

CHRISTMAS 1: YOU'RE WELCOME. THERE ARE NO STRANGERS HERE.

December 31, 2023

10:30 am



Vision

Transforming lives through God's grace.

Mission

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we grow disciples of Jesus Christ to love our neighbours and effect social change.

Values

Belonging, Community, Compassion, Engagement, and Service

The Rev. Dr. Jean Morris
Interim Moderator

The Rev. Jake Van Pernis (parental leave)
Assoc. Minister, Engagement & Service

The Rev. Wendy Adams
Interim Minister

The Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Simmins
Interim Minister

Matt Kallio
Music Coordinator

Please find Online Worship at:
www.gracechurchcalgary.com



Order of Worship

Land acknowledgement

In a spirit of respect and truth we honour and acknowledge that we worship on the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, Piikani, and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bears paw and Goodstoney First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta (Districts 5 and 6).

Prelude **O Holy Night**

Adolph Adam/arr. John Carter
Colleen Charter, piano

Welcome and Announcements

The Rev. Wendy Adams

Call to Worship

We have come to God's house because we know we are invited.

We are called to invite others to the kingdom.

We have come to God's house because God has planned and prepared for us.

We are called to plan and prepare as part of the kingdom.

We have come to God's house, where we know we are welcome.

We are called to welcome all of God's children.

We stay awhile, to worship the Holy One, because God longs to be with us.

We are called to worship God!

Christmas Litany

Rev. Wendy with The Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Simmins

Lighting of the Christmas Wreath

Response: Shepherd Lord, **Lead us, gather us and keep us.**

Glorious God, who presents us with the most precious of gifts, we praise you for all your blessings in our lives. Work in our hearts this day, preparing us for your presence. Work in our lives that we may reach out to others in comfort and compassion; work in our world that the darkness that has encompassed it may be dispelled by the brightness of your love and your Gift. In faith and expectation, we pray. Amen.

Hymn **135 Christians awake**

†

Opening Prayer

God, to whom there are no strangers,

we continue to celebrate that Jesus has come to live among us.

We sing praise to you, for in your love, we are seen and known.

Gifts have been unwrapped and feasts have been eaten.

We have rejoiced in the miracle of your love.

But in the coming weeks, we will put away the decorations.

We will take down the Christmas lights.

Help us to keep the good news of Christ in our hearts throughout the year.

Help us create a world in which there are no strangers to your love. Amen.

Hymn 170 What star is this

†

Prayer of Adoration

Rite of Reconciliation

Prayer of Confession

God of our lives,

we know you are with us through thick and thin,

in times of great joy and at moments of disappointment.

Yet we can feel let down when the joy of Christmas Day has passed.

Our hope gets folded away with the gift wrap,

our energy for the future feels a bit tattered.

Forgive us when our faithfulness flickers like a candle burning down.

Words of Forgiveness

The Peace

May the Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Hymn 144 'Twas in the moon of wintertime

†

Time with Young Christians

Prayer for Inspiration

Jan Dewar

Scripture Isaiah 52: 7-10
Psalm 148 (responsive)

Hymn 160 Unto us a child is born †

Matthew 2: 13-23

Sermon You're welcome. There are no strangers here.

Hymn 161 What child is this †

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

Response: God of the ages, hear our prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory Jesus bleibet meine Freude BWV 147 J.S. Bach

Doxology 145 In the bleak mid-winter v.4 †

What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part; yet what I can I give him—give my heart.

Prayer for Our Offering Dave Caldwell

Hymn 169 Il est né *

Benediction

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

Postlude Postlude on Antioch Hugo Gehrke

Life and Work at Grace Church

www.gracechurchcalgary.com/worship/



Worship Services

- ◇ Sundays at 10:30 am in-person.
- ◇ Livestreamed to watch anytime at www.gracechurchcalgary.com/worship/
- ◇ Fellowship in the Family Room immediately following Worship each Sunday.
- ◇ The South Sudanese community meets Sundays at 12:30 pm in the Chapel.
- ◇ The Anyuak community meets Sundays at 3:00 pm in the Chapel.

January 7 Baptism of the Lord
January 14

The Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Simmins
The Rev. Wendy Adams

Music Notes:

Merry Christmas Grace Church! Since we are in the season of Christmas, it's a great opportunity for musicians to play their favorite music based on carols. Kicking us off this morning is our own Colleen Charter playing a beautiful arrangement of the French carol "Cantique de Noel" commonly known in the English-speaking world as "O Holy Night". In Roquemaure, France, at the end of 1843, the town's church organ had recently been renovated. To celebrate the event, the parish priest persuaded poet Placide Cappeau, a native of the town, to write a Christmas poem. Cappeau's original poem began with the line, "Minuit, Chrétien, c'est l'heure solennelle" (Midnight, Christian, is the solemn hour). Soon afterwards, in that same year, Adolphe Adam composed the music. The song was premiered in Roquemaure in 1847 by the opera singer Emily Laurey.

Our postlude today uses the familiar tune "Antioch", known the world over as "Joy to the World". In this arrangement, the tune is cleverly woven into a 6/8 meter by American composer Hugo Gehrke. A devout Lutheran, Gehrke came from a musical family, and became a noted organist at Concordia Lutheran College in Chicago where he also taught third, fourth and fifth grades. His career as a musician spanned decades and involved directing choirs such as the Milwaukee a cappella Lutheran Choir as well as several prominent positions as organist within the American Lutheran community.

Permissions/Licensing

* Permission to reprint, podcast, and/or stream this music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE with license #A-729521. All rights reserved.

† Public Domain

Grace Updates

www.gracechurchcalgary.com/updates/



Thank You

Twenty volunteers take turns greeting worshippers each Sunday morning, providing a warm welcome and assisting with any questions. These welcomers help to demonstrate the hospitality that Grace hopes to share in its community. We give thanks for the graciousness and dedication of these volunteers.

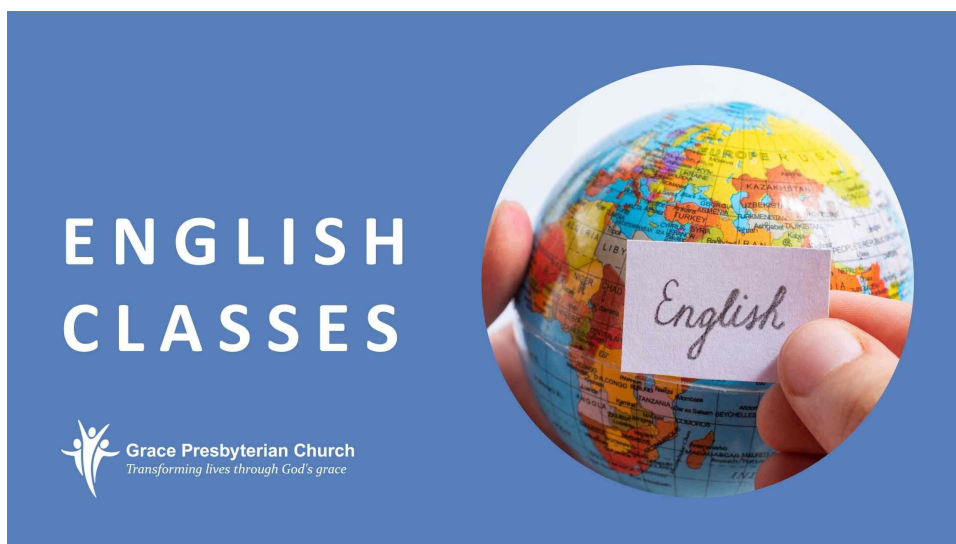
Volunteer Opportunities

Undecorating the Sanctuary

The season of Christmas is drawing to a close and so on the afternoon of Friday, January 5, your help to remove the decorations from the sanctuary would be very welcome.

English Language Learner Program Co-Coordinator

One volunteer has stepped forward to share the coordination of the English Language Learner (ELL) program at Grace. There is need for a second person to help support the class leaders with this ministry that is so valued by the students and rewarding for the volunteers. Currently, classes are offered Monday mornings through the school year.



Session Highlights

At its regular meeting December 11, the Session:

- opened with a reading of 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24 and prayer
- celebrated the joy of the recent baptisms and the warmth experienced by new attendees
- reflected on “Deepening Group Discernment”, the 4th chapter of Susan Beaumont’s book *How to Lead When You Don’t Know Where You’re Going: Leading in a Liminal Season*, and the suggested practices for seeing what God is up to
- agreed upon next steps for ensuring all members and adherents are assigned an elder for pastoral care and recognized that this will be additionally important when the time comes for a candidate for the Lead Minister position to be invited to preach for the call
- approved the reception of David Turner and Ephraim Porter as new members by reaffirmation of faith
- received an update from the Ad Hoc Committee on Land, Facilities and Assets, as it evaluates various real estate properties owned by Grace and their relative core and strategic values. Recommendations for this categorization work are expected in January
- agreed to delegate the review and approval of the draft Photo Directory to avoid delays
- considered the status of police background checks as required by the *Leading with Care* policy and identified necessary steps
- received reports from the committees and staff on the progress in their workplans, and gave thanks to God for the faithful work of so many people
- referred various correspondence as appropriate for follow-up
- closed with prayers of thanksgiving and intercession and a benediction

Grace Events

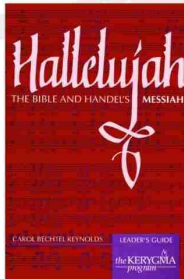
www.gracechurchcalgary.com/events/



God's Grace in Scripture resumes Wednesday mornings January 10 in the Lounge from 9:30 to 10:30 am, followed by a fellowship time. Drop in any week.

"Hallelujah, the Bible and Handel's Messiah" Bible Study

Part 2 resumes Thursday, January 11, 2024, led by The Rev. Wendy Adams. In-Person at Grace Presbyterian Church and online through Zoom.



JOIN A SPIRITUAL
GROWTH ADVENT AND
LENT BIBLE STUDY LED BY
THE REV WENDY ADAMS



Grace Presbyterian Church

1009 15 Avenue SW, Calgary, AB T2R 0S5

Phone: 403-244-5861

Website: www.gracechurchcalgary.com

[YouTube](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

Email: office@gracecalgary.org

Twitter/Facebook: @calgarygrace