

December 1, 2019

Why We Need Herod in Christmas

Free Grace Presbyterian Church

SOME THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION:

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed
You're gonna have to serve somebody
Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord
But you're gonna have to serve somebody

Bob Dylan
"Gotta Serve Somebody"
Singer-songwriter, author, and visual artist

In all their affliction
he was afflicted, and the
angel of his presence saved
them; in his love and in his pity
he redeemed them; he lifted
them up and carried them all
the days of old.

Isaiah 63:9

Character cannot be developed in
ease and quiet. Only through
experience of trial and
suffering can the soul be
strengthened,
ambition inspired,
and success be
achieved.

Helen Keller
Deaf-blind author, political
activist, and lecturer

The LORD is my shepherd; I
shall not want. He makes me lie
down in green pastures. He leads me
beside still waters. He restores my soul. He
leads me in paths of righteousness for his
name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with
me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence
of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows. Surely goodness and
mercy shall follow me all the days of
my life, and I shall dwell in the
house of the LORD forever.

Psalms 23

But he was pierced
for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our
iniquities; upon him was the
chastisement that brought us
peace, and with his
wounds we are healed.

Isaiah 53:5

"Now therefore
fear the LORD and serve
him in sincerity and in
faithfulness. Put away the gods
that your fathers served beyond
the River and in Egypt, and serve
the LORD. And if it is evil in your
eyes to serve the LORD,
choose this day whom you
will serve..."

Joshua 24:14-15

The unsavoury story of Herod's activity in all
this is an awesome reminder of how deeply
opposition to Jesus can be rooted in the hearts
of people who are not prepared to allow his
gentle rule to control them. If we are
determined to get our own way at all costs, we
will go to any lengths to eliminate all trace of
Jesus and his claims on our lives.

Michael Green
British pastor, evangelist, and NT scholar

GOD SUMMONS US BY HIS GRACE

Leader: 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

People: **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!**

We come and worship

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O come ye, O
2. God of God, Light of Light; lo, he ab -
3. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion, sing, all ye
4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing: Je - sus, to

come ye to Beth - le - hem; come and be - hold him
hors - not the Vir - gin's womb: ver - y God, be -
cit - i - zens of heav'n a - bove; glo - ry to God
thee be all glo - ry giv'n; Word of the Fa - ther,

REFRAIN

born the King of an - gels;
got - ten, not cre - a - ted;
in the high - est; O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a -
late in flesh ap - pear - ing;

dore him, O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord.

Our coming to worship God is a response to his gracious coming to us in Jesus Christ. Only by his coming are we able or willing to come and worship. So every worship service starts with God calling us to come to him through Jesus Christ.

"Crown Him with Many Crowns"

1. Crown him with man - y crowns, the Lamb up - on his throne; hark!
 2. Crown him the Lord of love; be - hold his hands and side, rich
 3. Crown him the Lord of life, who tri - umphed o'er the grave, who
 4. Crown him the Lord of heav'n, one with the Fa - ther known; one
 5. Crown him the Lord of years, the Po - ten - tate of time; Cre -

how the heav'n - ly an - them drowns all mu - sic but its own! A -
 wounds, yet vis - i - ble a - bove, in beau - ty glor - i - fied. No
 rose vic - tor - ious to the strife for those he came to save. His
 with the Spi - rit, through him giv'n, from yon - der glo - rious throne. To
 a - tor of the rol - ling spheres, in - ef - fab - ly sub - lime. All

wake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee, and
 an - gel in the sky can full - y bear that sight, but
 glor - ies now we sing, who died and rose on high, who
 thee be end - less praise, for thou for us hast died; be
 hail, Re - dee - mer, hail! for thou hast died for me: thy

hail him as thy match - less King, through all e - ter - ni - ty.
 down - ward bends his wond' - ring eye at mys - ter - ies so bright.
 died e - tern - al life to bring, and lives that death may die.
 thou, O Lord, through end - less days a - dored and mag - ni - fied.
 praise shall ne - ver, ne - ver fail through - out e - ter - ni - ty!

And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him.

Matthew 2

GOD SANCTIFIES US BY HIS GRACE

God calls us to see that our sin that separates us from him

Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear... But the Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins, declares the Lord.

Isaiah 59

We repent and rest in the Redeemer who came at Christmas

We use this time in God's presence to confess our sins and our need for God's grace, silently, personally before him alone. We invite you to join us in sorrow over your sin and joy in his grace and mercy in Jesus Christ.

God proclaims our redemption through the coming of Jesus Christ

Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53

redeem

[ri'dēm]

gain or regain possession of (something) in exchange for payment; buy back

God is our redeemer, the one who bought us back from the wages of our sin (death) by paying those wages in the death of Christ. This is why Jesus came. This is the joy of Christmas.

“Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.

And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

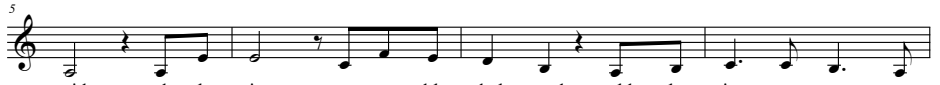
Luke 1

We proclaim the coming of the Redeemer in the child lying in the manger

“Who is This, So Weak and Helpless”



1. Who is this, so weak and help - less, child of low - ly He - brew
 2. Who is this, a Man of Sor - rows, walk - ing sad - ly life's hard
 3. Who is this? Be - hold him shed - ding drops of blood up - on the
 4. Who is this that hangs there dy - ing while the rude world scoffs and



maid, rude - ly in a sta - ble shel - tered, cold - ly in a man - ger
 way, home - less, wea - ry, sigh - ing, weep - ing o - ver sin and Sa - tan's
 ground! Who is this, des - pised, re - ject - ed, mocked, in - sult - ed, beat - en,
 scorns, num - bered with the mal - e - fac - tors, torn with nails, and crowned with



laid? 'Tis the Lord _____ of all cre - a - tion, _____ who this
 sway? 'Tis our God, _____ our glo - rious Sav - ior, _____ who a -
 bound? 'Tis our God, _____ who gifts and grac - es _____ on his
 thorns? 'Tis our God _____ who lives for - ev - er _____ 'mid the



won - drous path _____ has trod; he is God _____ from ev - er -
 bove _____ the star - ry sky is for us _____ a place pre -
 church _____ is pour - ing down; who shall smite _____ in ho - ly
 shin - ing ones on high, in the glo - rious gold - en



last - ing, and to ev - er - last - ing God.
 par - ing, where no tear can dim the eye.
 ven - geance all his foes be - neath his throne.
 cit - y, reign - ing ev - er - last - ing - ly.

GOD SPEAKS WITH US BY HIS GRACE

¹³Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt ¹⁵and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

Matthew 2:13–23

¹⁶Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸"A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."

¹⁹But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." ²¹And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. ²³And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

The Christian life is
full of difficulties,
full of pitfalls and
snares. That is why
we need the
Scriptures.
D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Sermon

Mr. Paul Martin

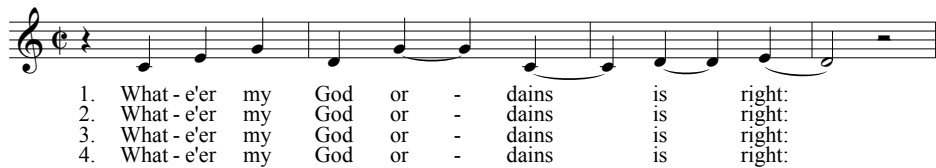
Why We Need Herod in Christmas

The Little People of Christmas

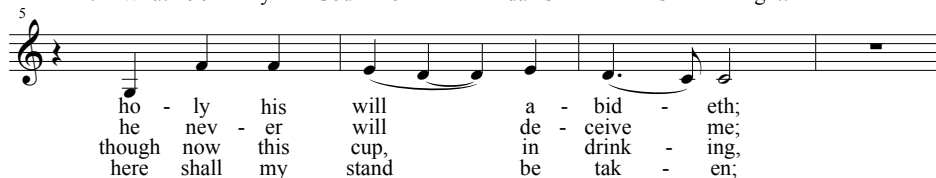
Paul Martin will be ordained and installed as a ruling elder of Free Grace today. An avid fly tyer (making artificial flies for fishing), Paul is a retired social worker who is always seeking to see what is going on in people's hearts behind their words and actions.

We look to God in faith that all that he ordains is his plan in love to perfect and mature his people

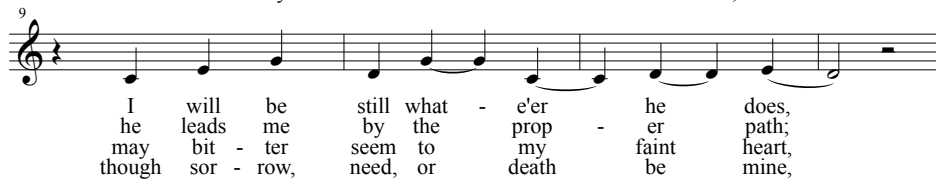
“Whate’er My God Ordains is Right”




1. What - e'er my God or - dains is right:
 2. What - e'er my God or - dains is right:
 3. What - e'er my God or - dains is right:
 4. What - e'er my God or - dains is right:



5
 ho - ly his will a - bid - eth;
 he nev - er will de - ceive me;
 though now this cup, in drink - ing,
 here shall my stand be tak - en;



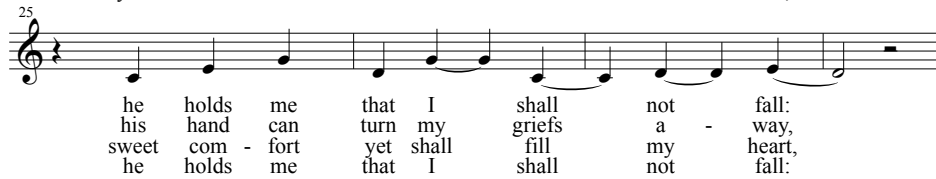
9
 I will be still what - e'er he does,
 he leads me by the prop - er path;
 may bit - ter seem to my faint heart,
 though sor - row, need, or death be mine,



13
 and fol - low where he guid - eth.
 I know he will not leave me.
 I take it, all un - shrink - ing.
 yet I am not for - sak - en.



17
 He is my God; though dark my road,
 I take con - tent, what he hath sent;
 My God is true; each morn a - new
 My Fa - ther's care is round me there;



25
 he holds me that I shall not fall:
 his hand can turn my griefs a - way,
 sweet com - fort yet shall fill my heart,
 he holds me that I shall not fall:



29
 where - fore to him I leave it all.
 and pa - tient - ly I wait his day.
 and pain and sor - row shall de - part.
 and so to him I leave it all.

Shall not the
 Judge of all the
 earth do what is
 just?
 Genesis 18

GOD STRENGTHENS US BY HIS GRACE

Ordination is the authoritative admission of one duly called to an office in the Church of God. The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America

We look to God to lead and guide us, his Church, through every circumstance of life by the means he appoints and the officers he calls as we ordain Paul Martin and Ben Van Dyke to the office of Ruling Elder

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will, on your own initiative, make known to your Session the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?
3. Do you approve of the form of government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in America, in conformity with the general principles of biblical polity?
4. Do you accept the office of ruling elder in this church, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your life, and to set a worthy example before the Church of which God has made you an officer?
5. Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?
6. Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the Church?

Do you, the members of this church, acknowledge and receive this brother as a ruling elder, and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement and obedience in the Lord to which his office, according to the Word of God and the Constitution of this Church, entitles him?

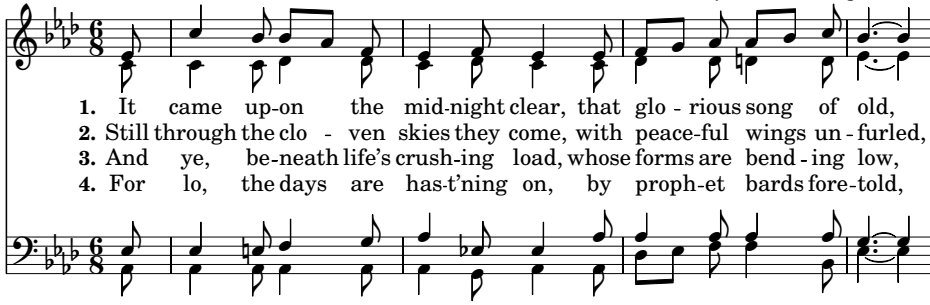
We pray for the Church and her elders

*During this time we live in faith, trusting in the power of his grace,
placing our lives and our church in his hands.
We ask that he would work in us and through us for his glory.*

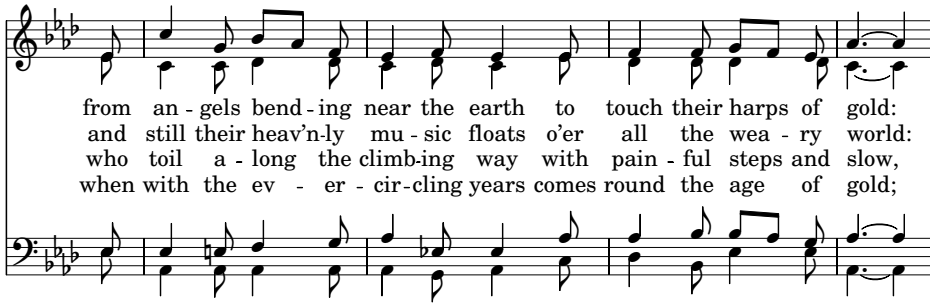
God works mightily in our lives through the pain of death as we proclaim the death of Jesus Christ through the celebration of the Lord's Supper

We celebrate God's free grace to us in Jesus Christ by observing the Lord's Supper each Sunday. We invite to the Lord's Table all those who are baptized followers of Jesus Christ, under the authority of Christ and his body, the Church. By eating the bread and drinking the cup with us as a visitor, you are acknowledging to our church that you are in covenant with God. You also acknowledge that you are a sinner, without hope except in the sovereign mercy of God, and that you are trusting in Jesus Christ alone for your salvation. If you have any doubts about your participation, please speak to one of the elders after the service. Wine and bread are the elements of the supper as instituted by Jesus Christ and so we follow his example.

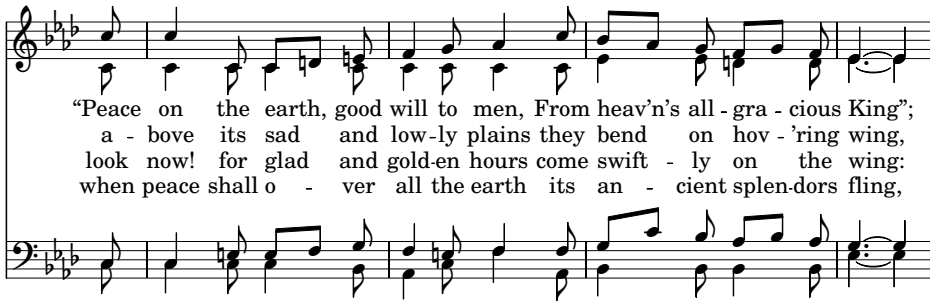
"It Came upon the Midnight Clear"



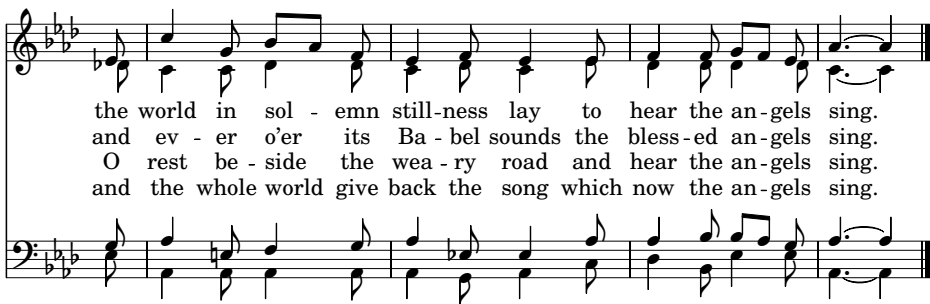
1. It came up-on the mid-n-ight clear, that glo - rious song of old,
2. Still through the clo - ven skies they come, with peace-ful wings un - furled,
3. And ye, be-neath life's crush-ing load, whose forms are bend-ing low,
4. For lo, the days are hast'ning on, by proph-et bards fore-told,



from an - gels bend-ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
and still their heav'n-ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world:
who toil a - long the climb-ing way with pain - ful steps and slow,
when with the ev - er - cir-cling years comes round the age of gold;



"Peace on the earth, good will to men, From heav'n's all - gra - cious King";
a - bove its sad and low-ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing,
look now! for glad and gold-en hours come swift - ly on the wing:
when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen-dors fling,



the world in sol - emn still-ness lay to hear the an-gels sing.
and ev - er o'er its Ba - bel sounds the bless-ed an-gels sing.
O rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an-gels sing.
and the whole world give back the song which now the an-gels sing.

And the angel said to them, "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

We give our tithes and offerings to God declaring that he is the one we serve

We give our offerings to God as a public demonstration of our faith, putting our money where our mouths are. In this action we show what we claim, that our lives are organized around God and lived for him instead of ourselves.

GOD SENDS US WITH HIS GRACE

We rejoice with all the earth that our King has come and that he rules the world with truth and grace

“Joy to the World”

1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth re - ceive her
 2. Joy to the earth! The Sav - ior reigns: let men their songs em -
 3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest the
 4. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na - tions

King; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,
 play; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow
 prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous - ness

and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his
 and heav'n and na - ture sing,

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

Revelation 21

We rest in his grace, content in all he gives

Leader: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore boast all the more gladly of your weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon you. For the sake of Christ, then, be content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when you are weak, then you are strong.

2 Corinthians 12

People: Amen

Please stay and join us for a time of refreshment and enjoying each other's company.

*This is a time to share in life together as the gospel calls us
as we reconnect with those we know and as we meet someone new.*



Welcome to Free Grace

We are a broken church full of broken people. We know we need God's free grace. Some of us have accepted this grace, some are exploring what it's all about. All of us are still trying to understand it. We are a church that seeks to proclaim this free grace of God with both our words and our lives. Not satisfied with simply talking about it, we want to live it out. We invite you to come, explore, and live God's free grace with us.

Our Connections



Free Grace is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), a family of churches that seeks to be faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed faith, and obedient to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

Our Leadership

Free Grace is lead by her elders, men called by God and set apart by the church to care and lead her as individual members, families, and as a whole. Our elders are:

Rev. Per Almquist (pastor)
Brian Cosgrove
Paul Martin
Ken Morris
Ben Van Dyke



Credits

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Shannon Van Dyke, *voice*; Wagner Sgobi, *piano*; Jake Paris, *guitar*

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- "Joy to the World" Public Domain. Words: Isaac Watts, 1719, based on Psalm 98. Music: Georg Frideric Handel, 1742, arr. Lowell Mason, 1836.

Do you see it? Herod must be in your nativities because Christmas is a gift, not for the rich, not for the well lit, not for the luminary, but for those who live broken by the darkness. Christmas is a song for the songless; a promise for the ones burned by broken promises; a dream for those who have resigned to never, ever, dream again.

Zack Eswine
Presbyterian pastor

broken people
bound together in Christ
for God's glory