



**December 14, 2025**

Advent is for the Doubting

*Free Grace Presbyterian Church*

## SOME THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION

The news of the kingdom is always new, unexpected, upsetting. It will not fit with men's preconceived ideas, nor pander to their prejudices. It digs far deeper than their shallow understanding of the evils of Satan's kingdom, and soars far higher than their low view of the glories of God's kingdom.

Michael Wilcock  
Anglican priest and biblical scholar

"Behold, I send  
my messenger, and he  
will prepare the way before  
me. And the Lord whom you seek  
will suddenly come to his temple;  
and the messenger of the  
covenant in whom you delight,  
behold, he is coming, says  
the LORD of hosts."

**Malachi 3:1**

And it is important to do just that, put doubt in its place, which means not to let it rule and reign in your life. It may be there—we need not deny its presence or pretend it's not real—but we need not let it control our lives either... the dark night of the soul calls us to move beyond a self-serving and self-centered piety. This vice involves harnessing God's power, invoked principally through prayer, to enable one to flourish by standards provided not by the gospel but by the dominant culture to which one belongs.

Robert Wennberg  
20<sup>th</sup> century American philosopher

And he came to  
Nazareth, where he had been  
brought up. And as was his custom, he  
went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and  
he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet  
Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found  
the place where it was written,

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the  
attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the  
synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say  
to them, "Today this Scripture has been  
fulfilled in your hearing."

**Luke 4:16–21**  
**quoting Isaiah 61:1-2**

For Jews demand signs and  
Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach  
Christ crucified, a stumbling block to  
Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who  
are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the  
power of God and the wisdom of God. For the  
foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the  
weakness of God is stronger than men... And  
because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who  
became to us wisdom from God, righteousness  
and sanctification and redemption, so that,  
as it is written, "Let the one who boasts,  
boast in the Lord."

**1 Corinthians 1:22–25, 30-31**

## GOD SUMMONS US BY HIS GRACE

**Leader:** Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely.

Jeremiah 23

**People:** **And this is the name by which he will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."**

**Leader:** Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

Luke 1

**People:** **that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;**

**Leader:** to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham,

**People:** **to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.**

### We sing out, longing for the coming of the promised One

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

1. Come thou long-ex-pec-ted Je-sus, Born to set thy peo-ple free;  
2. Joy to those who long to see thee, Day-spring from on high, ap-pear;  
3. Come thy earth-ly taste our sad-ness, he whose glo-ries knew no end;  
4. Born thy peo-ple to de-liv-er, born a child and yet a king;

From our fears and sins re-lease us, Let us find our rest in thee;  
Come, thou prom-ised one, Jesu Christ, our King;  
By his life to reign with him in heav'n, Born to pur-ge our land from all unrighteousness;  
O'er the hills far-off, and o'er the mountains, Thou art, O'er the rich and lowly, still;  
By thy throne, own self, and by thy blood, Thou art, Dear De-sire of ev-ery na-tion, Joy of ev-ery long-ing heart;  
This him, ev-er-last-ing bring-ing, Christ the Lord, who has come of all;  
By thy all-suf-fi-cient won-der-ful it, raise us to thy glorious throne.

God doesn't give us a watertight argument for himself. He gives us a person: Jesus Christ. No one has seen God, but in Jesus Christ, God reveals himself to the world. Thus Jesus Christ calls us to come to God, to receive his grace and truth, and to respond in worship.

"Rejoice"



1.All the earth re - joice, your Cre - a - tor reigns as the on - ly awe - some —  
 2.All the world re - joice, for the ba - by comes as a hum - ble prince in the  
 3.All the church re - joice, for your King re - turns on a white horse wear - ing a



God, the — Al - pha and the O - me - ga, who was, is, and is to  
 night, the — Word made flesh, E - man - u - el, the Ev - er - last - ing  
 crown. He will break the sky with the an - gel's shout, de - scend - ing — from the



come. Let the o - ceans roar and the moun - tains sing, he pro - vides for all he has  
 Light. Let the warmth of heav'n reach the cold - est heart with the gos - pel of his —  
 clouds. Then the dead will rise from the land and sea, all his peo - ple will as -



made. So be com - fort - ed as he rules with grace. Re - joice all the earth, re - joice!  
 grace, for his heel will bruise the — ser - pent's head. Re - joice all the world, re - joice!  
 cend. We will reign with him for e - ter - ni - ty. Re - joice all the church, re - joice!

Glory in his holy  
 name; let the  
 hearts of those  
 who seek the  
 LORD rejoice!

Psalms 105

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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**

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."

Isaiah 1

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.

John 1

## **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.*

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.

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

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).

Matthew 1

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 glory in Immanuel, who comes to save us from our sin

"Brightest and Best of the Stars of Morning"

1. Hail the blest morn', see the great Me - di - a - tor down from the  
 2. Cold on his cra - dle the dew drops are shin - ing, low lies his  
 3. Shall we then yield him, in cost - ly de - vo - tion, o - dors of  
 4. Vain - ly we of - fer each am - ple o - bla - tion, vain - ly with

6 re - gions of glo - ry de - scend. Shep - herds go wor - ship the babe in the  
 head with the beasts of the stall. An - gels a - dore him in slum - ber re -  
 E - dom, and of - frings di - vine gems of the moun - tain, and pearls of the  
 gifts would his fa - vor se - cure. Rich - er by far is the heart's a - do -

12 man - ger; lo, for his guard the bright an - gels at - tend.  
 clin - ing, Ma - ker and Mon - arch and Sav - ior of all,  
 o - cean, myrrh from the fo - rest, and gold from the mine?  
 ra - tion, dear - er to God are the prayers of the poor.

17 Bright - est and best of the stars\_\_ of the mor - ning, dawn on our dark - ness and

23 lend\_\_ us your aid. Star of the east, the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,

29 guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid.

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## GOD SPEAKS WITH US BY HIS GRACE

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Luke 7:18-35

<sup>18</sup>The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, <sup>19</sup>calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" <sup>20</sup>And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'" <sup>21</sup>In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. <sup>22</sup>And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>23</sup>And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

<sup>24</sup>When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>25</sup>What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings' courts. <sup>26</sup>What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>27</sup>This is he of whom it is written,

"Behold, I send my messenger before your face,  
who will prepare your way before you."

<sup>28</sup>I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." <sup>29</sup>(When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just, having been baptized with the baptism of John, <sup>30</sup>but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.)

<sup>31</sup>"To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? <sup>32</sup>They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another,

"We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;  
we sang a dirge, and you did not weep."

<sup>33</sup>For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' <sup>34</sup>The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' <sup>35</sup>Yet wisdom is justified by all her children."

In the beginning  
was the Word, and  
the Word was with  
God, and the Word  
was God... And  
the Word became  
flesh and dwelt  
among us, and we  
have seen his  
glory, glory as of  
the only Son from  
the Father, full of  
grace and truth...  
No one has ever  
seen God; the only  
God, who is at the  
Father's side, he  
has made him  
known.  
John 1

**Sermon**

Rev. Dr. Per Almquist

## Advent is for the Doubting

Jesus comes for the doubting that they would

1) see God's purpose (**18-24**)

2) submit to God's purpose

a. in repentance (**25-30**)

b. in living his reign in our lives (**31-35**)

Preaching exists,  
not for the  
propagating of  
views, opinions  
and ideals, but for  
the proclamation  
of the mighty acts  
of God.  
James Stewart



We cry out to see God’s purpose and submit our lives to it

“Speak, O Lord”

1. Speak, O Lord, as we come to you, to re - ceive the food of your  
2. Teach us Lord, full o - be - di - ence, ho - ly re - ver - ence, true hu -  
3. Speak, O Lord, and re - new our minds; help us grasp the heights of your

4  
ho - ly Word. Take your truth, plant it deep in us; shape and  
mi - li - ty. — Test our thoughts and our at - ti - tudes in the  
plans for us. — Truths un - changed from the dawn of time, that will

7  
fash - ion us — in your like - ness. That the light of Christ might be  
ra - di - ance of your pur - i - ty. Cause our faith to rise, cause our  
e - cho down through e - ter - ni - ty. And by grace we'll stand on your

10  
seen to - day in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.  
eyes to see your ma - jes - tic love and au - thor - i - ty.  
prom - is - es; — and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.

13  
Speak, O Lord, and ful - fill in us — all your  
Words of pow'r that can ne - ver fail; let their  
Speak, O Lord, till your church is built, and the

15  
pur - pos - es for your glo - ry.  
truth pre - vail o - ver un - be - lief.  
earth is filled with your glo - ry.

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

# GOD STRENGTHENS US BY HIS GRACE

## We see and submit to God's purpose as we proclaim the death of Jesus Christ in 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 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 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.*

We enjoy Christ  
only as we  
embrace Christ  
clad in his own  
promises.  
John Calvin

"Thou Who Wast Rich beyond All Splendor"

1. Thou who wast rich be - yond all splen - dor,  
2. Thou who art God be - yond all prais - ing,  
3. Thou who art love be - yond all tell - ing,

all for love's sake be - cam - est poor;  
all for love's sake be - cam - est man;  
Sav - ior and King, we wor - ship thee.

thrones for a man - ger did sur - ren - der,  
stoop - ing so low, but sin - ners rais - ing,  
E - man - u - el, with - in us dwell - ing,

sap - phire - paved courts for e - sta - ble floor.  
heav'n - ward by thine e - ter - nal plan.  
make us what thou would have us be.

Thou who wast rich be - yond all splen - dor,  
Thou who art God be - yond all prais - ing,  
Thou who art love be - yond all tell - ing,

all for love's sake be - cam - est poor.  
all for love's sake be - cam - est man.  
Sav - ior and King, we wor - ship thee.

**Having seen God's purpose in the coming of Jesus, we submit to his purpose and give our lives as offerings to him**

*God offers us his grace giving us himself in Jesus Christ. Our response is to acknowledge this by offering ourselves to him. The money we give is but an expression of a larger reality: our giving our whole selves to him.*

**We come to God, praying that his purpose would be ever more the reality of our lives**

*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.*

He was led by His love for others into the world, to forget himself in the needs of others...Self-sacrifice means not indifference to our times and our fellows: it means absorption in them. It means forgetfulness of self in others. It means entering into every man's hopes and fears, longings and despairs.  
B.B. Warfield

# GOD SENDS US BY HIS GRACE

Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The LORD has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations. 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

## We rejoice that God has come to show his purpose

"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,  
 plow; 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

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.

## We go out in the fullness of his purpose at work in and through us

John 1

**Leader:** May the Word, which became flesh and dwelt among us, reveal his glory to you, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. May you receive from his fullness grace upon grace.

**People:** Amen

### **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.

#### **Sunday, December 14th (TODAY)**

**Second Sunday Discussion** - 20 minutes after worship service is concluded

#### **Tuesday, December 16th**

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

#### **Friday, December 19th**

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

#### **Sunday, December 21st**

**Praying for Prodigals** - 8:30am – Pastor's office

#### **Wednesday, December 24th**

**Lessons in Carols** - 7:30pm – Christmas Eve Service

### **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)

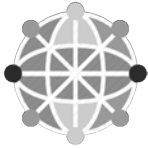
**If you are a member of Free Grace** and are not using the church directory app, you are missing out on a very useful tool. Please reach out to Linda to see how to download it to your phone.



## 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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Meredith Stephens, *voice*; Connor Crawford, *voice*; Shane Stephens, *percussion*; Judah Paris, *guitar*; Jacob Paris, *guitar*

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Seeing isn't believing; believing is seeing.

*The Santa Clause*

broken people  
bound together in Christ  
for God's glory