

*\*Different Christian traditions refer to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent, or the midpoint of Advent, as “Gaudete Sunday.” Meaning rejoice, the word reminds us that Christmas is drawing close and invites us to take up a posture of joy more and more. A pink candle is often used to mark visually the midpoint of Advent and the increasing anticipation of Christmas.*

CALL TO WORSHIP

LeaderLet us praise our Lord Jesus Christ.  
At the first Christmas Jesus came as a baby.

All**Alleluia! Jesus is coming!**

LeaderHe came to be like us because he loves us.  
He came to save us from our sin.

All**Alleluia! Jesus is coming!**

LeaderHe died, rose from the dead, and lives in heaven.  
He will come again because he loves us.

All**Alleluia! Jesus is coming!**

LeaderLet us rejoice for Jesus has come  
and is coming again to make all things new!

All**Alleluia! Let us sing with joy and hope!**

SONG OF PRAISE & RESPONSE

*O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL / J. WADE*

1. 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;

3. Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to Thee be glory given;  
Word of the Father,  
now in flesh appearing;

**REFRAIN:**  
*O come, let us adore Him  
O come, let us adore Him  
O come, let us adore Him  
Christ the Lord!*

2. Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
glory to God, glory in the highest;

*HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING / F. FRANZEN*

1. 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 host proclaim,  
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

2. Christ, by highest Heav’n adored;  
Christ the everlasting Lord;  
late in time, behold Him come,  
offspring of a virgin’s womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
hail th’incarnate Deity;  
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,  
Jesus our Emmanuel.

**REFRAIN:**  
*Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”*

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

ReaderAs we light the Advent candles, let us remember the words of the prophet Isaiah: “Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?  
Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up speedily;  
your righteousness shall go before you;  
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.” (58:6, 8)

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.”  

— John 8:12

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

SONGS OF PRAISE & RESPONSE

*THE FIRST NOEL / TRADITIONAL ENGLISH CAROL; ARR. THE REINDEER TRIBE*

1. The first Noel the angel did say  
was to certain poor shepherds  
in fields as they lay;  
in fields where they lay  
tending their sheep,  
on a cold winter’s night  
that was so deep.

**REFRAIN**  
*Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,  
born is the King of Israel!*

2. They looked up and saw a star  
shining in the east, beyond them far;  
and to the earth it gave great light,  
and so it continued  
both day and night.

3. Then let us all with one accord  
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord;  
That hath made heaven  
and earth of naught,  
and with His blood mankind  
hath bought.

*WHAT CHILD IS THIS / W. DIX*

1. What Child is this, who, laid to rest,  
on Mary’s lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,  
while shepherds watch are keeping?

3. So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh  
come, peasant, king to own Him.  
The King of kings salvation brings;  
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.

**REFRAIN**  
*This, this is Christ, the King,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing:  
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,  
the Babe, the Son of Mary!*

2. Why lies He in such mean estate,  
where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here  
the silent Word is pleading.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

AllMerciful God, always with us, always coming:  
We confess that we do not know how to prepare for your Advent.  
We have forgotten how to hope in miracles;  
we have ignored the promise of your kingdom;  
we get distracted by all the busyness of this season. Forgive us, God.  
Grant us the simple wonder of the shepherds,  
the intelligent courage of the Magi,  
and the patient faith of Mary and Joseph,  
that we may journey with them to Bethlehem  
and find the good news of a child born for us.  
Now, in the quiet of our hearts,  
we ask you to make us ready for his coming. **Amen.**  
*(silence is kept together)*

SONG OF ASSURANCE

*ANGELS FROM THE REALM OF GLORY / WORDS: J. MONTGOMERY; ARR. REINDREER TRIBE*

1. Angels from the realms of glory,  
wing your flight o’er all the earth;  
Ye who sang creation’s story  
now proclaim Messiah’s birth.

2. Shepherds, in the field abiding,  
watching o’er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing;  
yonder shines the infant light:

**REFRAIN**  
*Come and worship, come and worship,  
worship Christ, the newborn King.  
Come and worship, come and worship,  
worship Christ, the newborn King.*

WORDS OF COMFORT & PEACE

Leader“Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to  
Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is  
pardoned, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her  
sins.” Because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we  
know these words are true! Be at peace!  

—from Isaiah 40:1-2

All**Thanks be to God!**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

LeaderMay the peace of the Lord be always with you.

**TogetherAnd 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.*

CHILDREN’S CHOIR

*\*Children are invited to stay up front after singing.*

SCRIPTURE READING

*Isaiah 40:9-11 (ESV)*

<sup>9</sup> 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!”  
<sup>10</sup> Behold, the Lord God comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
behold, his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.  
<sup>11</sup> 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.

LeaderThis is the word of the Lord.

**AllThanks be to God!**

MORNING MESSAGE

**Marc Choi**

*“He’s Never Gonna Give You Up”  
The Good News of Advent & Christmas*

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

LIGHT OF THE STABLE / E. HARRIS

1. Hail, hail to the newborn king  
Let our voices sing him our praises  
Hail, hail to the guiding light  
That brought us tonight to our savior

2. Come now, there it shines so bright  
To the knowing light of the stable  
Lean close to the child so dear  
Cast aside your fear and the thankful

REFRAIN

Ale, alleluia, alle, alleluia  
Ale, alleluia, alle, alleluia

GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN / WORDS: R. BOYCE; ARR. THE REINDEER TRIBE

1. While shepherds kept their watching  
o'er silent flocks by night,  
Behold throughout the heavens  
there shone a holy light.  
The shepherds feared and trembled,  
when lo! above the earth,  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed our Savior's birth.

3. Down in a lowly manger  
our humble Christ was born,  
and brought us all salvation  
that blessed Christmas morn.  
The shepherds feared and trembled,  
when lo! above the earth,  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed our Savior's birth.

REFRAIN

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere;

Gloria in excelsis deo (4x)

THE BENEDICTION & SENDING

Leader May the Lord make your love increase  
and overflow for each other and for everyone else,  
just as ours does for you.  
May he strengthen your hearts  
so that you will be blameless and holy  
in the presence of our God and Father  
when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.  
— 1 Thess. 3:12-13 (NIV)

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

- 12/24: All are invited to a pre-service fellowship hour starting at 9am. Bring something sweet or savory to share! Our Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols Service will begin at 10am.
- 12/31: No Sunday Service (Sr. Center is closed)
- 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](mailto: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	\$43,315
BUDGETED GIVING	469,000	88,000
DIFFERENCE	-33,774	-44,685

\* as of 12/15/2023; 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](http://www.gracepasadena.org/give). Or give via our app.

Would you like to give a stock gift? Contact [info@gracepasadena.org](mailto:info@gracepasadena.org) to learn how.



(626) 653-6036 (voicemail or text) | [info@gracepasadena.org](mailto:info@gracepasadena.org) | [www.gracepasadena.org](http://www.gracepasadena.org)

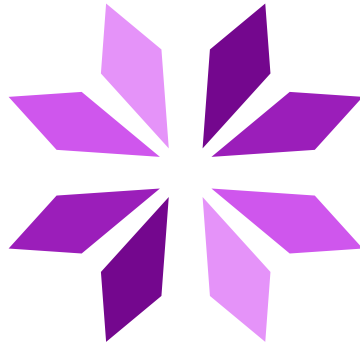
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Pasadena, CA 91101



"[In] this season of Advent, it is critical to remember that, although we often feel frustrated because it seems that God is absent from the harsh reality that we have to face, the Lord still wants to and can manifest his glory in the intimacy of our lives, in our home, our relationships, our community. He has no limits to doing so. There are no impediments to what He wants to do with us. May the Lord give us the faith and the ability to recognize His incredible and merciful interventions in our daily lives, even if it seems that the conditions are not favorable and it's not humanly possible. What God does in private will bear fruit among those close to us and those far away. And then our story will never be the same again."

NELLY PEREZ | from Villa Nueva, Argentina

Because Christmas is almost here  
Because dancing fits so well with music  
Because inside baby clothes are miracles.

Gaudete

Because some people love you  
Because of chocolate

Because pain does not last forever  
Because Santa Claus is coming.

Gaudete

Because of laughter

Because there really are angels

Because your fingers fit your hands  
Because forgiveness is yours for the asking

Because of children

Because of parents.

Gaudete

Because the blind see.

And the lame walk.

Gaudete

Because lepers are clean

And the deaf hear.

Gaudete

Because the dead will live again

And there is good news for the poor.

Gaudete

Because of Christmas

Because of Jesus

You rejoice.

BRAD REYNOLDS | "GAUDETE"

DECEMBER 17, 2023  
THE 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT