

**December 31, 2023**

*New Year's Eve*

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 10:00 AM**

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

***God Calls Us to Worship***

The Prelude:

“Fantasie de Concert: O Sanctissima”

(O du frölich, O du Selige)

O you joyful, O you blessed, grace-bringing Christmas time!  
The world was lost, Christ is born: rejoice, rejoice, O Christendom!

Friedrich Lux

The Chiming of the Hour

\*The Processional Hymn: Lift Up Your Hearts 81:1,2,4,5

“Angels, from the Realms of Glory”

\*The Greeting

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

The Welcome

***We Approach God with Penitence***

The Call to Confession: Ephesians 5:1-2, 8-9

The Prayer of Confession:

beginning with Lift Up Your Hearts 623:1-2

“God, Be Merciful to Me”

*Verse 2 a cappella*

The Prayer of Confession

The Assurance of Pardon: based on Psalm 130:4-5,7

Lord, if you kept a record of sins, who could stand?

**But with you there is forgiveness,  
so that we can, with reverence, serve you.**

Children of God, put your hope in the Lord,

**for with the Lord is unfailing love**

**and with him is full redemption.**

\*The Hymn of Commitment: Lift Up Your Hearts 730

“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”

***We Respond with Thanksgiving***

The Children's Message

The Pastoral Prayer

*Prayer will include the song below, based on Psalm 38:15*

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of two systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef. The lyrics are: "Lord, we wait for you. Yes, we wait for you. For you will answer, Lord, we wait for you." The music is in a simple, hymn-like style with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C).

The Offertory:

“French Noel on *Still, Still, Still*”

Larry Visser

The Offering

\*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.**

***God Speaks to Us***

The Scripture: Matthew 18:1-5 (p.1530)

The Sermon: “**BECOMING LIKE A CHILD AT CHRISTMAS**”

The Prayer for Blessing on the Word

***We Respond with Praise***

\*The Closing Hymn: *Worship & Rejoice 202*

“Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light”

\*The Benediction

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

\*The Organ Amen

\*The Silent Prayer and Carillon Bells

\*The Postlude:

“Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella”

Keith Chapman

Rev. Peter Jonker— minister

Chad Boorsma – liturgist

Dr. Larry Visser – organist

Jake & Molly Versluis – Cross and Bible Bearers

**Music at LaGrave**

The hymn tune SICILIAN MARINERS originated in Italy with the Roman Catholic hymn *O Sanctissima*. According to tradition, Sicilian mariners ended their day by singing this hymn. The tune spread from Italy to Germany where it was sung to a popular Christmas carol, *O du Fröliche, O du Selige* (O How Joyfully, O How Blessed). Another version of the text may be found in *Worship & Rejoice* #208. German conductor, composer, and organist Friedrich Lux (1820-1895) wrote an extensive piece based on this hymn tune in 1863 in the form of a set of variations which display the many colors and textures of the organ.

**Today is New Year's Eve Sunday and Christmastide.**

Christmastide is the twelve days following Christmas day. The

sanctuary colors of Christmastide 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.

**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.

**This evening** is our annual **New Year's Eve service**. Reverend Manion will preach on Ephesians 5:15-20, we will remember the births and deaths of 2023, and we will celebrate communion together.

Livestreaming worship is available at [lagrave.org/live](http://lagrave.org/live)