

January 1, 2023

New Year's Day

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 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:

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|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| "Cold December Flies Away" | Catalonian Carol, arr. Larry Visser |
| "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" | Paul Manz |
| "He Whom Shepherd Men Came Praising" | Paul Manz |
| "Still, Still, Still" | Paul Manz |

The Chiming of the Hour

The Introit:

"Gaudeamus Hodie" Earlene Rentz
Gaudeamus odie, Gaudeamus hodie! Hallelujah!
Gaudete, Gaudete, Gaudeamus hodie!
(English translation: Let us rejoice today.)

*The Processional Hymn: Lift Up Your Hearts 81
"Angels from the Realms of Glory"

*The Greeting

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

The Welcome

We Humbly Approach God

The Call to Confession: Philippians 2:6-11

The Prayer of Confession:

Almighty God who inhabits eternity but dwells with those who are of a humble and contrite spirit: before you and our Lord Jesus Christ we confess our sins. We have ignored the presence of your Spirit. We have failed to look for the return of our Savior and Judge. We have been blind to your coming in the suffering of the hungry, the exiled, the destitute, the sick, and the imprisoned. In your great goodness put away our offenses and cleanse us from our sin, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

The Assurance of Forgiveness: 1 Peter 2:24

*The Hymn of Response: Lift Up Your Hearts 105:1-3
"As with Gladness Men of Old"

*The Affirmation of Faith: *Our World Belongs to God*

Joining the mission of God, the church is sent with the gospel of the kingdom to call everyone to know and follow Christ and to proclaim to all the assurance that in the name of Jesus there is forgiveness of sin and new life for all who repent and believe. The Spirit calls all members to embrace God's mission in their neighborhoods and in the world: to feed the hungry, bring water to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and free the prisoner. We repent of leaving this work to a few, for this mission is central to our being.

*The Hymn of Response: Lift Up Your Hearts 105:4,5
"As with Gladness Men of Old"

4. Holy Jesus, every day, keep us in the narrow way, and when mortal things are past, bring our ransomed lives at last where they need no star to guide, where no clouds your glory hide.

5. In that glorious city bright none shall need created light; you its light, its joy, its crown, you its sun which goes not down; there forever may we sing alleluias to our King!

We Respond with Thanksgiving

The Children's Message

The Pastoral Prayer

The Anthem: "Angels' Gloria"

arr. Laura Farnell

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains, and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains. Alleluia, alleluia!
Gloria in excelsis!

Gloria! Hark the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" Joyful
all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies; with the angelic hosts
proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Sing, choirs of angels! Allelu, allelu, alleluia! Sing in exultation!
Sing alleluia!

Angels and archangels may have gathered there, upon that silent night.
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air. Glories stream from heaven
afar, heavenly hosts sing "Alleluia!" Sleep in heavenly peace. Gloria!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

The Offering

The Offertory:

"Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day"

English Carol, arr. James Biery

*The Doxology

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

God Speaks to Us

The Scripture: Mark 4:1-20 (p.1560)

The Sermon: **"THE MOST IMPORTANT PARABLE OF ALL"**

The Prayer for a Blessing on the Word

We Go in His Peace

*The Hymn of Response: Lift Up Your Hearts 124
"A Sower's Seed Fell on a Path"

*The Benediction

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

*The Organ Amen

*The Silent Prayer and Carillon Bells

*The Postlude:

“Ere zij God” (Glory to God)

Jan Zwart

Rev. David Gifford – guest minister

Erin Alley – liturgist

Dr. Larry Visser – organist

7-12 Choir, Renee Vande Wege – director

Jess Hollenbach – pianist

Dee DeKryger and Joyce Jeltema – Cross and Bible Bearers

Dave Gifford and his wife Blanca are long-time LaGrave-sponsored missionaries in Mexico City where Dave engages in teaching (Reformed Presbyterian Seminary in Mexico City), preaching, training, mentoring, and developing and publishing free Spanish materials for Christians. We welcome Dave to LaGrave this morning.

The sanctuary colors of Christmas are white, purple, and gold. White symbolizes the purity and holiness of Jesus Christ, Son of God. Yet, he is also Jesus Christ, born of a woman, being both God and human. As a human person, Jesus was like us in every respect except he was without sin. Therefore, he was able to take our sins upon himself and redeem us. Purple represents the birth of Jesus but also foreshadows his coming death. All of the colors combine against the background of gold. Gold represents the kingship of Jesus and also our joy and celebration of the Christmas season.

Music at LaGrave:

Ere zij God, the most well-known Dutch carol in the Netherlands, may have been written by Franz Albert Schultz, a German Lutheran theologian. The carol was first published in *Het Nachtegaaltje* and in numerous editions of *Zangbundel* compiled by Johannes DeHeer in the early 20th century. Dutch organist Jan Zwart (1877-1937) is the composer of this morning's postlude based on *Ere zij God*. Following his arrangement, the hymn will be played on the full organ, during which all those who know the Dutch text are invited to sing (*Lift Up Your Hearts #84*).

Due to the cancellation of the Christmas Eve Family Service, the 7-12 Choir will sing this morning under Renee's direction for the final time. They share a joyful and energetic Latin-texted introit rejoicing in the season past and in the New Year, and an anthem which combines several well-known Christmas carols. Thanks, Renee, for your leadership of our children and youth these past two years.

The January special offering is for Inner City Christian Federation (ICCF) which provides housing opportunities, home ownership counseling, home repairs and maintenance for families who otherwise cannot afford a home.

There is no evening service. Happy New Year!

Livestreaming worship is available at lagrave.org/live