



**December 7, 2025**

**Advent is for the Broken**

*Free Grace Presbyterian Church*

## SOME THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION

When you hear...of death, you must think not only of the grave and the coffin, and of the horrible manner in which life is separated from the body and how the body is destroyed and brought to nought, but you must think of the cause by which man is brought to death and without which death and that which accompanies it, would be impossible... namely, sin and the wrath of God on account of sin.

Martin Luther  
15th Century monk, reformer, pastor

...for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

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But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

**Genesis 2:17 & James 1:14-15**

Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.

**Psalms 68:5**

He says, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" and then he makes good on his promise by coming to us in all his comfort. So we go to him with our troubles, knowing that in his loving heart there is enough room for all our sorrows.

Phillip Graham Ryken  
President of Wheaton College

That the Prince of Peace is stronger than the king of terrors, and that though death, the last enemy, is mighty, he is not so mighty as the sinner's Friend.

J.C. Ryle  
19th-century English Anglican bishop

Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

**Revelation 1:17b-18**

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

**1 Corinthians 15:55 (KJV)**

And then one day, I'll cross that river,  
I'll fight life's final war with pain;  
And then as death gives way to victory,  
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He reigns.

Bill & Gloria Gaither  
Hymn-writers  
*Because He Lives*, 1971

# GOD SUMMONS US BY HIS GRACE

**Leader:** The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwell in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

Isaiah 9

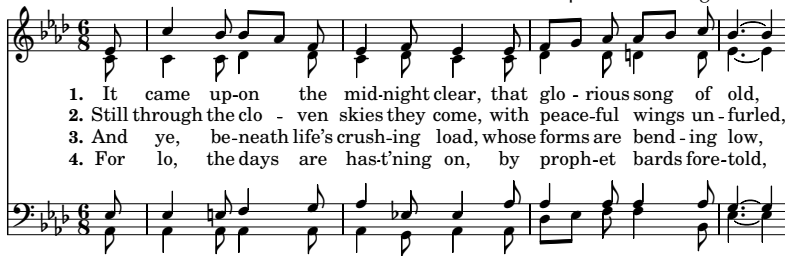
**People:** **For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;**

Luke 2

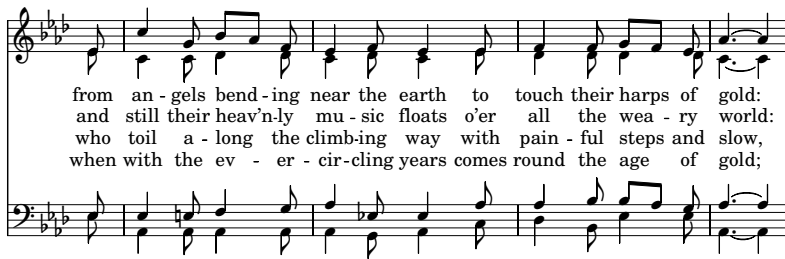
**Leader:** And the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

**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."**

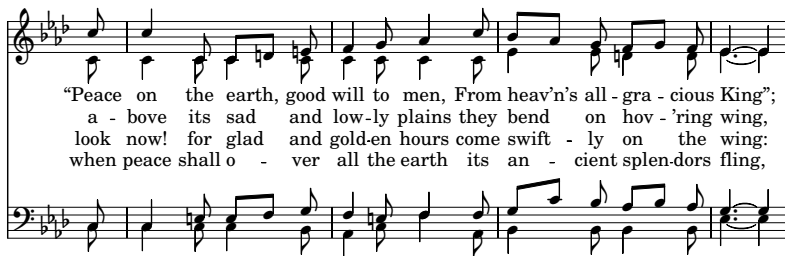
It Came upon the Midnight Clear"



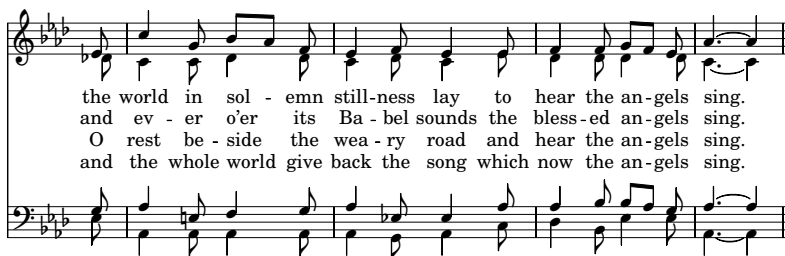
1. It came up-on the mid-n-ight clear, that glo - rious song of old,  
2. Still through the clo - ven skies they come, with peace-ful wings un-furled,  
3. And ye, be-neath life's crush-ing load, whose forms are bend-ing low,  
4. For lo, the days are has-t'ning on, by proph-et bards fore-told,



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;



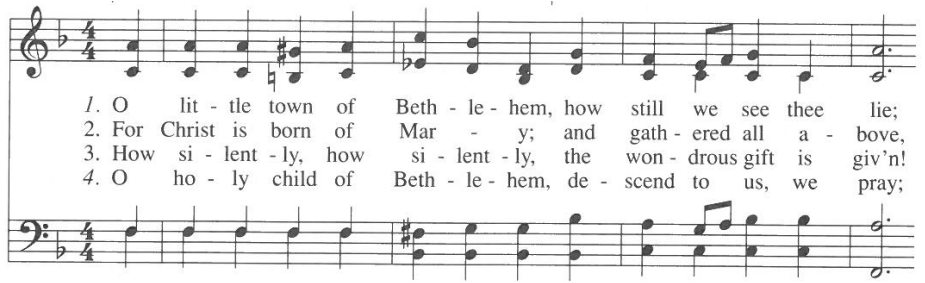
"Peace on the earth, good will to men, From heav'n's all - gra - cious King";  
a - bove its sad and low-ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing,  
look now! for glad and gold-en hours come swift - ly on the wing:  
when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen-dors fling,



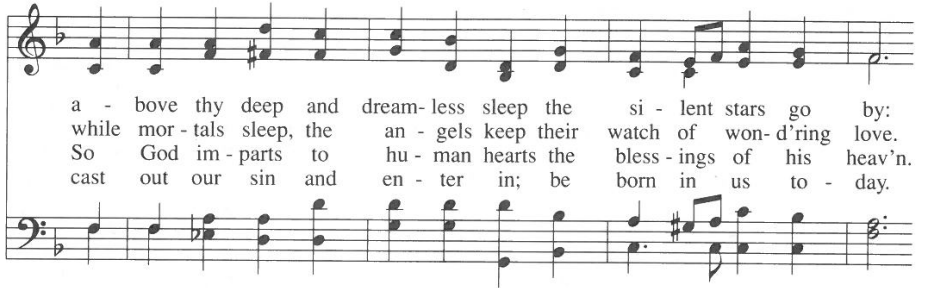
the world in sol - emn still-ness lay to hear the an-gels sing.  
and ev - er o'er its Ba - bel sounds the bless-ed an-gels sing.  
O rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an-gels sing.  
and the whole world give back the song which now the an-gels sing.

How beautiful  
upon the  
mountains are the  
feet of him who  
brings good news,  
who publishes  
peace, who brings  
good news of  
happiness, who  
publishes  
salvation, who says  
to Zion, "Your God  
reigns.  
Isaiah 52

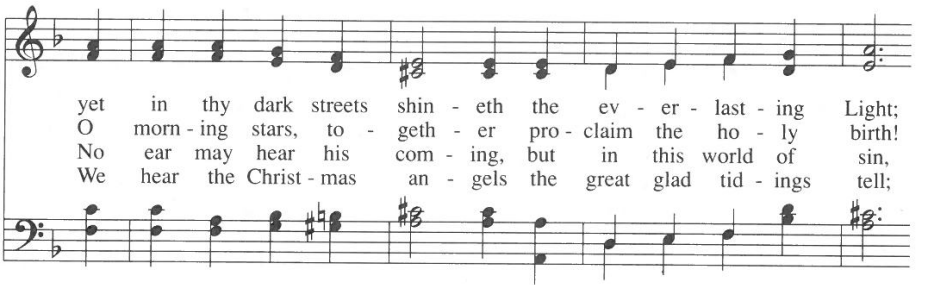
"O Little Town of Bethlehem"



1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie;  
 2. For Christ is born of Mar - y; and gath - ered all a - bove,  
 3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is giv'n!  
 4. O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



a - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by:  
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.  
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.  
 cast out our sin and en - ter in; be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing Light;  
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth!  
 No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,  
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.  
 And prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.  
 where meek souls will re - ceive him still, the dear Christ en - ters in.  
 O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el.

But you, O  
 Bethlehem  
 Ephrathah, who  
 are too little to be  
 among the clans  
 of Judah, from you  
 shall come forth  
 for me one who is  
 to be ruler in  
 Israel, whose  
 coming forth is  
 from of old, from  
 ancient days.

Micah 5

# GOD SANCTIFIES US BY HIS GRACE

## God proclaims that we are sick with sin and unbelief

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... And as Jesus reclined at table in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

John 1

Mark 2

"Help My Unbelief"

I know the Lord is nigh, and would but can - not pray, for  
I would but can - not love, though wooed by love di - vine; no

Sa - tan meets me when I try, and frights my soul a - way, and  
ar - gu - ments have pow'r to move a soul as base as mine, a

frights my soul a - way. I would but can't re - pent, though  
soul so base as mine. I would but can - not rest in

I en - dea - vor oft; this sto - ny heart can ne'er re - lent 'til  
God's most ho - ly will; I know what he ap - points is best and

Je - sus makes it soft, 'til Je - sus makes it soft.  
mur - mur at it still, I mur - mur at it still.

Help my un - be - lief; help my un - be - lief;

help my un - be - lief; my help must come from thee.

A bruised reed he  
will not break, and  
a faintly burning  
wick he will not  
quench; he will  
faithfully bring  
forth justice  
Isaiah 42


## God assures pardon to all who are brokenhearted for their sins

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. 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.



Psalms 34  
Isaiah 40

## We rest in the righteous of the one who came to us



"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.



For he grew up  
before him like a  
young plant, and  
like a root out of  
dry ground; he  
had no form or  
majesty that we  
should look at  
him, and no  
beauty that we  
should desire him.  
Isaiah 53

Continue to the next page.

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## GOD SPEAKS WITH US BY HIS GRACE

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Luke 7:11-17

[11] Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. [12] As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. [13] And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." [14] Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." [15] And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. [16] Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" [17] And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.



## **Advent is For the Broken**

That You May Be Certain

*We must rest in sure hope:*

1) **That he sees the unknown** (v11-13)

2) **That he cares for the broken** (v13)

3) **That he conquers death** (v14-15)

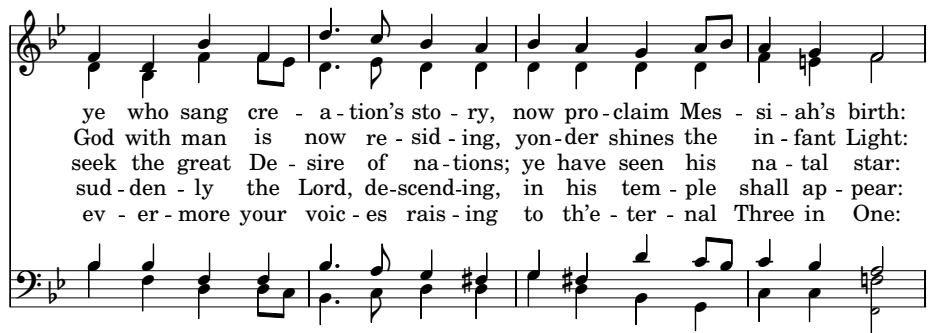
**Conclusion** (v16-17)

## We join the heavenly choir, praising the Messiah— savior of the nations

"Angels, from the Realms of Glory"

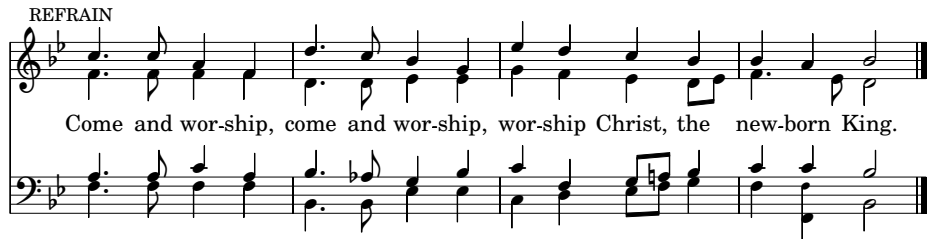


1. An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
2. Shep-herds in the fields a - bid-ing, watch-ing o'er your flocks by night,  
3. Sa - ges, leave your con-tem-plations, bright-er vi - sions beam a - far;  
4. Saints be - fore the al - tar bend-ing, watch-ing long in hope and fear,  
5. All cre - a - tion, join in prais-ing God the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son;



ye who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro-claim Mes - si - ah's birth:  
God with man is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant Light:  
seek the great De - sire of na - tions; ye have seen his na - tal star:  
sud - den - ly the Lord, de-scend-ing, in his tem - ple shall ap - pear:  
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to th'e - ter - nal Three in One:

REFRAIN



Come and wor-ship, come and wor-ship, wor-ship Christ, the new-born King.

He has  
remembered his  
steadfast love and  
faithfulness to the  
house of Israel. All  
the ends of the  
earth have seen  
the salvation of  
our God.  
Psalm 98

# GOD STRENGTHENS US BY HIS GRACE

## We celebrate the Lord's supper, being strengthen with new life in Christ

We invite all who are baptized followers of Jesus Christ under the authority of Christ and his body, the Church to partake in this sacrament. By eating the bread and drinking the cup, you are acknowledging 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.

"Away in a Manger (All Glory to Jesus)"

1. A - way in a man-ger a ba-by is\_\_ born. The Sov - reign of heav-en whom  
2. A - way in a man-ger a Ser-vant is\_\_ born, made noth - ing to raise up the  
3. A - way in a man-ger a Sav - ior is\_\_ born. The crown he'll be giv - en will

an - gels a - dore is wrapped in the weak - ness of our mor - tal frame. The  
hope - less and poor. With grace as his bur - den and love as his yoke, the  
pierce him with thorns. The King will be cursed with our sin and our shame. The

lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.  
gen - tle Lord Je - sus will shep - herd our souls.  
blame - less Lord Je - sus will die in our place.

**CHORUS**

All glo - ry to Je - sus for - ev - er. We lift high the name\_\_ of our  
Sav - ior. All glo - ry to Je - sus for - ev - er. We lift high the name  
\_\_ of our Sav - ior.

4. A - way in a man-ger a  
Li - on is\_\_ born. The dark - ness will trem - ble at his might - y roar. His mer - cy will  
tri - umph and death will be slain! The ris - en Lord Je - sus for - ev - er will reign.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

2 Corinthians 8

**We proclaim our faith in the triune God who became incarnate for us**

Leader: What is it we believe about God, the Father?

People: **We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.**

Leader: What is it we believe about Jesus Christ?

People: **We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,  
begotten of the Father before all worlds;  
God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;  
by whom all things were made;  
who, for us and for our salvation  
came down from heaven,  
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary,  
and was made man;  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered and was buried;  
and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures,  
and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father;  
and he shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead;  
whose kingdom shall have no end.**

Leader: What is it we believe about the Holy Spirit?

People: **And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son;  
who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;  
who spoke by the prophets;  
and we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church;  
we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;  
and we look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

In addition to your regular tithes and offerings, we ask that you would pray about giving to the Geneva Fund (Ministerial Relief).

This fund is used to help ministers or their widows who have fallen on hard times due to health issues, death of a spouse, or other sudden burdens. This our way to help the greater church care for those who have served it.

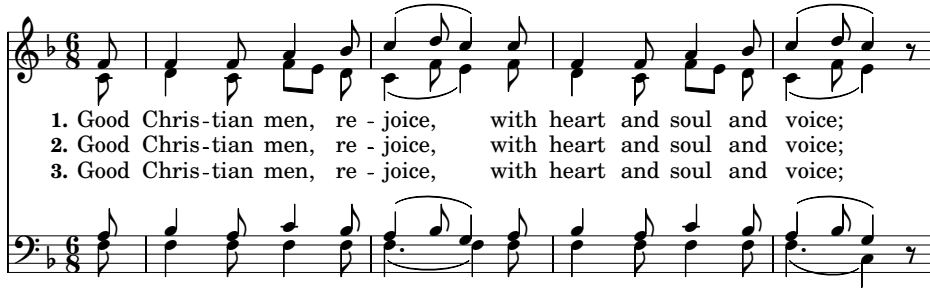
**In prayer, we ask God to meet the needs of all those who serve Him**

*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 SENDS US BY HIS GRACE

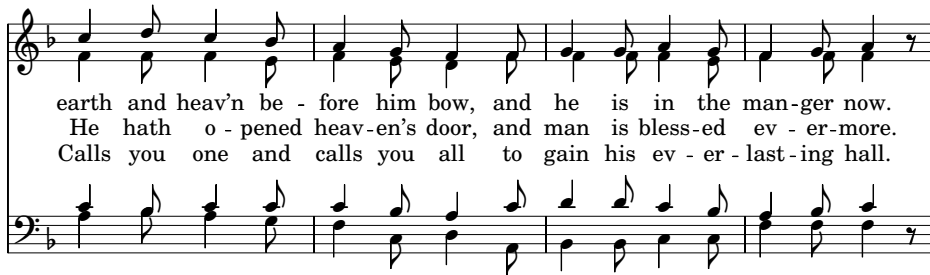
**We rejoice, having been raised up to new life in Christ**      "Good Christian Men, Rejoice



1. Good Chris-tian men, re - joice, with heart and soul and voice;  
2. Good Chris-tian men, re - joice, with heart and soul and voice;  
3. Good Chris-tian men, re - joice, with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;  
now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!  
now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!



earth and heav'n be - fore him bow, and he is in the man-ger now.  
He hath o - pened heav-en's door, and man is bless-ed ev - er-more.  
Calls you one and calls you all to gain his ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!  
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!  
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Let the heavens be  
glad, and let the  
earth rejoice; let  
the sea roar, and  
all that fills it; let  
the field exult, and  
everything in it!  
Then shall all the  
trees of the forest  
sing for joy.  
Psalm 96

## God's promise is to all who bring their brokenness to him

Leader: Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

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

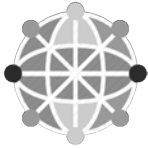
2 Thessalonians 2



## 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. Dr. Per Almquist  
Brian Cosgrove  
Rev. Adam Lee  
Ken Morris  
Ben Van Dyke



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Beth Almquist, *piano*; Abigail Lee, *violin*; Jocelyn Crawford, *voice*; Shannon VanDyke, *voice*

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# Our Daily Worship

## A through-the-week devotional



The following pages are provided for you with a desire to “lead you beside still waters”.

May they assist you in your walk with Christ through week, as you practice his presence, feed upon his word, and reflect upon how both impact your weekly life.

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## SUNDAY

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**Scripture** – Luke 7:11-17

**Reflection:** Advent is the story of God coming toward the broken. Jesus does not wait for the suffering to find Him—He walks deliberately into their obscurity, their grief, and their fear. In Nain, He approaches a widow whose sorrow was hidden from the world but never hidden from Him. Advent declares that God’s heart has always been to draw near: the God who sees, who knows, who comes down, who enters the places we cannot escape and the pains we cannot fix. Before we consider how Jesus sees, cares, or conquers, we begin here: *He comes*. Advent is the assurance that God Himself moves toward the broken long before they can move toward Him.

**Our Common Weakness:** We doubt that God willingly draws near to our broken places..

**Christ Connection:** Christ’s advent is God’s decisive movement toward the broken, the weary, and the unseen.

*Psalm 34:18 – According to this verse, to whom is the Lord near?*

*Exodus 3:7 – How does God describe His awareness of His people’s suffering?*

*Psalm 147:3 – What does the Lord do for those whose hearts are broken?*

### **Consider:**

*“Come, thou long-expected Jesus,  
Born to set thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us,  
Let us find our rest in thee.”  
— Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (v.1)*

**Embrace-** *Where in your life do you feel bowed down, weakened, or unable to rise? Advent means Christ comes precisely there. Ask Him to meet you in the place where your strength ends and His compassion begins.*

**Prayer** Lord Jesus, long-expected Savior, thank You that You come to the contrite and lowly. Lift me where I am bowed down; bind what is broken; restore what sorrow has taken. Let Your advent teach my heart that You draw near not to the strong but to the needy. Amen.



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## MONDAY

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**Scripture** – *Luke 7:11–13*

**Reflection:** As Jesus approaches Nain, two crowds converge—His disciples entering the town and the mourners leaving it. Many people saw the funeral procession. They saw the bier, the movement, the loss. But only Jesus truly **saw her**—a widow now losing her only son, with her past, present, and future collapsing in front of her. Advent reminds us that God’s sight is not general but personal. He does not merely observe the scene; He perceives the sufferer. The God who comes near is the God who sees personally.

**Our Common Weakness:** We doubt that God is interested in our personal situation.

**Christ Connection:** Christ sees those who feel unseen.

*Genesis 16:13 – What name does Hagar give to the Lord who sees her?*

*Psalms 33:18 – Whose life does the eye of the Lord remain fixed upon?*

*Luke 12:6–7 – What does Jesus say to reveal how personally God sees and values His people?*

### **Consider**

*“Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light.”*

*— O Little Town of Bethlehem (v.1)*

**Embrace-** *Bethlehem’s “dark streets” represent ordinary, overlooked places. Yet there Christ appears. The unseen place is where the Light chooses to shine. Where do the “dark streets” of your own life feel overlooked—places where you assume God sees the events around you but not you? Let the hymn’s image shape your faith today: The everlasting Light shines exactly where you feel unseen.*

**Prayer** Lord Jesus, Light of the world, shine into the dim and hidden places of my heart. Let me know the comfort of being seen—not generally, but personally, fully, and compassionately. As You saw the widow, see me. As You moved toward her, move toward me. Amen.

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## TUESDAY

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**Scripture** – *Luke 7:13*

**Reflection:** Luke tells us simply and profoundly: “When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her.” This is more than sympathy. Jesus’ compassion is a movement—an inner stirring that propels Him toward the widow’s grief. She does not call for Him. She does not expect Him. Her sorrow does not repel Him; it draws Him. Advent reveals the heart of God: the Holy One comes near *not* because we are strong, but precisely because we are broken. His mercy does not react to our efforts—it arises from His eternal heart of love.

**Our Common Weakness:** We assume God waits for us to pray harder or do more.

**Christ Connection:** Christ’s advent shows that God’s compassion precedes our cry and moves toward us in our sorrow.

*Exodus 3:7–8 – What does this passage reveal about God’s prior knowledge and initiative toward his people’s suffering?*

*Psalm 103:13–14 – How does God’s compassion take our weakness and frailty into account?*

*Isaiah 49:15 – What image does God use to describe the depth and faithfulness of his compassion?*

### **Consider**

*“Mild He lays His glory by,  
Born that man no more may die.”  
—Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (v.2)*

*Christ’s compassion is not distant observation. He lays aside glory to draw near—to feel, to enter, to care—because suffering people cannot be saved from afar.*

**Embrace-** *Where are you tempted to believe that God’s heart toward you is cool, restrained, or reluctant? Let the hymn re-teach you today: Christ lays glory aside because compassion moves Him closer, not farther away. Ask Him to help you trust that His care is as real, as present, and as personal as His coming.*

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, compassionate Savior, thank You that You draw near with tenderness toward weakness and sorrow. Help me believe that Your heart is moved toward me, not away from me. Teach me to rest in compassion that led You to lay aside glory and come close. Amen.

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## WEDNESDAY

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**Scripture** – *Luke 7:14–15*

**Reflection:** When Jesus reaches the bier, He does not negotiate with death, confront it as an equal, or even acknowledge it as having authority. He speaks past it—directly to the young man. *“Young man, I say to you, arise.”* Luke shows us something astonishing: when Christ speaks, death has no voice in the conversation.

This moment deliberately echoes the Old Testament, but with a decisive difference. When Elijah and Elisha raised widows’ sons, they cried out to the Lord, stretched themselves upon the child, and pleaded for life to return (1 Kings 17; 2 Kings 4). They acted as servants appealing to heaven’s power. But Jesus does not plead. He does not pray. He does not ask. He speaks. Death is treated not as a rival force to be overcome, but as a defeated interruption swept aside by divine authority. Advent reveals that the One born into a world under death’s shadow is not a prophet calling on God—He is the Lord who commands life itself. His word does not react to death; it overrides it and replaces it with life.

Finally, when Luke tells us that Jesus *“gave him to his mother,”* he is doing more than describing a tender moment. He is echoing the language of Kings, where prophets once returned sons to grieving mothers (1 Kings 17:23; 2 Kings 4:36–37). This same Jesus will later, while hanging on the cross, entrust another mother to another son (John 19:26–27). Across these moments, a pattern emerges and finds its fulfillment: whether by restoration or by substitution, Jesus is the giver of life. Again and again, He gives what death can never keep.

**Isaiah 25:8** – *What does God promise to do to death, and what will He do for those who grieve?*

**Romans 6:9–10** – *What does Paul say about death’s relationship to Christ after the resurrection?*

**John 5:25** – *According to Jesus, what happens when the dead hear the voice of the Son of God?*

### **Consider**

*“Born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth,  
Born to give them second birth.”  
—Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, v.2*

**Embrace-** *If you are grieving the loss of a loved one who died in Christ, hear this hope clearly: death does not have the final word. The Savior who spoke “Arise” at Nain will speak again at the resurrection.*

*If you are battling forms of present deadness—patterns of sin, weary obedience, places where you feel stalled or overcome—hear the same authority spoken over you now. Christ’s word does not negotiate with death or sin; it speaks life. Ask Him to apply His resurrection power where obedience has felt weak and temptation has felt strong.*

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, thank You that death does not speak when You do. Speak life over our grief, our sin, and our weakness. Where we feel defeated, teach us to live in the sure hope that You give life—now and forever. Amen.

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## THURSDAY

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**Scripture** – Luke 7:16-17

**Reflection:** When the crowd witnesses what Jesus has done, their response is not analysis but awe. Fear grips them—not terror, but reverent astonishment—and it spills over into worship and testimony. *“God has visited His people,”* they say. Luke wants us to hear that phrase rightly. This is not merely gratitude for a miracle. It is the confession that God Himself has drawn near. This text reaches its Advent crescendo here: the coming of Christ is not only comfort for the broken or victory over death; it is God stepping into history to dwell among His people. And when God visits His people, the news does not remain private. It spreads. Hope cannot stay contained.

**Our Common Weakness:** We treat God’s work in our midst as something to be enjoyed privately rather than proclaimed publicly.

**Christ Connection:** Advent is God’s visitation—drawing near, restoring life.

*1 Kings 17:24 – What does the widow confess about Elijah after her son is restored, and what has changed in her understanding?*

*2 Kings 4:9 – What does the Shunammite woman already recognize about Elisha before her son is raised?*

*Luke 7:16 – Cultures have a kind of “regional memory.” Given that Elijah’s and Elisha’s ministries were widely known in this same region of Israel, how does that shared history help explain why the crowd immediately says, “A great prophet has arisen among us”—and then presses beyond that to confess, “God has visited his people”?*

### Consider

*“O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here,  
Until the Son of God appear.”  
— O Come, O Come Emmanuel (v5)*

*This hymn gives voice to Israel’s long memory of waiting. It does not describe private longing, but a people in exile—mourning together—crying out for God to come and dwell among them again. When the crowd in Luke 7 declares, “God has visited his people,” they are confessing that this ancient prayer has finally been answered. Emmanuel has come. God has drawn near—not to one person only, but to a people bound together by shared hope and shared need.*

**Prayer:** Gracious God, we thank You that in Jesus Christ You have visited Your people. You have come near to gather us together in hope and faith. Unite our hearts in awe and peace, and help us rejoice not only in what You are doing in our own lives, but in what You are doing among us as Your church. May our shared faith bear witness that Emmanuel is with His people. Amen.

During the 12th century, the Church learned to sing its way back into the longing of Israel. *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* was shaped as believers returned to the promises of Scripture, choosing in Advent to place themselves within the hopes and cries that once awaited the Messiah.

The hymn is rooted in the ancient **O Antiphons**, prayers sung during the final days of Advent. These prayers call on Christ by biblical names—Wisdom, Lord, Root of Jesse, Key of David—titles drawn from God's promises of coming rescue. Though sung after Christ's birth, they give voice to the waiting that marked God's people before He came.

By singing these words, the Church remembers what kind of Savior He is—the One who comes to the exiled and the weary. Advent invites us to rehearse that longing together, trusting that the God who once visited His people remains with them until all His promises are complete.

O come, O come, Immanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high,  
who ordered all things mightily;  
to us the path of knowledge show  
and teach us in its ways to go. Refrain

O come, O come, great Lord of might,  
who to your tribes on Sinai's height  
in ancient times did give the law  
in cloud and majesty and awe. Refrain

O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem,  
unto your own and rescue them!  
From depths of hell your people save,  
and give them victory o'er the grave. Refrain

O come, O Key of David, come  
and open wide our heavenly home.  
Make safe for us the heavenward road  
and bar the way to death's abode. Refrain

O come, O Bright and Morning Star,  
and bring us comfort from afar!  
Dispel the shadows of the night  
and turn our darkness into light. Refrain

O come, O King of nations, bind  
in one the hearts of all mankind.  
Bid all our sad divisions cease  
and be yourself our King of Peace. Refrain

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## PRAYER & PRAISES

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### **Your elders invite you to join us in seeking the Lord's help:**

Pray that the Lord would raise up deacons from within our congregation. Many practical needs are being met by your elders, which can stretch the time we have for our primary calling—prayer and the ministry of the Word. We are trusting the Lord to provide co-laborers who can share in the care and service of Christ's body.

#### **What Is a Deacon?**

In Scripture, deacons are those who embody the mercy and compassion of Christ through practical service. Their ministry is not only to *do* acts of service but to *lead the church in serving*—caring for physical and material needs so that the ministry of Word and prayer may flourish.

#### **Biblical Qualifications**

1 Timothy 3:8–13 and Acts 6:1–7 describe deacons as men of spiritual maturity and Christlike character—dignified, not double-tongued, self-controlled, generous, faithful, and trustworthy. Their lives should already show a pattern of humble, wise, Spirit-filled service.

#### **From the Book of Church Order (BCO 9-1):**

*"The office of deacon is set forth in the Scriptures as ordinary and perpetual in the Church. The office is one of sympathy and service, after the example of the Lord Jesus; it expresses also the communion of saints, especially in their helping one another in time of need. It is the duty of the deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress."*

#### **Practical Qualities (BCO 9-3)**

- Men of spiritual character
- Honest reputation
- Exemplary lives
- Brotherly spirit
- warm sympathies
- sound judgment

You may be surprised that nowhere in any of this is there a requirement to be a handyman. The office of deacon is one of leadership in service, not technical ability. A deacon's task is not to do everything personally, but to wisely see that the needs of Christ's people are met—mobilizing others, managing resources well, and serving with compassion and discernment. Their work includes caring for those in need or distress, encouraging the congregation to grow in joyful generosity, and overseeing the faithful use and upkeep of the church's resources and property. Deacons lead by caring, organizing, and modeling the mercy of Christ for the whole church, all under the oversight of the Session. We're praying for those already demonstrating a deacon's heart—that the Lord would confirm and call them to serve in this way.

### **This Week In Focus:**

**ALL THIS MONTH** - Please prayerfully consider giving to:  
**Ministry Relief Fund** - To assist ministers or their wives who are in desperate need.

#### **Tuesday, December 9th**

**Free Grace English@ The Root Cellar** - 6:30-7:30pm

#### **Wednesday, December 10th**

**Conversations in Grace** - 7:00pm – At the church (bring your worship folder)

#### **Friday, December 12th**

**Youth Group** - 7:00pm – At the church

#### **Saturday, December 13th**

**Women's Breakfast** - 9:30am – Cosgrove Family Home

### **Regular Rhythms of Grace**

#### **Weekly Gatherings**

**Free Grace English @ the Root Cellar** - Tuesdays 6:30- 7:30pm

**Conversations in Grace** - Wednesday 7:00pm – At the church (conversation about the weekly devotional).

**Youth Group** - Fridays, 7:00pm – At the church

#### **Monthly or Biweekly Gatherings**

**First Friday Fellowship** - Game night at the VanDykes @ 5:45pm

**Second Sunday Discussions** - 2nd Sunday, 15 minutes after worship ends—  
Family-style conversations on a rotating topic.

**Session Meetings** - 2nd Thursday, 9am— Pastor's office (visitors are welcome to sit in)

**Women's Breakfast** - 2nd Saturday, 9:30am – Cosgrove Family Home

**Praying for Prodigals** - 3rd Sunday, 8:30am – Church building

**If you do not know** the address of any event, or the contact information for any event, please contact either Pastor Adam at [adam.lee@freegrace.us](mailto:adam.lee@freegrace.us) or Linda at the email address below.

**If you would like to** be added to our church-family email where you can keep in touch through the week, or if you would like to be added to the church directory, please email Linda at [linda.morris@freegrace.us](mailto:linda.morris@freegrace.us)

**If you are a member of Free Grace** and are not using the church directory app, you are missing out on a very useful tool. Please reach out to Linda to see how to download it to your phone.

broken people  
bound together in Christ  
for God's glory