

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

All **As we worship today, let us welcome God’s salvation in our hearts, in our community, and in all of creation.**

Leader Let us worship God, God who comes to us just as he promised.

All **Let us worship our promise making and promise keeping God!**

—based on Is. 40:3

SONG OF PRAISE & RESPONSE

PREPARE THE WAY, O ZION / WORDS. F. FRANZEN; ARR. REINDEER TRIBE

1. Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near! Let every hill and valley a level way appear. Greet One who comes in glory foretold in sacred story. Oh blest is Christ that came in God’s most holy name!

2. He brings God’s rule, O Zion, he comes from heaven above. His rule is peace and freedom and justice, truth, and love.

Lift high your praise resounding for grace and joy abounding. Oh, blest is Christ that came in God’s most holy name!

3. Fling wide your gates, O Zion, your Savior’s rule embrace! His tidings of salvation proclaim in every place. All lands will bow before Him, their voices will adore Him. Oh blest is Christ that came in God’s most holy name!

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Reader As we light the first Advent candle, let us remember the words of the prophet Isaiah: “And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I do, and I do not forsake them.” (42:16) And let us remember the fulfillment of these words in Jesus Christ, who said, “I am the light of the world; the one who follows me will not walk in darkness but have the light of life.” (Jn. 8:12)

All **Come, Lord Jesus, come!**

SONGS OF PRAISE & RESPONSE

COME, O REDEEMER OF THE EART / WORDS. AMBROSE OF MILAN

1. Come, O Redeemer of the earth, and manifest Thy virgin birth. Let every age in wonder fall: such birth befits the God of all.

2. Begotten of no human will but of the Spirit, Thou art still The Word of God in flesh arrayed, the promised fruit to man displayed.

3. Thy cradle here shall glitter bright, and darkness breathe a newer light Where endless faith shall shine serene and twilight never intervene.

4. All praise, eternal Son, to Thee, whose advent sets Thy people free, Whom, with the Father, we adore, and Holy Ghost, for evermore.

GOD REST YOU MERRY GENTLEMEN / ARR. THE REINDEER TRIBE

1. God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay; Remember Christ, our Savior, was born on Christmas Day To save us all from Satan’s pow’r, when we were gone astray. O tidings of comfort and joy, Tidings of comfort and joy.

2. From God our heav’nly Father, a blessed angel came and unto certain shepherds, brought tidings of the same, how that in Bethlehem was born, the son of God by name. O tidings of comfort and joy, Tidings of comfort and joy.

3. “Fear not,” then said the angel, “Let nothing you affright; this day is born a Savior, the true and radiant light, to free all those who trust in him, from Satan’s pow’r and might.” O tidings of comfort and joy, Tidings of comfort and joy.

4. Now to the Lord sing praises, all you within this place, And in true love and fellowship, each other now embrace; This holy tide of Christmas, is filled with heav’nly grace. O tidings of comfort and joy, Tidings of comfort and joy.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All God of salvation, in Christ you have done great things — our hearts are filled with joy. By your power you lifted us out of the wasteland of sin and brought us with joy and laughter into your kingdom. Salvation is your gift to us. But we confess that often we try to replace your gift with our own efforts. We try to complete what is already perfect; we try to add to what is already full; we try to earn what we already have. Forgive us for our foolishness. **Amen.** *(silence is kept together)*

SONG OF ASSURANCE

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST / REINDEER TRIBE

Glory to God in the highest
And peace on earth
Peace on earth
Glory to God in the highest
And peace on earth
Peace on earth
Good will to men,
O daughters of Zion rejoice
Shout with joy and sing
Our Savior is here

WORDS OF COMFORT & PEACE

Leader The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The Lord is our righteousness.”

People of God: Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose coming we announce in this season, is our righteousness. In Christ, we are made right with God.

All **Thanks be to God!**

—based on Jer. 33:14-16

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Leader O Immanuel, child of promise and sign of hope, you come from a distance far beyond our reach, yet are closer to us than we are to ourselves: remain with us in our own days of expectation, that we may give birth to what is just, true, beautiful, and good— through the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit, abides with us, one God now and forever.

All **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Leader O Wisdom, your words uttered in the beginning generated a world of beauty and goodness, giving purpose and value to each creature; instruct us in the way of prudence, that we may nurture the world with justice and joy. Help us to resist evil and to obey you, so that we may walk in your ways and the beauty of your creation may flourish— through the one whom we know as the Wisdom of the ages, even Christ, our Lord.

All **Come, Lord Jesus..**

Leader O Lord of might, master of the universe and ruler of the house of Israel, your mighty acts have rescued remnants of your people from the midst of slavery, exile, war, and holocaust: raise your scepter over us, that your saving rule may be extended to all people in all places— for the sake of him who we know as Lord of all, even Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

All **Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader May the peace of the Lord be always with you.

Together **And also with you!**

** Children ages 2 to 5th grade are invited to participate in our children’s program during the sermon; children return for Communion.*

GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

**If you’re visiting with us for the first time, please fill out an information card (available at the welcome table) and drop it into the offering box or give it to a church staff member. For more announcements, see the back of the bulletin or visit our website.*

THE OFFERING & OFFERTORY

**During the offertory, we consider all that we have and all that God may be asking us to give. Please take this time to ask God how you might give of your financial gifts, personal time and even vocational calling. There are different ways to give. You may mail your offering to our office: 16 N Marengo Ave Ste 609, Pasadena, CA 91101; or give via our app (iOS and Android) or website: www.gracepasadena.org/give.*

SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 48:10-22 (ESV)

¹⁰ Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. ¹¹ And Israel said to Joseph, “I never expected to see your face; and behold, God has let me see your offspring also.”¹² Then Joseph removed them from his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. ¹³ And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel’s left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel’s right hand, and brought them near him. ¹⁴ And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands (for Manasseh was the firstborn).¹⁵ And he blessed Joseph and said, “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, ¹⁶ the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys; and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.”

¹⁷ When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he took his father’s hand to move it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head. ¹⁸ And Joseph said to his father, “Not this way, my father; since this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head.” ¹⁹ But his father refused and said, “I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude of nations.”²⁰ So he blessed them that day, saying, “By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying, ‘God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh.’”

Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh. ²¹ Then Israel said to Joseph, “Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you again to the land of your fathers. ²² Moreover, I have given to you rather than to your brothers one mountain slope that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow.”

Leader This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God!**

MORNING MESSAGE

Ben Ewen

“Conformed to the Image of the Firstborn”

Sermon Series: Genesis

COMMUNION

GUIDELINES: *The sacrament of Communion is also called the Lord’s Supper or Eucharist. It is the family meal for those who are willing to forsake their sin and trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. The invitation is from Jesus Christ alone, not from this church or any minister. If you are baptized and can call yourself a Christian, come to the table.*

DIRECTIONS: *When instructed, please come forward to receive Communion. Receive the bread and juice from the servers. Pre-packaged elements, which are gluten-free are available in the line closest to the stage. Participate as you feel comfortable.*

CHILDREN: *Children who are baptized, can profess faith in Jesus Christ in an age appropriate manner, and have talked to a pastor or an elder may participate in communion.*

SONGS OF RESPONSE & CELEBRATION

COMFORT MY PEOPLE (ISAIAH 40) / REINDEER TRIBE

Comfort, comfort
Comfort my people
Comfort, comfort
Comfort my people
The voice of him
calling in the desert
Prepare the way for the Lord

THERE WAS A STAR / THE STAPLE SINGERS

1. There was a star (There was a star)
On Christmas night (On Christmas night)
That gave the world (That gave the world)
A wondrous light (A wondrous light)
To show that peace and love come from above (come from above)

2. There was a star (There was a star)
To show the way (To show the way)
Straight to the place (Straight to the place)
Where Jesus lay (Where Jesus lay)
To show Christmas night there was a star (A star)

Jesus lamb we see Thee shining bright
Put out thy hand and lead us in the light

3. That Christmas joy (That Christmas joy)
Unto us all (Unto us all)
And help my heart (And help my heart)
And hearts rejoice (And hearts rejoice)
To show that Christmas night there was a star (A star)

THE BENEDICTION & SENDING

Leader

God the Father, who loved the world
so much that he sent his only Son,
give you grace to prepare for eternal life.
God the Son, who comes to us as Redeemer and Judge,
reveal to you the path from darkness to light.
God the Holy Spirit, by whose working the virgin Mary
conceived the Christ, help you bear the fruits of holiness.

All

Thanks be to God! Amen!

THE GRACE PASADENA APP

Use the app to listen to sermons, access an audio Bible, view and register for upcoming events (including City Groups), set up giving and more! Use the QR codes below.



For Android Phones



For iOS Phones

THE CHURCH CALENDAR

ADVENT
CHRISTMAS
EPIPHANY
LENT
EASTER
PENTECOST
ORDINARY TIME

Advent is a season of hopeful expectation and preparation; it's the season the church anticipates the coming of Christ. We look forward to and prepare for Christmas, the celebration of his birth. We also look forward to and prepare for his future and final coming to judge the world and mend all things. During Advent, we prepare our hearts for the Lord, so that when he comes, he may find us watching and waiting. The color of the season is purple, which is associated with royalty and repentance.

ANNOUNCEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- 12/17: Join us at our regular time (10am) for a special all-church worship service.
- 12/24: All are invited to a pre-service fellowship hour starting at 9am and the Christmas Eve service at 10am. More details to come!
- 12/31: No Sunday service
- 1/7/24: Sunday service resumes

*Looking for a way to love our neighbors? Consider joining the Park Ministry after the service.

*If you are in any kind of need, please email mercy@gracepasadena.org or talk to a deacon or other leader of Grace. You are not alone - we are here to help!

*Scan the QR code below for more details, other announcements and contact information!



GRACE PASADENA'S VISION STATEMENT

Grace Pasadena exists to **Experience** & **Extend** the life-giving grace of God

- As we grow in the knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ
- In every sphere of life
- For our neighborhoods, city and the world

GRACE PASADENA'S CORE VALUES

God-Centered Worship – We seek to be transformed in worship as we experience the wonder of God and respond appropriately

Gospel-Driven Identity – We seek a personal experience of the gospel that both humbles us, and assures us that we are more deeply valued and loved by God than we can possibly imagine

Outward-Facing Community – We seek the betterment of our city as we extend God's grace by loving our neighbors as ourselves

Kingdom-Minded Movement – We seek to extend the Kingdom of Jesus Christ by creating community and global partnerships that can reach and serve those in need

GIVING & BUDGET

	JAN-NOV '23*	DEC '23*
OFFERINGS & CONTRIBUTIONS	\$435,226	\$5,236
BUDGETED GIVING	469,000	88,000
DIFFERENCE	-33,774	-82,764

* as of 12/7/2023; figures exclude directed gifts from outside donors

YEAR END GIVING NOTE

PLEASE NOTE: All tax-deductible gifts for 2023 must given by 12/31/2023. Any financial gifts sent through the mail must be dated and postmarked by 12/31/2023. Our mailing address is: 16 N Marengo Ave Ste 609, Pasadena, CA 91101. To give via our website, visit: www.gracepasadena.org/give. Or give via our app.

Would you like to give a stock gift? Contact info@gracepasadena.org to learn how.



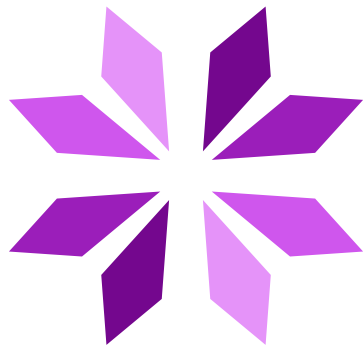
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Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version

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He will come like last leaf's fall.
One night when the November wind
has flayed the trees to bone, and earth
wakes choking on the mould,
the soft shroud's folding.

He will come like frost.
One morning when the shrinking earth
opens on mist, to find itself
arrested in the net
of alien, sword-set beauty.

He will come like dark.
One evening when the bursting red
December sun draws up the sheet
and penny-masks its eye to yield
the star-snowed fields of sky.

He will come, will come,
will come like crying in the night,
like blood, like breaking,
as the earth writhes to toss him free.
He will come like child.

ROWAN WILLIAMS | "ADVENT CALENDER"

What shall we say was the cause, why he raised Ephraim above his own brother, to whom, according to usage, he was inferior? If any one should suppose that Ephraim had some hidden seed of excellence, he not only vainly trifles, but impiously perverts the counsel of God. For since God derives from himself and from his own liberality, the cause, why he prefers one of the two to the other: he confers the honor upon the younger, for the purpose of showing that he is bound by no claims of human merit; but that he distributes his gifts freely, as it seems good unto him. And while this liberty of God is extended to every kind of good, it yet shines the most clearly in the first adoption, whereby he predestinates to himself, those whom he sees fit, out of the ruined mass.

JOHN CALVIN

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

ROMANS 8:28-29

DECEMBER 10, 2023

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT