen.*

## **Private Reflection and Confession**

### **Words of Encouragement**

**Galatians 4:4-5**

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.

### **Sacrament of Baptism**

Genevieve Rose Deligans  
Emma Lincoln

### **Song of Baptism**

*The Blessing*  
Chris Brown, Cody Carnes, Kari Jobe, and Steven Furtick

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make His face shine upon you.  
And give you peace, and give you peace,  
And give you peace forever.

The Lord be gracious to you.  
The Lord turn His face towards you.  
And give you peace, and give you peace,  
And give you peace forever.



## Song of Thanksgiving

*Oh, How Good It Is*

Stuart Townend, Kristyn Getty, Keith Getty, and Ross Holmes

Oh how good it is  
When the family of God  
Dwells together in spirit  
In faith and unity  
Where the bonds of peace  
Of acceptance and love  
Are the fruit of His presence  
Here among us

Chorus:

So with one voice we'll sing to the Lord  
And with one heart we'll live out His word  
Till the whole earth sees  
The Redeemer has come  
For He dwells in the presence of His people

Oh how good it is  
On this journey we share  
To rejoice with the happy  
And weep with those who mourn  
For the weak find strength  
The afflicted find grace  
When we offer the blessing  
Of belonging (chorus)

Oh how good it is  
To embrace His command  
To prefer one another  
Forgive as He forgives  
When we live as one  
We all share in the love  
Of the Son with the Father  
And the Spirit (chorus)

## **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**

Commitment

## **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

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail."

38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Minister: This is the Word of the LORD.

*People: Thanks be to God!*

Sermon

Pastor Brad Wright

*Mary's Hope*

LIVING INTO ADVENT HOPE

## Communion

### *Guidelines for Reception of Communion*

Communion is a 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

## *O Come All Ye Faithful*

C. Frederick Oakeley and John Francis Wade

O come all ye faithful  
Joyful and triumphant  
O come ye O come ye to Bethlehem  
Come and behold Him  
Born the King of angels

Chorus:

O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
Christ the Lord

Sing choirs of angels  
Sing in exultation  
O sing all ye citizens of heav'n above  
Glory to God  
in the highest (chorus)

## 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**

### *O Come All Ye Faithful*

C. Frederick Oakeley and John Francis Wade

Yea Lord we greet Thee  
Born this happy morning  
Jesus to Thee be all glory giv'n  
Word of the Father  
Now in flesh appearing

Chorus:

O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
Christ the Lord

## Benediction<sup>3</sup>

I Thess. 5:23-24

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit, soul, and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do this.

## 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

Daniel Campbell, piano  
Jennifer Reddick, flute

Stephanie Taylor, vocalist  
Timothy Taylor, guitar & vocalist

\_\_\_\_\_ **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/>



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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.

## 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 November: \$111,816**

\$,1092,232: Jan. - Nov. 2024 General Fund Budget

\$1,027,448: Jan. - Nov. 2024 Actual General Fund Income

(\$64,784): 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.