

Welcome to Grace United Methodist Church!!

Sunday – December 24, 2023 – 9:00 am



Meditation Verse: *“And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” – Luke 1:36-37*

Grace United Methodist Church

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Pastor John Britt

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Check us out on Facebook!

Church Staff:

Pastor	John Britt
Office Administrator	Phyllis Stevens
Children's Ministry	Kelly Carter
Youth Ministry	Kristal Hamm
Financial Administrator	Cindy Puckett
Custodian	Tanya Taylor
Digital Campus Host	Kristin Britt
Audio/Visual	Steve Hilton
Lay Leader	Mike Marsland
Pianist	Julie Marsland

Order of Worship

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Call to Worship:

Leader: Beloved, when we were in exile,

People: You dwelled with us in our tents.

Leader: When we were afflicted,

People: You comforted us in your mercy.

Leader: Like sheep in the pastures,

People: You gathered us to you.

Leader: In this pregnant time of waiting,

People: We yearn for the coming of your Son again, as if for the first time.

Leader: For with you, Holy One,

People: All things are possible. All things are possible.

*Passing of the Peace

*Hymn #234 – O Come, All Ye Faithful

Advent Candle Lighting:

Reader 1: When the angel Gabriel visited Mary, announcing God's plan for her to conceive and give birth to the Messiah, *"Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'"* (Luke 1:34) And yet, only a few months later, Mary sings to Elizabeth, *"My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me — holy is his name"* (Luke 1:46-49).

Reader 2: We, like Mary, hear God's call to be part of making God's dream for our salvation and flourishing a reality, and we question, *"How can this be? I am only..."* Yet, like Mary, the "onlys" that make us hesitate are gifts God can and will use as God's love transforms us into bearers of good news.

People: We wait as people who have encountered divine love that disrupts the status quo and ushers us into abundant life marked by mutual love and peace that flows from the flourishing of all people.

Reader 1: We light these candles as signs of our hope, our peace, our joy, and the love that transforms us. May love grow within us, transforming us into bold witnesses of God's salvation with our voices and our lives. Amen.

*Song: Light the Advent Candle, Verses 1-4 and Chorus

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

Kids Message

Message: "The Subjunctive Space"

*Song of Response – Special Music: The Day of the Lord

Morning Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Announcements

*Closing Music:

- Hymn #218 – It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
- O Holy Night

*Blessing

Please stand if you are able.

GPS – Grow, Pray, Study

- 1) *Grow.* When have you stepped into the subjunctive space that God has called you into? How has that affected your faith?
- 2) *Pray.* As you consider how the Holy Spirit has “room” to move, to guide, to lead, to expand in your life, how could your prayer practices provide more “space”?
- 3) *Study.* Read Matthew 2:1-12. Consider the gifts that you have to offer to the King in the coming year. What gifts might you be willing to give to God in 2024?

Next Week's Lectionary Readings:

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Psalms 148

Luke 2:22-40

Galatians 4:4-7

To go a little deeper
with these readings
each day this week,
please go to:
pastorjohnb.org

Next Sunday's Message: "The Cliffhanger" - As the holiday season and year winds down, we gain a glimpse into the life of Jesus as a child. Mary and Joseph honor the traditions of their faith as they bring Jesus to the temple. While there Jesus is blessed by Simeon, who proclaims that Jesus' life is set to walk a prophetic path. We too are called to walk such a path. As we find ourselves in between what has happened and the new year that lies ahead, we reflect back and we look forward. Guided by God, we move into a new year, seeking to be grounded in our faith as we actively live out how God is calling us to be a part of the ongoing story.

This Week at Grace

- Thursday – 10:00 AM – Disc. Small Group – SS Room
- Thursday – 5:30 PM – Men's Group – Fellowship Hall
- Friday – 6:30 AM – Women's Study – Chapel

Special Events at Grace

- Dec. 25 – Church Office *CLOSED*

Announcement:

The December Mission of the Month is for Piedmont Valley Elementary and Stagebarn Middle schools.

May God Bless you throughout the coming week!!