

December 17, 2023

Third 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:

“Where Have These Happy Shepherds Gone?”
“Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying”

Claude Balbastre
Wayne Wold

The Chiming of the Hour

The Introit:

“Prepare the Way”

Prepare the way of the Lord. Prepare the way of the Lord, and all people will see the salvation of our God.

Isaiah 40:3; 52:10. Music: Jacques Berthier (1923-1994) ©1984 Les Presses de Taizé, admin. GIA Publications, Inc. Used with permission under OneLicense #707908

*The Processional Hymn: Lift Up Your Hearts 59

“Comfort, Comfort Now My People”

*The Greeting

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

The Welcome

We Humbly Approach God

The Reading

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world; the one who follows me will not walk in darkness but have the light of life.”

We light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ.

The Lighting of the Advent Candle

The Reading: Isaiah 49:6

The Sung Response:

Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel.

God with us, revealed in us, his name is called Emmanuel.

Worship & Rejoice 178 Words: Bob McGee ©1976 C.A. Music.
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The Prayer of Confession

The Words of Forgiveness: based on 1 John 1:5-7

God is light; in him is no darkness at all.

If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth.

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

*The Hymn of Commitment: Lift Up Your Hearts 60

“Hark, the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes”

We Respond with Thanksgiving

The Children's Message

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, 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, 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, within our hearts, the yearning.

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God Speaks to Us

The Scripture: Genesis 14:8-24

The Sermon: **“JESUS IN GENESIS: IN THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK”**

The Prayer for Blessing on the Word

*The Closing Hymn: Lift Up Your Hearts 109

“Hail to the Lord's Anointed”

The Offertory:

“Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding”

Malcolm Archer

“The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came”

David Cherwien

The Offering

After the offering plate has passed you in the pew, members of the congregation and visitors are invited to come forward and join the chancel choir for the traditional singing of the Handel's “Hallelujah Chorus.”

*The Hallelujah Chorus, from *Messiah*

G.F. Handel

Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever. King of kings, and Lord of lords. Hallelujah!

*The Benediction

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

*The Final Hallelujah

*The Silent Prayer and Carillon Bells

*The Postlude:

“Angels from the Realms of Glory”

Edwin C. Johnson

Rev. Peter Jonker – minister

Rachel Thorne – liturgist

Dr. Larry Visser – organist, pianist

Chancel Choir, Dr. Rob Hobgood – director

Perrin Rynders – timpanist

The Colago Family (8:40) The Nagel Family (11:00) – candle lighters

Linda & Dan Slotsema – Cross and Bible Bearers (8:40)

Dee DeKryger & Joyce Jeltema – Cross and Bible Bearers (11:00)

The Advent Banners and Parament reflect the message of Isaiah 9:6, “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.” In Advent we celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus, the light of the world, breaks through the world's darkness with his glory bringing to us the light of salvation. **The Advent Wreath** is a circle which reminds us of God who is

eternal with no beginning and no end. The four ring candles represent the light of God coming into the world. They also represent the period of waiting during the four Sundays of Advent. The pink candle symbolizes the joy of the eminent coming of the Christ. The white, center candle is the Christ candle. It reminds us that the incarnation is the heart of the Christmas season. Jesus, the light of the world, comes into the darkness of our lives and brings new life and hope.

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

The evening service will be an **Instrumental Carol Sing** with a 50+ member, all-church orchestra. Several carols will be sung, accompanied by the orchestra under the direction of Dr. Rob Hobgood. **Join us after the Carol Sing** tonight for fellowship and Christmas cookies tin the MPR.

Livestreaming worship is available at lagrave.org/live