

# Grace Lutheran



Yoked parish of faith and service: *Bethel & Zion*

*Love is spoken here! Be the living Eucharist!*



***Greendale Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service***  
***November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024***

3:00 PM Zion

## All are welcome!

The altars of this parish belong to God, and not to us. All people are welcome to participate in every aspect of our worship, including our open table for the Eucharist. We are honored by your presence this day and hope you find peace and refreshment as we celebrate the extravagant love of God, as followers of the Way of Jesus.

**NOTE REGARDING SCRIPTURE USAGE:** Our denomination is an exegetical (Spirit-led) tradition in that we preach and teach according to the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), a three-year cycle of recommended texts primarily used within main-line denominations as inspiration; Eastern and Western rites of Catholicism use a variant. As such, Church of England second and third service texts within the RCL are also valid. The Book of Q, The Gospel of Thomas and The Gospel of Mary Magdalene may also be used when their material is found to be more historically accurate to what scholarship has uncovered as the way Jesus would have addressed his disciples and hearers against what the canonical writers adjusted/appended at times for the teaching of their ancient congregations.

*There is a place for you, here!*

## We Gather

*The Holy Spirit calls us in community as people of the Way.*

### PRELUDE

*Old Hundred – Clarence Eddy*

Lois Toepfner

*The congregation stands*

### WELCOME

### GREETING

The Grace of our Creator God be with us all! ***And also with you!***

### PRAYER OF APPROACH

Let us pray: Almighty God our Creator, Your generous goodness comes to us new every day as Covenanters, free-church, Unitarian Universalists, Episcopalians and Lutherans. By the work of Your Spirit lead us to acknowledge Your goodness, give thanks for Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience every day. ***Amen.***

### GATHERING HYMN

*For the Fruit of All Creation*

ELW (red book) 679

*The congregation is seated*

## We listen to God's Word

*God speaks to us in poetry, creative writing, scripture, preaching & song.*

**A READING FROM HEBREW SCRIPTURE (*Tanakh*):** Joel 2:21-25a from the *Good News Translation*\*

"Fields, don't be afraid, but be joyful and glad because of all the LORD has done for you.

<sup>22</sup> Animals, don't be afraid. The pastures are green; the trees bear their fruit, and there are plenty of figs and grapes.

<sup>23</sup> "Be glad, people of Zion, rejoice at what the LORD your God has done for you. [God] has given you the right amount of autumn rain [and] poured down the winter rain for you and the spring rain as before.

<sup>24</sup> The threshing places will be full of grain; the pits beside the presses will overflow with wine and olive oil.

<sup>25</sup> I will give you back what you lost in the years when swarms of locusts ate your crops.

*Response* In the Name of all that is Holy! ***Thanks be to God!***

### BELL ANTHEM

*We Gather Together* - arr. Martha Lynn Thompson

Grace Lutheran Bells

**PSALM 126** interpretation by The Rev. Christine Robinson

*read responsively*

When we found ourselves free, we couldn't believe it.

***We wandered around, dazed with joy.***

People shook their heads and said, "God has done great things for them!"

***God has done great things for us and we are glad.***

Help us adjust to this turn of events. Make the most of us.

***Help us to never forget. We sowed these seeds with tears. We reap with joy.***

## INTERLUDE

*Meditation on a Folk Song* – Joseph M. Martin

Matthew Johnsen

*The assembly stands to welcome the Living Word!*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

W&P 144

REFRAIN ***Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.*** (repeat)

- 1) ***When I feel afraid, think I've lost my way, still you're there right beside me, nothing will I fear as long as you are near. Please be near me to the end.***
- 2) ***I will not forget your Love for me and yet, my heart forever is wandering. Jesus be my guide and hold me to your side, and I will love you to the end.***

*Preface* Hear the Holy Gospel according to Matthew! ***Glory to you, O Lord!***

## A READING FROM THE GOSPELS: MATTHEW 6:25-33 from *The Message*\*

<sup>25-26</sup> “If you decide for God, living a life of God-worship, it follows that you don’t fuss about what’s on the table at mealtimes or whether the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body. Look at the birds, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, careless in the care of God. And you count far more to [God] than birds.

<sup>27-29</sup> “Has anyone by fussing in front of the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch? All this time and money wasted on fashion—do you think it makes that much difference? Instead of looking at the fashions, walk out into the fields and look at the wildflowers. They never primp or shop, but have you ever seen color and design quite like it? The ten best-dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them.

<sup>30-33</sup> “If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers—most of which are never even seen—don’t you think [God will] attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? What I’m trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with *getting*, so you can respond to God’s *giving*. People who don’t know God and the way [God] works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how [God] works. Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don’t worry about missing out. You’ll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.

*Response* The gospel of our Lord! ***Praise to you, O Christ!***

*The congregation is seated*

## MESSAGE

Pastor Andrew

*The congregation stands*

## HYMN OF THE DAY

*We Plow the Fields and Scatter*

ELW 681

*The congregation is seated*

## LITANY OF THANKSGIVING

You who are the Mystery at the heart of all things, source of all that is, ***to You we give thanks.***

For the gift of Creation, and the wonder of this world, ***we thank You.***

For every creature and the web of all living things to which we belong, ***we thank You.***

For the gift of life, and the miracle that we are able to gather today, ***we thank You.***

For gifts of sight and hearing, the gift of movement and touch, and for all the wonders that we behold, ***we thank You.***

For all the people who have blessed us, ***we thank You.***

For all our loved ones, for any who have taught us, helped us, loved us, accompanied us or prayed for us, ***we thank You.***

For the food we eat, and all those around the world who provide it, ***we thank You.***

May our gratitude overflow to others, especially those who do not have what we do; May our thanks take form in giving and in working for the world You intend for us.

O God, fountain of our souls and earth of our lives, we thank You, and pray that we may always live in humility, gratitude and joy. ***Amen.***

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## THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be always with us always! ***And also with you***

## OFFERTORY ANTHEM

*Father, We Thank You – Rutter*

combined choirs

Today's offering supports *In the Hour of Need Family Shelter*, Worcester, MA

## PRAYER OF PEACE

God, when we close our eyes to this world, ***may Your Presence nudge us awake.***

When we are weary and ready to quit, ***may Your passion for this world energize us.***

When we are hopeless, ***may Your gaze raise us up.***

When we are afraid, ***may Your Love enfold us.***

When we are angry and want to blame, ***may Your kindness sweep us off our feet.***

When we are bitter and ready to fight, ***may Your forgiveness quiet us.***

When we find ourselves in a land of sorrow, ***may Your Presence accompany us.***

When we are broken and we despair, ***may Your delight make us whole.***

God of Grace, as You send us into this world, ***may Your hope live in us, Your Love, Your joy.***

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## **We go out to serve God**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*The congregation stands*

**BLESSING** The Lord bless us and keep us, the Lord's face shine upon us and be Gracious unto us,  
the Lord look upon us and give us peace. ***Amen.***

## SENDING HYMN

*Now Thank We All our God*

ELW 840

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace, share God's Grace! ***Thanks be to God!***

## POSTLUDE

*Now Thank We All Our God – Karg-Elert*

Randy Bloom

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## ***A LIGHT RECEPTION FOLLOWS THE SERVICE TODAY IN THE PALMER ROOM***

***Please join with us!***

In this season it is good and right and necessary to be reminded of just what Grace is all about and to think upon the blessings each of us shares from the bounty our Creator sends our way.

Today's service sponsored by the Greendale Ecumenical Group

Unitarian Universalist Church of Worcester (UUA)

The Rev. Aaron Payson, Minister  
The Rev. Cheryl Leshay  
Matthew Johnsen, Music Director

Grace Lutheran Church. *Zion & Bethel* (ELCA)

The Rev. Andrew Borden, Pastor  
Randy Bloom, Minister of Music  
Lois Toepfner, Deacon, Emeritus MM  
Adam Hanks, Bell Choir Director  
Marie Sturdevant, Lay Leader

Salem Covenant Church (ECC)

The Rev. Mark Nilson, Senior Pastor  
Brad Hendrickson, Organist/Ch. Dir.

Greendale People's Church

St. Michael's on the Heights (ECUSA)

Dianne Wilson, Deacon