

**January 5, 2020**

# Why We Need Simeon & Anna

*Free Grace Presbyterian Church*

## SOME THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION:

The apostles told the same story of Jesus at three levels—as *historical* event (witnessed by their own eyes), as having *theological* significance (interpreted by the Scriptures), and as *contemporary* message (confronting men and women with the necessity of decision). We have the same responsibility today to tell the story of Jesus as fact, doctrine, and gospel.

John Stott

British Reformed Anglican pastor and theologian

Sing for joy, O  
heavens, and exult, O  
earth; break forth, O  
mountains, into singing! For  
the LORD has comforted his  
people and will have  
compassion on his  
afflicted.

**Isaiah 49:13**

"But the LORD of  
hosts, him you shall honor as  
holy. Let him be your fear, and let  
him be your dread. And he will  
become a sanctuary and a stone of  
offense and a rock of stumbling to both  
houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to  
the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And  
many shall stumble on it. They shall  
fall and be broken; they shall  
be snared and taken."

**Isaiah 8:13-15**

For thus  
says the LORD: "Behold,  
I will extend peace to her like a  
river, and the glory of the nations  
like an overflowing stream; and you  
shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her  
hip, and bounced upon her knees. As one  
whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort  
you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.  
You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice;  
your bones shall flourish like the grass;  
and the hand of the LORD shall be  
known to his servants, and he shall  
show his indignation against  
his enemies."

**Isaiah 66:12-14**

This is the gate of  
the LORD; the  
righteous shall enter  
through it. I thank you that  
you have answered me and  
have become my salvation.  
The stone that the builders  
rejected has become the  
cornerstone.

**Psalms 118:20-22**

[Jesus'] purpose is not to heal as many people as possible as a manifestation of the kingdom of God drawn near in his person, but to confront men with the demand for decision in the perspective of God's absolute claim upon their person.

William Lane

20<sup>th</sup> century NT scholar

# GOD SUMMONS US BY HIS GRACE

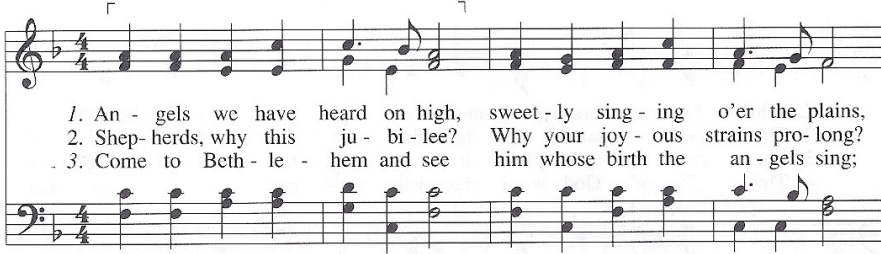
**Leader:** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

**People:** **All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.**

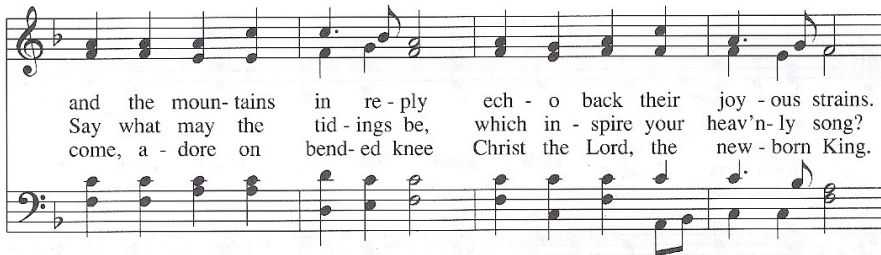
**Leader:** In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

**People:** **My eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.**

**We join the heavenly chorus in singing glory to God** "Angels We Have Heard on High"



1. An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,  
2. Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?  
3. Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun - tains in re - ply ech - o back their joy - ous strains.  
Say what may the tid - ings be, which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?  
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.



REFRAIN  
Glo - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o,



glo - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

John 1  
Luke 2

Christmas is the celebration of God's glory dwelling among us in the person of Jesus Christ. The grace and truth of God revealed in Jesus' birth calls us to come like the shepherds and the wise men to bring our gifts and worship.

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# GOD SANCTIFIES US BY HIS GRACE

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## **God declares that though we have seen his salvation in Jesus Christ still we fail to know him and receive him**

Isaiah 1  
John 1

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken... "Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand."

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

Our confession of our sin is not our coming to God to plead for his love, that we are not so bad after all, but our accepting the reality of our sin and resting in his coming to us. This is Christmas: God coming to dwell with us in Jesus Christ, not our going to dwell with God.

## **We confess our sin: that even as God comes to us in Jesus Christ, we fail to know and receive him**

*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.*

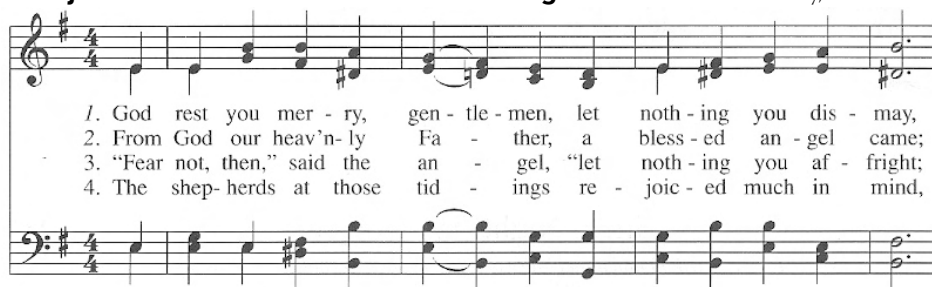
## **God declares his dwelling with us in Jesus Christ to save us from our sins**

Matthew 1

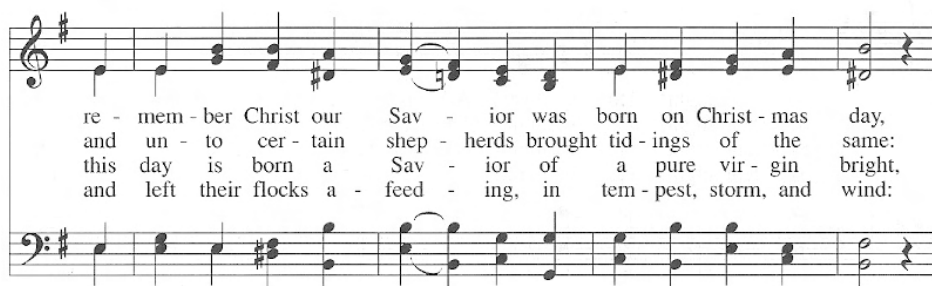
Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

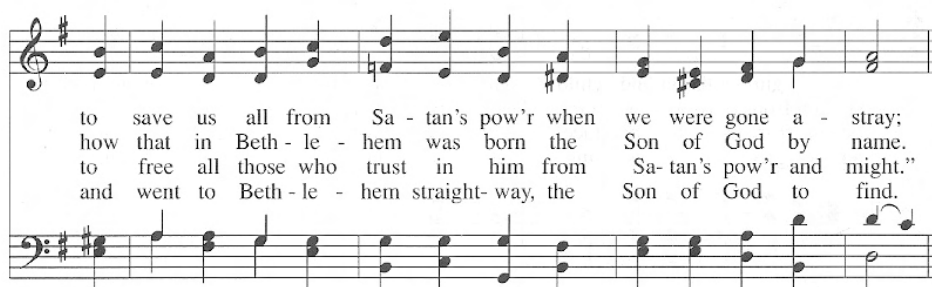
**We rejoice and rest in announcement of God's grace** "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen"



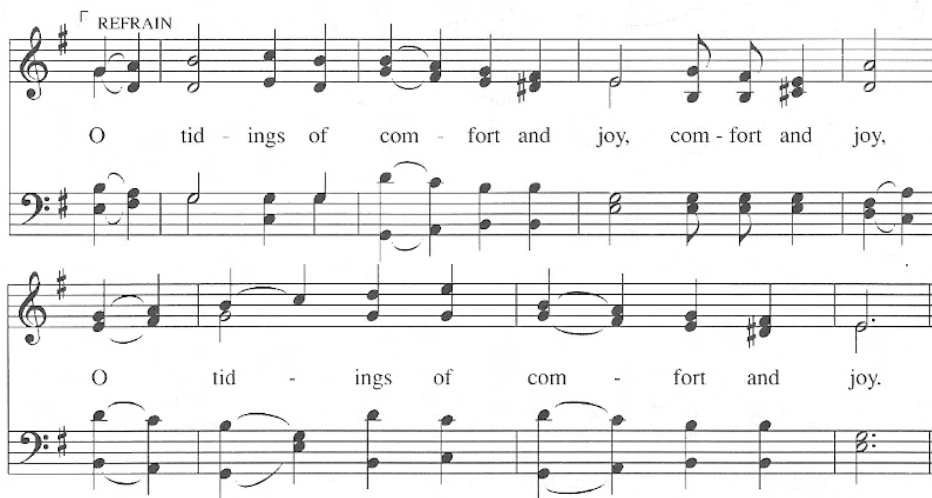
1. God rest you mer - ry, gen - tle - men, let noth - ing you dis - may,  
 2. From God our heav'n - ly Fa - ther, a bless - ed an - gel came;  
 3. "Fear not, then," said the an - gel, "let noth - ing you af - fright;  
 4. The shep - herds at those tid - ings re - joic - ed much in mind,



re - mem - ber Christ our Sav - ior was born on Christ - mas day,  
 and un - to cer - tain shep - herds brought tid - ings of the same:  
 this day is born a Sav - ior of a pure vir - gin bright,  
 and left their flocks a - feed - ing, in tem - pest, storm, and wind:



to save us all from Sa - tan's pow'r when we were gone a - stray;  
 how that in Beth - le - hem was born the Son of God by name.  
 to free all those who trust in him from Sa - tan's pow'r and might."  
 and went to Beth - le - hem straight - way, the Son of God to find.



REFRAIN  
 O tid - ings of com - fort and joy, com - fort and joy,  
 O tid - ings of com - fort and joy.

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

16

1, 2, 3. 4.

The first staff of music for 'The Rose Tree' is in 2/4 time and G major. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody starts on a whole note G4, followed by a half rest. A bracket above the staff indicates a first ending for measures 1, 2, and 3, which end with a repeat sign. The second ending, marked '4.', continues the melody from measure 4. The notation includes various note values (half, quarter, eighth notes) and rests.

21

Musical notation for measures 21-24. Measure 21: G4 quarter, A4 quarter, B4 quarter, C5 quarter. Measure 22: B4 quarter, A4 quarter, G4 quarter, F#4 quarter. Measure 23: E4 quarter, D4 quarter, C4 quarter, B3 quarter. Measure 24: A3 quarter, G3 quarter, F#3 quarter, E3 quarter. The piece ends with a double bar line.

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

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## GOD SPEAKS WITH US BY HIS GRACE

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<sup>22</sup>And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup>(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") <sup>24</sup>and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."  
<sup>25</sup>Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup>And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. <sup>27</sup>And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup>he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

<sup>29</sup>"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,  
according to your word;  
<sup>30</sup>for my eyes have seen your salvation  
<sup>31</sup>that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
<sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and for glory to your people Israel."

<sup>33</sup>And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him.  
<sup>34</sup>And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed <sup>35</sup>(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

<sup>36</sup>And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, <sup>37</sup>and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup>And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Luke 2:22-38

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

Hebrews 1

Christian  
preaching begins  
with the name of  
Jesus.  
C.K. Barrett

**Sermon**

**Why We Need Simeon & Anna**  
The Little People of Christmas

Rev. Per Almquist

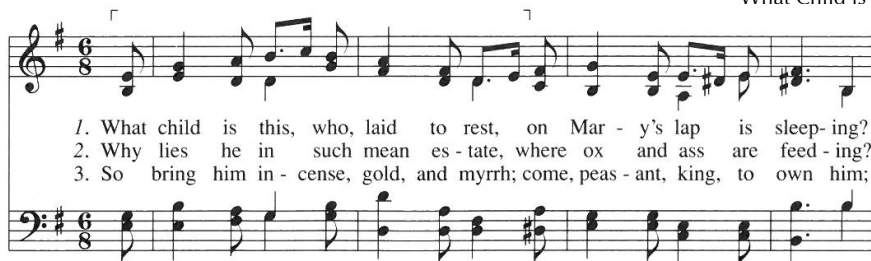


# GOD STRENGTHENS US BY HIS GRACE

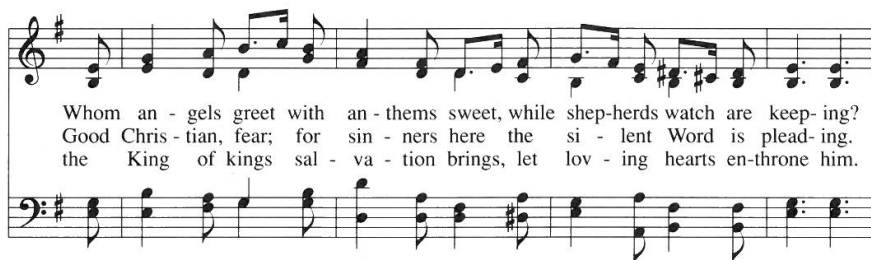
## God applies the reality of Jesus Christ to us, our salvation through his death, as we celebrate the Lord's Supper

*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, you proclaim that you are in covenant relationship with God, 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.*

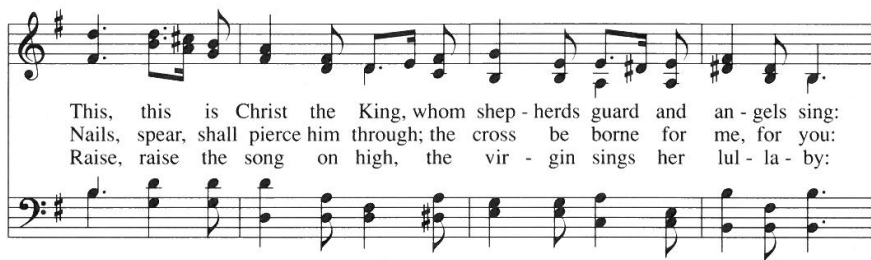
"What Child is This"



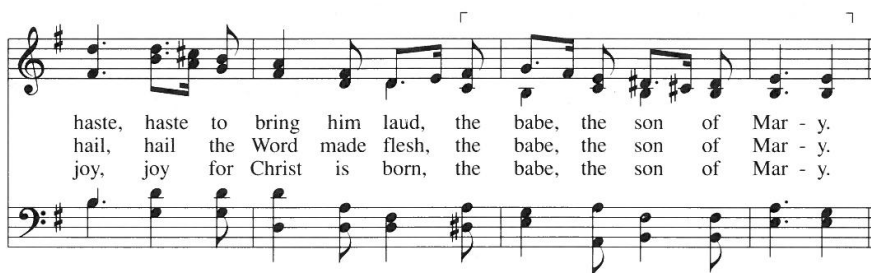
1. What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?  
2. Why lies he in such mean es - tate, where ox and ass are feed - ing?  
3. So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him;



Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet, while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?  
Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.  
the King of kings sal - va - tion brings, let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the King, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing:  
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you:  
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by:



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y.  
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y.  
joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y.

The visible sign was useful for the confirmation and proof of the fact. And such is the use of sacraments, to strengthen us in proportion to our ignorance; for we are not angels, that can behold the mysteries of God without any assistance, and therefore he raises us to himself by gradual advances.  
John Calvin

"In Christ Alone"



1. In Christ a - lone my hope is found; he is my Light, my Strength, my  
 2. In Christ a - lone, who took on flesh, full - ness of God in help - less  
 3. There in the ground his bo - dy lay, Light of the world by dark - ness  
 4. No guilt in life, no fear in death: this is the pow'r of Christ in



4 Song. This cor - ner - stone, this sol - id ground, firm through the fierc - est drought and  
 babe. This gift of love and right - eous - ness, scorned by the ones he came to  
 slain. Then burst - ing forth in glo - rious day, up from the grave he rose a -  
 me. From life's first cry to fi - nal breath, Je - sus com - mands my des - ti -



8 storm. What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when striv - ings  
 save: 'til on that cross as Je - sus died, the wrath of God was sat - is -  
 gain! And as he stands in vic - to - ry, sin's curse has lost its grip on  
 ny. No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man, can ev - er pluck me from his



12 cease! My Com - for - ter, my all in all: here in the love of Christ I stand.  
 fied. For ev - 'ry sin on him was laid: here in the death of Christ I live.  
 me. For I am his, and he is mine: bought with the pre - cious blood of Christ.  
 hand. 'Til he re - turns, or calls me home, here in the pow'r of Christ I'll \_\_\_\_\_



18 stand. No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man, can ev - er pluck me from his hand. 'Til he re -



23 turns, or calls me home, here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

Set your hope fully  
 on the grace that  
 will be brought to  
 you at the  
 revelation of Jesus  
 Christ.  
 1 Peter 1

**We bring our tithes and offerings revealing the thoughts of our hearts: our acceptance of Jesus Christ as God's agent of salvation**

*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.*

**We come to God through his agent as we pray in Christ's name**

*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.*

Our main goal in prayer is to delve into a deeper relationship with the God who loves us, not to control our environment or our circumstances.

# GOD SENDS US WITH HIS GRACE

We rejoice that we have seen God's salvation and speak of him to all

"Go, Tell It on the Mountain"

The musical score is written for a four-part vocal ensemble (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in 4/4 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into four systems, each with a treble and bass staff. Chord symbols are placed above the treble staff. The lyrics are written below the bass staff. The first system includes a 'Unison' marking and a 'Ref.' (Refrain) instruction. The second system ends with a 'Fine' marking. The third system contains three verses of lyrics. The fourth system ends with a 'D.C.' (Da Capo) marking.

*Unison* *C7* *F* *C*

(Ref.) Go, tell it on the moun - tain, o - ver the hills and ev - ery - where;

*F* *Dm* *F/C* *C7* *Fine*

go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born.

*F* *C* *F* *C7* *Dm* *C* *F*

1. While shep- herds kept their watch - ing o'er si - lent flocks by night, be -  
2. The shep- herds feared and trem- bled when, lo! a - bove the earth rang  
3. Down in a low - ly man - ger our hum - ble Christ was born, and

*C* *F* *Gm* *G7* *C7* *D.C.*

hold, through - out the heav - ens there shone a ho - ly light.  
out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ - mas morn.

And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

Luke 2

## God promises his work in us through Jesus Christ

Leader: Now may the God of your salvation, according to his steadfast love and his abundant mercy, create in you a clean heart and renew a right spirit within you. May the Lord restore to you the joy of your salvation and uphold you with a willing spirit that your tongue will sing aloud of his righteousness and your mouth will declare his praise.

**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.*

Psalms 51

A benediction is a pronouncement of God's blessing; hence, the minister stands with hands outstretched, and an appropriate posture is for the worshipper to stand with their hands open, palms upward, to receive God's blessing as he promises.



## 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.

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## 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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Connor Crawford, *voice*; Scott Almquist, *piano*; Beth Almquist, *piano, voice*

"Angels We Have Heard on High" Public Domain, Words: Traditional French carol. Music: Traditional French melody, arr. by Edward S. Barnes, 1937.

"God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen" Public Domain. Words: Traditional English carol, 18th century. Music: Traditional English melody, 18th century.

"It is Finished - Part II" ©2006 Red Mountain Music. Words: Attributed to Jonathan Evans, 1784 & Benjamin Francis, 1787. Music: Jeff Koonce, 2005; arranged by Beth Almquist, 2012.

"What Child Is This" Public Domain. Words: Traditional English Carol. Music: Traditional English Melody, 16<sup>th</sup> century.

"In Christ Alone" ©2001 Kingsway Thankyou Music. Words and Music: Keith Getty & Stuart Townend, 2001.

"Go, Tell It on the Mountain" Pubic Domain. Words and Music: Traditional spiritual.

Praise God for Christmas.  
Praise Him for the incarnation,  
for the word made flesh.  
I will not sing of shepherds  
watching flocks on frosty nights,  
or angel choristers.  
I will not sing of a stable bare in Bethlehem,  
or lowing oxen,  
wise men trailing star with gold,  
frankincense, and myrrh.  
Tonight I will sing praise to the Father  
who stood on heaven's threshold  
and said farewell to his Son  
as he stepped across the stars  
to Bethlehem and Jerusalem.  
And I will sing praise to the infinite, eternal Son,  
who became most finite, a baby  
who would one day be executed for my crime.  
Praise him in the heavens,  
Praise him in the stable,  
Praise him in my heart.

Joseph Bayly  
20<sup>th</sup> century American author and publisher

broken people  
bound together in Christ  
for God's glory