

Sunday Worship on December 14, 2025

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Kevin Johnston)

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to worship (See the insert)
- Light the candle of joy
- BOP 119 Hope of a star (vs. 3)
- Praise song BOP 124 People in darkness
- Prayer for Worship and the Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song 344 The wise may bring their learning (Music BOP 468)
- Prayer for children

We listen

- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Isaiah 35:1-10
- Second reading: Psalm 146:5-10 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: Luke 1:46b-55
- Sermon: **Magnified grace**
- Praise song BOP 110 Come, thou long expected Jesus
- Prayer for people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (tune BOP 79 Praise God with songs that never cease) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey BOP 374 O for a thousand tongues to sing

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Responsive Call to Worship (See the insert)

- Light the candle of hope
- BOP 119 Hope of a star (vs. 3)

Praise song – BOP 124 People in darkness

Prayer of Adoration

Creator God, Maker of heaven and earth,
with the sea and the stars, and everything in between,
we praise you for the wonders of this world and beyond it.
You set all creation in relationships both fruitful and fragile.
You make deserts bloom and refresh the earth with seasonal rain.

As you care for the vulnerable and all your people,
we praise with joyful songs in our hearts this day,
Our God, who is the Source, Saviour and Spirit of life,
perfect in unity, splendour and truth.

Prayer of confession (Unison)

**Gracious Judge, we look around us and we are not proud of what we see.
People criticize each other and listen only to those who agree with them.
We grumble and think the past holds the solutions, forgetting its inequities and iniquities.
We are impatient for things to improve but we do not want to change our ways. Forgive us
for sharing in the ungrateful mood of our times,
and renew in us the joy and gratitude we once knew for your gifts to us in Christ Jesus.**

Heavenly Father, hear us, as we offer the Prayer that Jesus taught us: (The Lord's Prayer:)
**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on
earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Receive the Good News in joy. With great mercy, God forgives what we have confessed and offers us new life in Christ. Rejoice that you can make a new beginning and share the joy in mercy and forgiveness with others.

May the Peace of Christ be with you. *(Let us bless each other with the peace of the Lord.)*

Praise song BOP 118 Hard the glad sound

Prayer for the children

Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)

- First reading: Isaiah 35:1-10
- Second reading: Psalm 146:5-10 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: Luke 1:46b-55

“This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God.”

Sermon: Magnified grace

Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, on this Third Sunday of Advent, we slow down and listen to the quiet song of a young woman from Nazareth.

Today's passage from the Gospel of Luke is the praise of Mary, Jesus' mother. When Mary was first told to have a baby as a virgin, Mary was led to her relative, Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist.

When Mary came to Elizabeth's house, Elizabeth confessed that the baby was leaping for joy in her womb. And Elizabeth blessed Mary. After the blessing, with joy, Mary praised the Lord. That is the main passage for today.

Mary's world was small, her resources were few, and her situation was complicated. Yet, out of her heart rises one of the most joyful songs in Scripture. Her voice is steady and confident. Not because her circumstances were easy, but because God was near.

And this is what Advent teaches us again. Joy is NOT the result of perfect conditions. Joy grows where grace has taken root. Joy rises when God becomes large in our hearts.

Mary begins, **V46b, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour."**

Mary magnifies God, not herself, not her gift, nor her fears. She lifts up the ONE who lifted her first. Grace always begins with God.

Today, we listen to Mary's song as our own.

[1] This is the grace that finds the lowly.

Mary is not a person of status. She is young, female, poor, and from a forgotten town. But grace sees what the world overlooks. No one paid attention to her. But, God saw her, knew her and chose her.

She sings, **v48, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant."**

Mary is not boasting. She is simply amazed that God came so close to her.

This is the good news of Advent.

God meets the humble. God lifts the overlooked. God sees the anxious heart, the tired soul, the discouraged workers, the lonely believer.

God bends down toward us with grace long before we lift our eyes toward him.

In Christ, God's favour reaches the lowly again and again. And that includes us.

[2] This is the grace that reverses the broken patterns

Mary's song is gentle. But it is not soft.

It announces a kingdom that turns the world upside down. Her song is radical.

V51, "He has scattered the proud..."

V52, "He brings down the powerful from their thrones..."

V52, “[He] lifted up the lowly...”

V53, “He has filled the hungry...”

V53, “[He] sent the rich away empty.

God is not indifferent to injustice. He does not shrug at cruelty or close his eyes to pride. **God comes to re-order what sin had dis-ordered.**

In Jesus, the proud lose their throne, and the humble find their seat.

In Jesus, the hungry are fed, and the self-sufficient discover their emptiness.

In Jesus, peace does not come through force, but through mercy.

Mary sings a new reality. God is making things right.

And when Christ is magnified, peace becomes possible. Even in places where peace seemed impossible – **like last week’s picture** – sleeping Jesus in a small tiny boat in the middle of the stormy sea.

So, magnify Jesus, not our problems, not our emotions, not our powers. Let us lift our eyes and praise the Lord.

[3] This is the grace that keeps God’s ancient promises.

V54-55, “He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.”

God’s story is long, but never broken. He keeps his promises from generation to generation.

Mary sees herself not as the centre of the story, but as a small part of God’s great mercy unfolding. And this is why she can rejoice even before Jesus is born. She trusts the God who has been faithful in the past and she firmly believe that God will be faithful in the future.

This is Advent joy. **We rejoice not because everything is perfect, but because God is trustworthy.**

Mary magnifies the Lord because grace has already magnified her life. Her hope is not based on what she can control, but her hope is on the God who came near.

So in this Advent season...

Let Christ become large in your heart.

Let grace reshape your thoughts.

Let joy rise – not because everything is easy, but because God is faithful.

And may Mary’s song become your song.

“My soul magnifies the Lord.”

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Let us pray.

Gracious Jesus, thank you for the mercy that found us, thank you for the grace that lifted us, and thank you for the faithfulness that carries us. As we accept your wisdom today, enlarge our hearts with the joy of Christ. Let his grace shape our thoughts, guide our steps, and soften our words. Teach us to live as people who trust your promises and walk in your light. In Jesus' precious and powerful, we pray. Amen.

Praise song BOP 110 Come, thou long expected Jesus

Prayer for the people:

Lord of compassion and hope, we come to you with grateful hearts, trusting in your goodness and learning on your strength.

We pray for those who carry heavy burdens today, those wrestling with illness, loss, uncertainty, or loneliness. Surround them with your comfort.

We pray for our world, still longing for your peace. We lift up before you the people who do not have peace and joy in their hearts. We pray for the people who do not have safety in their lives. We pray for the people who cannot meet their basic needs. Gracious God, glorious God, merciful God, compassionate God... watch over them. Let your eyes remain on those people. Let your hands cover them. Protect them and provide their needs. Hold them in your hands and hide them under your wings. Be their shelter and their stronghold. Comfort them.

There are struggles, difficulties, illnesses, and emotional challenges in our congregation. Heavenly Father, we come to you with our prayers now. Hear us. Heal us. And strengthen us.

Fill us with your presence. Let us overflow. Make us your hands and feet. Use us to spread your love. Make us shine your light to our family, to our church, and to our communities.

Help us share Advent joy and embody Christ's grace wherever we are.

Come, Lord Jesus. Renew our hope, strengthen our faith, and anchor our joy in you. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering:

In this season of joy, we remember that grace always moves us to give. Just as God looked upon Mary with mercy, he looks upon us with the same loving kindness. Let us now offer our gifts.

Let us offer God our gratitude, our resources, and our hearts. Let us trust God that God will use them to magnify his name in the world.

As we give our offerings, let us glorify God.

(BOP #79, Praise God with songs)(words are on the screen)

Offering prayer:

God of grace and mercy, thank you for your generosity. We now lift up the offerings of our love, our gratitude, our resources, our hearts, and our time. Receive them. Receive us. Receive our praise and worship.

Fill us with your faith. Loving God, bless our offering. Bless our lives. We pray all this in the magnificent name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 374 O for a thousand tongues to sing

Now, it is our time to be sent to the world where God called us to be.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, today, Mary's song reminds us that God's grace does not whisper. God's grace is magnified. It lifts the lowly, strengthens the weary, and turns our ordinary lives into place where his mercy shines. As we go into this week of Advent joy, may we carry this truth. God sees us. God is with us. And his grace is already at work among us.

Benediction: May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, our Father, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and always. Amen.