

December 20, 2020

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Led by the Holy Spirit, LaGrave's members seek to worship and serve God in all of life, transforming His world and being transformed to reflect the character of Christ.

Welcome to worship at LaGrave. Because our worship proceeds without announcements, please carefully follow the order of worship printed below, noting that we use *two* different red hymnals. The *Worship & Rejoice* hymnal will be indicated by bold, italic type. An asterisk (*) denotes standing for those who are able. We are glad that you are here. Let us worship God together.

MORNING WORSHIP 8:40 & 11:00 AM

Please prepare your heart and mind for worship with a time of prayer and meditation.

God Calls Us to Worship

The Prelude:

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" Robert J. Powell
"What Is This Lovely Fragrance?" Harrison Oxley
"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" Johannes Brahms, Gerald Near

The Chiming of the Hour

The Introit: "While We Are Waiting, Come" Don Cason
While we are waiting, come. Jesus our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

Come, Savior, quickly come. Jesus our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

Text: Claire Cloninger © 1986, Word Music, LLC. Used with permission under CCLI #461624

*The Processional Hymn: Lift Up Your Hearts 59:1,3

"Comfort, Comfort Now My People"

(Because we are not able to sing yet, please reflect on the hymn texts or hum along while the vocalist leads us.)

*The Greeting

*The People's Response: **Amen.**

The Welcome

We Approach our God

The Call to Confession: 1 Peter 1:3,4

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

We light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ.
Advent means coming. When the Lord comes, he will put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

I will lead the blind by a road they do not know, by the paths they have not known, I will guide them.

I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I will do and I will not forsake them.

My people will not labor in vain, nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be blessed by the Lord.
Before I call they will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Based on Isaiah 42:16, 65:23-24

The Sung Prayer for Advent: Lift Up Your Hearts 480

"Wait for the Lord" (*sing twice*)

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord; be strong, take heart.

Words and Music: Jacques Berthier, from Songs and Prayers from Taizé 1991
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The Prayer of Confession

The Assurance of Pardon: 1 Corinthians 15:54-58

The Hymn of Response: Lift Up Your Hearts 79:1,4

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

*The Response: Heidelberg Catechism Q.&A. 1

Q. What is your only comfort in life and in death?

A. **That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death— to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.**

He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.

Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

*The Doxology:

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

The Children's Message

(Children, 4s, K – 2nd grade, may come forward.)

The Anthem: "Angels Sang It Then"

Chinese Folk Song, arr. Ronald A. Nelson

Angels sang it then, peace, goodwill to men. Who will sing it now? Shepherds, hearing the angel's word, went to Bethlehem to seek the Lord. Told it then to all, what they heard and saw. Who will tell it now?

Mary kept these things, pondered in her heart. Who will ponder now? Wise men journeyed from lands afar, followed faithfully the guiding star. shining once again; peace, goodwill to men. Who will follow now?

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The Pastoral Prayer

The Anthem: "The Yearning"

Craig Courtney

There is a yearning in hearts weighed down by ancient grief and centuries of sorrow. There is a yearning in hearts that in the darkness hide and in the shades of death abide, a yearning for tomorrow.

There is a yearning, for the promised One, the Firstborn of creation. There is a yearning for the Lord who visited his own, and by his death for sin atoned to bring to us salvation. Emmanuel, Emmanuel, within our hearts the yearning.

There is a yearning that fills the hearts of those who wait the day of his appearing. There is a yearning when all our sorrows are erased and we shall see the One who placed within our hearts the yearning. Emmanuel, Emmanuel, within our hearts the yearning.

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God Speaks to Us

The Scripture: Isaiah 25:1-12

The Sermon: **"MAKING THE CROOKED STRAIGHT:
THE ONE WHO LIFTS THE SHROUD"**

The Prayer for a Blessing on the Word

*The Response:

Remembering the promise to reconcile the world to himself, God joined our humanity in Jesus Christ – the eternal Word made flesh. He is the long-awaited Messiah, one with us and one with God, fully human and fully divine, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

Standing in our place, Jesus suffered during his years on earth, especially in the tortures of the cross. He carried God's judgment on our sin—his sacrifice removed our guilt. God raised him from the dead: he walked out of the grave, conqueror of sin and death—Lord of Life! We are set right with God, given new life, and called to walk with him in freedom from sin's dominion.

Our World Belongs to God, par. 23, 25

We Respond with Praise

*The Closing Hymn: Lift Up Your Hearts 80:1,3
“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

*The Benediction

*The People's Response: **Amen.**

*The Organ Amen

*The Silent Prayer and Carillon Bells

*The Postlude:

“Of the Father's Love Begotten” David Cherwien

*Offering plates are located at the Sanctuary exits.
Thank you for your continued support of our ministries.*

Rev. Peter Jonker – minister

Rev. Ruth Boven – liturgist

Dr. Larry Visser – organist, pianist

Kathryn Becksvoort, Clara Becksvoort –vocalists

Dee DeKryger and Rev. Peter Jonker – Cross & Bible Bearers (8:40)

Rachel Rynbrandt and Rev. Peter Jonker – Cross & Bible Bearers (11:00)

The Scholten Holcomb Family – Advent Wreath (8:40)

Celine Alcumbrack – Advent Wreath (11:00)

Music at LaGrave

Hope College graduate Susan Bentall Boersma has written a poignant text addressing a yearning to see God, the One who came to earth to “visit his own,” and the hope of Emmanuel's return in the second Advent. Contemporary composer Craig Courtney's gift of writing lyrical melodies and extensive piano background are evident in his beautiful anthem based on Boersma's text. Following a dramatic climax near the conclusion, the anthem ends quietly with an extended single pitch, symbolizing our waiting and yearning for God.

The flowers on the chancel are given by **Marianne Stehouwer** in loving memory of her husband, **Charles J. Stehouwer**, who entered his heavenly home on December 4, 2012. “Blessed are those who die in the Lord.”

The banners and parament for Advent help us focus on the message from Isaiah: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light." (Isaiah 9:6) In Advent we celebrate the coming of Christ. His glorious, heavenly light breaks forth in the darkness and brings us the hope of a new day.

The December special offering is for Next Step of West Michigan which offers skill training and employment for the vulnerable population including ex-offenders and those in rehab. The organization engages in light wood working and assembly, general contracting and sub-contracting services to businesses, city entities and property owners.