

# Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD

3700 WASHINGTON AVENUE – RACINE, WISCONSIN 53405-2999

PHONE (262) 633-4831; www.gracelutheranracine.net

REV. BRIAN T. CRANE, PASTOR

(608) 567-9029 (MOBILE); (262) 583-2575 (HOME); revbriancrane@yahoo.com

## December 2020 & January 2021

\*\*\*\*\*

**“Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation. When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish. Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever.” (Psalm 146:3–6; ESV)**

Dear Friends in Christ:

Every four years, Americans elect or reelect a president to lead our nation. Whether our preferred candidate won this time or not, Holy Scripture tells us that we should pray for him and for all our leaders. St. Paul writes in 1 Timothy, chapter 2: “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way” (vv. 1–2).

St. Paul tells us that we are to pray for our leaders not only so that we might live in peace and safety, but also so that the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ might be widely and freely proclaimed in our community. He continues in that same passage, “This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time” (vv. 3–6).

God has entrusted our political leaders with great power and authority (Romans 13:1–7). In our prayers, we ask God to help them to use their authority for the benefit and blessing of those they serve. However, Scripture also reminds us that we are not to put our trust in them for the future. We are to look to God alone for help and salvation. He alone is our Savior. In another place Scripture says, “I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:1–2).

And so, as God’s people, saved and redeemed by the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, we are to pray for our president and for all our leaders, whoever they might be and of whichever political party they might belong. We pray that God would give them wisdom and strength to do that which is in the best interests of our nation and world. We also pray for peace and safety for ourselves and for our community, and that God would bless and protect those who protect and serve us. And, especially this year, we pray for an end to this awful pandemic and for a return to normalcy soon.

But, as we pray, we also do what we have done here at Grace for the last 101 years, and what the one holy Christian and apostolic Church has done for the last 2,000 years. Both in times of prosperity as well as adversity, we proclaim Jesus Christ crucified and risen for the salvation of the world. Our hope for the future does not lie in any particular political party or candidate. All of us, including our leaders, will one day perish from the earth. But, through faith in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we have the promise of eternal life in heaven. And, what’s more, we have His promise that He is with us now, even in the midst of the trials and uncertainties of this present age. Jesus is with us here in His Church as we hear His Word and as we receive His body and blood in Holy Communion for our forgiveness, life, and salvation.

My friends, as you sojourn through this broken and dying world looking forward to the life of the world to come, St. Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians in their time of adversity is my prayer for you also: "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:23–24).

Jesus says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (Revelation 22:20)

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Brian Crane

---

### **FROM THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP**

Christmas is coming. It is a joyous time of feasting. The Church feasts upon the Word of God in sermon, song, and sacrament.

We hear the proclamation of the message of the angels: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). We mingle our voices with theirs as we sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased" (Luke 2:14)! We receive the proclaimed Savior, Christ the Lord, not wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in manger but wrapped in bread and wine placed into our mouths for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. We feast in great joy indeed because of this great blessing from our Lord and God.

God's people in ancient Israel also feasted with great joy. The Lord showered His abundant blessing on His people. And He commanded them to feast upon it (Deuteronomy 16). The people were to go to the place appointed, where the Lord would make His name dwell, and give offerings, each man as he was able, according to the blessing of the Lord that He had given them (Deut. 16:10, 15, 17).

And there the Lord would bless them with joy as they feasted upon what the Lord had provided. They ate of the choice parts of their offerings. They enjoyed the company of all the people of God as they together heard His promises of blessing, sang of His bountiful goodness, and partook of what He gave.

We feast on the Word who became flesh to dwell among us, not just during Christmas but throughout all the year. We feast not just on the salvation He has wrought for us in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, but we feast also on all the temporal blessings that God gives out of His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us. We enjoy the rich bounty that God provides, not only in Word and Sacrament, but also in house and home, property and income, family and friends.

Let us then, as did our brothers in the faith from ancient Israel, give as we are able, according to the blessing of the Lord our God that He has given us. Let us, like them, give generously of the first fruits of our income, which He gives, so that all may know and enjoy the salvation He gives and the joy we have in the Savior born in the city of David, who is Christ the Lord.

## ADVENT MIDWEEK SERVICES 2020

As we anticipate the Christmas celebration, we are reminded of the fact that another new church year will soon begin. The Season of Advent marks the beginning of the new church calendar. Advent, which means “coming,” gives us time to prepare for the celebration of our Lord’s birth.

The theme for our midweek Advent services is “Away in a Manger,” based on the beloved Christmas hymn. Please join us as we consider the three advents or “comings” of Jesus—His first coming as a baby in Bethlehem, His second promised coming again at the end of the time, and His ongoing coming among us today in His Word and Sacraments.

The following Thursdays in Advent will give us the opportunity to prepare for the Christmas celebration. Please note that all Midweek services are held at **6:30 PM**. They will be Vespers services without Holy Communion. They will each have different Scripture readings and hymns and a different sermon than the following Sunday’s Divine Service.

### Midweek Advent Services

Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>

“Christ’s First Coming: Who Lies in the Manger?” (Isaiah 11:1–20)

Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup>

“Christ’s Second Coming: For What Has He Come?” (Isaiah 2:1–12)

Thursday, December 17<sup>th</sup>

“Christ’s Third Coming: How Has He Saved Us?” (Isaiah 35:1–10)

~~~~~

**ADVENT FELLOWSHIP:** The Board of Parish Fellowship invites you for dessert, coffee, and fellowship at **5:15 PM** on Thursdays in Advent, before the Midweek Advent service. Please feel free to bring your own meal/food. We hope to see you there!

**CHRISTMAS SERVICES:** Christmas Eve worship services will be held at **3:30 PM** and **6:30 PM**. The Christmas Day service will be held at **10:00 AM**.

\*\*\*\*\*

**ELEVATOR FUND:** As of Sunday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, we have raised **\$83,199** for the Elevator Fund. As of November 9<sup>th</sup>, the balance on our elevator loans stands at **\$356,661.81**.

\*\*\*\*\*

**WORSHIP SERVICES:** Our Sunday worship services can be viewed on Grace’s Facebook page and on our YouTube channel, “Grace Lutheran Church, Racine, WI – LCMS.”

\*\*\*\*\*

**HARVEST OUTREACH:** If you are available and would like to help out at Harvest Outreach, please let Connie Abrahamson know. Volunteers are needed for **Fri., Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>** and **Fri., Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>**. Thank you!

**LOOKING FOR A UNIQUE CHRISTMAS GIFT?** Grace Lutheran Church has 100<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary cookbooks for sale for \$15 each. Be sure to ask for the Addendum that goes with it. A brief history of our church with pictures is included. The cookbook contains a lot of international and legacy recipes. Please contact Becky Saxena, Connie Abrahamson, or Becky Gardner for more information.

\*\*\*\*\*

**VOTERS’ MEETINGS:** On Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, there will be two Voters’ Meetings. The first begins at 10:30 AM and is the annual Budget and Elections Meeting. The second begins immediately after the first. Its purpose is to discuss the Worship Schedule for 2021.

\*\*\*\*\*

**THANK YOU** from Doris Jacobson: I would like to thank all those who thought of me on my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Daily Lectionary Readings**  
**December 2020 – January 2021**

|                         |                                                      |                        |                                            |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Tuesday, December 1:    | Isaiah 7:10-8:8<br>1 Peter 3:1-22                    | Friday, January 1:     | Isaiah 61:1-11<br>Luke 1:57-80             |
| Wednesday, December 2:  | Isaiah 8:9-9:7<br>1 Peter 4:1-19                     | Saturday, January 2:   | Isaiah 62:1-12<br>Luke 2:1-20              |
| Thursday, December 3:   | Isaiah 9:8-10:11<br>1 Peter 5:1-14                   | Sunday, January 3:     | Isaiah 63:1-14<br>Luke 2:21-40             |
| Friday, December 4:     | Isaiah 10:12-27a, 33-34<br>2 Peter 1:1-21            | Monday, January 4:     | Isaiah 63:15-65:7<br>Luke 2:41-52          |
| Saturday, December 5:   | Isaiah 11:1-12:6<br>2 Peter 2:1-22                   | Tuesday, January 5:    | Isaiah 65:8-25<br>Luke 3:1-20              |
| Sunday, December 6:     | Isaiah 14:1-23<br>2 Peter 3:1-18                     | Wednesday, January 6:  | Isaiah 66:1-20<br>Luke 3:21-38             |
| Monday, December 7:     | Isaiah 24:1-13<br>1 John 1:1-2:14                    | Thursday, January 7:   | Ezekiel 1:1-14, 22-28<br>Romans 1:1-17     |
| Tuesday, December 8:    | Isaiah 24:14-25:12<br>1 John 2:15-29                 | Friday, January 8:     | Ezekiel 2:1-3:11<br>Romans 1:18-22         |
| Wednesday, December 9:  | Isaiah 26:1-19<br>1 John 3:1-24                      | Saturday, January 9:   | Ezekiel 3:12-27<br>Romans 2:1-16           |
| Thursday, December 10:  | Isaiah 26:20-27:13<br>1 John 4:1-21                  | Sunday, January 10:    | Ezekiel 18:1-4, 19-32<br>Romans 2:17-29    |
| Friday, December 11:    | Isaiah 28:14-29<br>1 John 5:1-21                     | Monday, January 11:    | Ezekiel 33:1-20<br>Romans 3:1-18           |
| Saturday, December 12:  | Isaiah 29:1-14<br>Jude 1-25                          | Tuesday, January 12:   | Ezekiel 34:1-24<br>Romans 3:19-31          |
| Sunday, December 13:    | Isaiah 29:15-30:14<br>Revelation 1:1-20              | Wednesday, January 13: | Ezekiel 36:13-28<br>Romans 4:1-25          |
| Monday, December 14:    | Isaiah 30:15-26<br>Revelation 2:1-29                 | Thursday, January 14:  | Ezekiel 36:33-37:14<br>Romans 5:1-21       |
| Tuesday, December 15:   | Isaiah 30:27-31:9<br>Revelation 3:1-22               | Friday, January 15:    | Ezekiel 37:15-28<br>Romans 6:1-23          |
| Wednesday, December 16: | Isaiah 32:1-20<br>Revelation 4:1-11                  | Saturday, January 16:  | Ezekiel 38:1-23<br>Romans 7:1-20           |
| Thursday, December 17:  | Isaiah 33:1-24<br>Revelation 5:1-14                  | Sunday, January 17:    | Ezekiel 39:1-10, 17-29<br>Romans 7:21-8:17 |
| Friday, December 18:    | Isaiah 34:1-2, 8-35:10<br>Revelation 6:1-17          | Monday, January 18:    | Ezekiel 40:1-4; 43:1-12<br>Romans 8:18-39  |
| Saturday, December 19:  | Isaiah 40:1-17<br>Revelation 7:1-17                  | Tuesday, January 19:   | Ezekiel 44:1-16, 23-29<br>Romans 9:1-18    |
| Sunday, December 20:    | Isaiah 40:18-41:10<br>Revelation 8:1-13              | Wednesday, January 20: | Ezekiel 47:1-14, 21-23<br>Romans 9:19-33   |
| Monday, December 21:    | Isaiah 42:1-25<br>Revelation 9:1-12                  | Thursday, January 21:  | Joel 1:1-20<br>Romans 10:1-21              |
| Tuesday, December 22:   | Isaiah 43:1-24<br>Revelation 9:13-10:11              | Friday, January 22:    | Joel 2:1-17<br>Romans 11:1-24              |
| Wednesday, December 23: | Isaiah 43:25-44:20<br>Revelation 11:1-19             | Saturday, January 23:  | Joel 2:18-32<br>Romans 11:25-12:13         |
| Thursday, December 24:  | Isaiah 44:21-45:13, 20-25<br>Revelation 12:1-17      | Sunday, January 24:    | Joel 3:1-21<br>Romans 12:14-13:14          |
| Friday, December 25:    | Isaiah 49:1-18<br>Matthew 1:1-17                     | Monday, January 25:    | Zechariah 1:1-21<br>Romans 14:1-23         |
| Saturday, December 26:  | Isaiah 49:22-26; 50:4-51:8, 12-16<br>Matthew 1:18-25 | Tuesday, January 26:   | Zechariah 2:1-3:10<br>Romans 15:1-13       |
| Sunday, December 27:    | Isaiah 51:17-52:12<br>Matthew 2:1-12                 | Wednesday, January 27: | Zechariah 4:1-5:11<br>Romans 15:14-33      |
| Monday, December 28:    | Isaiah 52:13-54:10<br>Matthew 2:13-23                | Thursday, January 28:  | Zechariah 6:1-7:14<br>Romans 16:17-27      |
| Tuesday, December 29:   | Isaiah 55:1-13<br>Luke 1:1-25                        | Friday, January 29:    | Zechariah 8:1-23<br>2 Timothy 1:1-18       |
| Wednesday, December 30: | Isaiah 58:1-59:3, 14-21<br>Luke 1:26-38              | Saturday, January 30:  | Zechariah 9:1-17<br>2 Timothy 2:1-26       |
| Thursday, December 31:  | Isaiah 60:1-22<br>Luke 1:39-56                       | Sunday, January 31:    | Zechariah 10:1-11:3<br>2 Timothy 3:1-17    |