

December 19, 2021

Forth 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 AM & 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:

“Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

John R. Watkinson

“Comfort, Comfort Now My People”

Henry Woodward, Egil Hovland

“Creator of the Stars of Night”

David Cherwien

The Chiming of the Hour

The Introit:

“Prepare the Royal Highway”

Swedish folk tune, arr. John Ferguson

Prepare the royal highway; the King of kings is near! Let every hill and valley a level road appear! Then greet the King of glory, foretold in sacred story: Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God’s Word!

His is no earthly kingdom; it comes from heaven above. His rule is peace and freedom and justice, truth and love. So let your praise be sounding for kindness so abounding: Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God’s Word!

© 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship

*The Processional Hymn: Lift Up Your Hearts 66:1-3,5

“With Joy I Heard My Friends Exclaim”

*The Greeting

*The People’s Response: **Amen.**

The Welcome

We Humbly Approach Our God

The Call to Confession

The Reading: John 15:9-11

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.

If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love.

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

The Lighting of the Candle:

We light this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into the world.

With the coming of this light there is joy,

Joy that is ours, not only at Christmas, but always.

Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, rejoice...the Lord is near.”

The candle is lit.

The Sung Refrain:

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.

LUYH 56:1

The Prayer of Confession:

(prayer begins with silence)

Gracious God, we are called to be joyful people, giving thanks for you and your good gifts. There are times, however, when sin and sorrow grow, pushing joy to the side. We lose sight of your grace, and instead fall into despair. We are consumed by loss, distracted by stuff, and crippled with fear. We focus on our lack, rather than your love. Lift our eyes, Lord Jesus, and renew our joy in you. Remind us that in your sacrifice is our forgiveness, in your death is our resurrection, in your coming is our joy! Through Christ we pray, Amen.

The Assurance of Forgiveness: Isaiah 12:2-3

*The Hymn of Response: Lift Up Your Hearts 92:1,3

“Joy to the World”

The Children’s Message

The Children’s Anthems:

“Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

Spiritual, arr. John Work

(Refrain)

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere, go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their watching over silent flocks by night, behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. (Refrain)

The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior’s birth. (Refrain)

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born, and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. (Refrain)

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”

Polish Carol

Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall; oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the child is Lord of all. Swift are winging angels singing, bells are ringing, tidings bringing: Christ the child is the Lord of all.

The Pastoral Prayer

The Anthem:

“Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

John A. Behnke

Of the Father’s love begotten ere the worlds began to be, he is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he, of the things that are, that have been and that future years shall see evermore and evermore.

Oh, that birth forever blessed, when the virgin, full of grace, by the Holy Ghost conceiving, bore the Savior of our race, and the babe, the world’s redeemer, first revealed his sacred face evermore and evermore.

This is he whom seers in old time chanted of with one accord, whom the voices of the prophets promised in their faithful word; now he shines, the long expected; let creation praise its Lord evermore and evermore.

Let the heights of heaven adore him; angel hosts, his praises sing; powers, dominions, bow before him and extol our God and King; let no tongue on earth be silent, every voice in concert ring evermore and evermore.

Christ, to you, with God the Father and the Spirit, there shall be hymn and chant and high thanksgiving, and the shout of jubilee: Honor, glory, and dominion and eternal victory evermore and evermore!

God Speaks to Us

The Scripture: John 1:1-18 (page 1646)

The Sermon: **“PREPARING THE WAY WITH JOHN”**

The Prayer for a Blessing on the Word

*The Closing Hymn: ***Worship & Rejoice 202***
“Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light”

The Reading: Revelation 19:1,4-7

*The Hallelujah Chorus, from *Messiah* G.F. Handel
(Please find music in your pew and rise to sing)

*The Benediction

*The People’s Response: **Amen.**

*The Final Hallelujah (Choir)

*The Silent Prayer and Carillon Bells

*The Postlude:
“Angels from the Realms of Glory”
(quoting Handel’s *For unto Us a Child is Born*)
Edwin C. Johnson

Rev. Peter Jonker – minister
Pastor Bob Grussing – liturgist
Dr. Larry Visser – organist
Chancel Choir, Dr. James Borst – director
Perrin Rynders – timpanist
Lower Elementary Choir, Renee Vande Wege – director (11:00)
Julia Fletcher – pianist (11:00)
Nolan & Avery Walcott – candle lighters (8:40)
Janna, Nelida & Micah Romero – candle lighters (11:00)
Dee De Kryger and Rev. Peter Jonker – Cross and Bible Bearers (8:40)
Albert Doorn and Rev. Peter Jonker – Cross and Bible Bearers (11:00)

Music at LaGrave:

With a text originating in the 4th century and a chant tune from the 13th century, the ancient hymn *Of the Father’s Love Begotten* remains a favorite Christmas hymn centuries later. The text was written as a defense against the heresy of Arianism which troubled the church. The final stanza is a doxology reflecting John’s vision of the new Jerusalem in Rev. 4-7. We hear a choral version of this ancient hymn sung this morning by our full choir.

The banners and parament reflect the message from Isaiah 9:6, “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.” In Advent we celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus breaks through the world’s darkness with his glory bringing us the light of salvation.

The flowers on the chancel today are given by **Marianne Stehouwer** in loving memory of her husband, **Charles J. Stehouwer**, who went to glory on 12/4/2012. "Blessed are those who die in the Lord.”

The special offering for December is for **Oakdale Neighbors**, a neighborhood development organization providing youth mentoring and advocacy, tax preparation, financial classes and neighborhood business development assistance.

This evening is the **Annual Family Carol Sing**. Along with readings of scripture and poetry, we will sing many favorite Christmas carols together. There will be no orchestra this year. Dress is informal. It will be a wonderful, family-friendly way to celebrate Jesus’ birth.

Livestreaming worship is available at lagrave.org/live