

Order of Worship for at Home Use

November 29, 2020

Welcome to worship with Grace@Home!

We pray that you are healthy and well as you worship this week.

If you wish to worship via the video, click this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbC_fTaMfm4

May God's peace fill Your heart and mind as we enter, with intention, into our time of worship this week. We continue to live in a strange time, yet, God is with us. God is for us. God will never leave us. It is right, then, that we can rest in His presence, seek His face, and rely on His grace throughout all of life.

In these moments of worship, today, we honor those who have served in our armed forces. We seek God's peace for our city, nation and world. We pray for healing and help in this time of hardship. We ask for God's provision as we watch the unfolding of events surrounding our elections.

Again this week you are encouraged to find a place where you can center your heart and mind on Christ, you might light a candle, bring your bible and take a deep breath as you join in our time of worship.

Let us worship God together.

With God's love,

Pastor Dana

We Gather as God's Family to Worship

Prelude "He Is Born the Holy One" arr. P. Cota Bells of Grace
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIXD9m87a2g>

Welcome Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDnkg8YPwCY>

Call to Worship Isaiah 7:14 Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgh64u2KPE0>

Advent is the season of hope. This year we join with all who hope for the presence of God this Christmas. Together with our sisters and brothers we are people of hope who dream of a better world, Christ filled and glorious. This year our theme for the season of Advent is "Those Who Dream." Together we will enter the Christmas story and the expectant hope of those who dream in Advent.

The power of dreams lies in waking up.

For when we close our eyes,
We can see a better world.

When we close our eyes,
We can dream a better dream.

But when we open our eyes,
We begin the work of faith.

The power of worship is the same.

When we enter this space,
We can see a better world.

When we enter this space,
We dream a better dream.

But when we leave this space,
We begin the work of faith.

So come in. Dream your dream.

Find hope here.

Find the one called Immanuel, God with us.

We begin the work of faith.

Let us worship God

Hymn "Waymaker" Kulu & Egbu Kathy & Family
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvqDmM56t-4>

Sharing the Peace of Christ **not in video**

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you...

and also with you.

In this time of social distancing it is important for us to remember that in Christ we are connected to all who believe in Jesus in every time and place. As the world continues to be isolated, and many are feeling anxious, as Christians we share the peace of Christ as a way to offer hope and the joy of Christ. Again today we use the familiar words, “The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you... and also with you.”

Now, or after your time of worship, reach out via text, email, phone or video call, to someone outside of your home extending the invitation to enter into the peace of Christ with our faith community.

Praise God, that His peace is with us, always!

Prayer and The Lord’s Prayer

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THrL4HPIv7k>

Dear Heavenly Father,

Over and over again in scripture, we hear your dream for a beautiful world. We hear your dream for peace and reconciliation. We hear your dream for harmony and togetherness. We hear your dream for community and hope. We hear your dreams, and yet we do not open our eyes. We continue to live with the curtains drawn, the covers pulled tight, eyes shut to the realities of the world. Forgive us. Kindle a hope in us that will burn through the darkest nights. Give us the strength and the will to keep awake in this sleeping world.

God as we enter this Advent season, help us to realize your dream for our world. Help us to recognize those who honor your vision by caring for others, providing for the needy and caring for the sick. God help us to bless those who protect us, honoring their service. And thank you God that you continue to show your grace in the world through acts of kindness and love this Christmas and Advent season.

We pray this in the name of Your Son who is Immanuel, God with us, and who taught us to pray saying:

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 temptations, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and glory forever,
Amen.

We Listen to God’s Word

Hymn/Praise

“Jesus Loves Me”

not in video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C63z5hCd7bc>

Children's Message

Pastor Dana Pope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2txvNTPKao>

Special Music

"I Saw Three Ships" arr. P. Cota

Bell of Grace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-T8xWEgYhk>

Reading of the Word

Isaiah 7:14 & Mark 13:24-37

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fu-cg8sumHE>

Isaiah 7:14

14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Mark 13:32-37

32 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. **33** Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. **34** It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

35 "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. **36** If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. **37** What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"

Message

"Dreamers...Keep Awake"

Pastor Dana Pope

Please pray with me: O Great Dreamer, You dreamed up the stars in the sky. You dreamed up that magic baby smell and the way cream sinks into coffee. You dreamed up the crunch of fall leaves and music that makes our feet move and soul soar. You dreamed up wisteria and the pure magic that is a six-foot-tall sunflower or a beautiful Christmas Tree with lights twinkling. And in the midst of all of that, you dreamed up a dream for your people—a dream of hope and justice, a dream for eyes wide open, to both the world's suffering and the world's beauty. So today, as we read scripture and meditate on Your word we ask that you would plant that same dream in us. Pour out your Spirit... place Your loving hands on our hearts and minds so that we may see what you see, and dream what you dream. Gratefully, with HOPE, we pray. Amen.

This year in Advent we are invited into an expectant waiting during which we will intentionally enter into a spiritual discipline of dreaming. In troubled times it is common to focus on the nightmare of it all. All that is difficult, heartbreaking and fear producing...and the truth is we must see reality. However, our God is calling us not ONLY see the darkness around us, but to ALSO to see Immanuel... God with us... we are to look for the reality of God's work and God's kingdom and we are called to live into the light and life and hope and joy and peace and love that is found in Him.

It is in that space of BOTH / AND that we dare to dream.

Psalm 126 says:

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy...The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. Restore our fortunes, Lord, like streams in the Negev. Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.

As the people of God, we are called to be “in the world but not of the world.” Dreamers with eyes wide open.

I don't know about you guys, but most of the time I would much rather ignore the world. Close my eyes to all of the bad and the ugly. Sometimes it's all just too much. I would much rather sleep through the rest of COVID, close my eyes to all of the pain, grief and loss that we have experienced of late, sleep through the violence and the name calling and the political unrest. I am weary. I need sleep. My eyes and my heart cannot un-see the pain and grief and sorrow. So, if it were possible I would prefer to sleep through it.

I once had a co-worker/supervisor that I commuted to and from work with. A 45-minute drive each way. Carpooling went well, until it didn't. As the weight of running the department became more and more overwhelming, a divorce became reality, and tensions at work from all sides became unbearable... AND even though I should have been a better friend... I would get into the car (when I was not driving) and immediately go to sleep. It was an escape. It was self-preservation. It was a way for me to cope. But, looking back, it was not productive. It was not helpful. I did not choose the path which accepted God's invitation to keep awake and enter into His dream.

We are NOT called to sleep through our lives. We are called to live them. To keep awake.

It is necessary to feel all the feelings, to deal with the reality of what is...

we are to live in the world, keep our eyes open. Not hide or sleep through it. we must acknowledge the truth. Feel the sorrow and the grief. Understand the turmoil and pain of those around us.

BUT we are not made, nor are we called, to do it alone. Immanuel is with us.

The Messiah is come. And through Him we have been given the gift of connection, intimacy with God. And in this can we rest. In this we can HOPE.

Our tears are not in vain...we are reminded in the psalm... *the tears we sow are necessary for songs of joy to come.*

And the tears are where we begin. And tears can be an act of worship... in fact there are entire psalms which are laments...or psalms of darkness... for some reason we tend to think we need to keep the darkness out of our prayers. That God only wants to hear about the things we want to hear about... that somehow if we share the things that pain us, bring us grief or that we are angry about, God will turn away (as we tend to) OR that if we dare to think or say these things we are being unfaithful.

Walter Brueggemann said this about tears and lamenting: “[Lament] is an act of bold faith, albeit TRANSFORMED faith. It is an act of faith on the one hand, because it insists that the world must be experienced as it really is and not in some pretended way. On the other hand, it is bold because it insists that all such experiences of disorder are a proper subject for discourse with God. There is nothing out of bounds, nothing precluded or inappropriate. Everything properly belongs in this conversation of the heart. To withhold parts of life from that conversation is in fact to withhold part of life from the sovereignty of God.” He goes on to say that it is important to bring EVERYTHING to speech...addressed to God.

As we begin this time of Advent waiting, we, as an act of bold faith, we lift our heads and rub the sleep from our eyes...so that we can see the reality of the world... we lift up our laments...and then in God’s great mercy – HIS hand in ours - we face it. Feel it...without fear and trembling, without dread and despair... knowing that our lament is connected to hope...and HOPE to dreaming...

We begin where we are, in the messy middle... and we look to hope... we remember that we are called to an abundant LIFE... not to sleep... we open our eyes and keep awake because we are called to **more** than just being alive...

we are called to live well, to live into the kingdom of God
We are called to dream big. To participate in the life of Christ.
Now is the time to dream about new possibilities.
New ways of doing and being.
Now is the time to dream of deliverance.
Now is the time to dream about what God's shalom is calling us to.
(adapted from Patricia DeJong)

I wonder what we are dreaming about today...

I wonder what God is dreaming of for us and for our world today...

In the weeks to come we will continue to discuss how we might become more aware of God's dreams...how we might enter into dreaming as a spiritual discipline... as we begin to think about dreaming in this way it occurs to me that God gives us invitations...often by disruption or interruption...which invite us into His dreams.

If 2020 isn't a disruption or interruption, I don't know what is. And the invitations are many...as are the laments...

You know, at Grace, we have kicked around the idea of (and wondered how to) get started using technology more effectively since I was called (to FPC) in 2005. It took a global pandemic, stay at home orders, and closing the doors for in-person worship for us to really step into the invitation...and purchase iPads and begin to figure out how to create and upload online worship services, sign up for a YouTube channel and all the rest. We accepted that invitation, and now people around the country have an opportunity to learn about God, to connect with our church, and participate in worship with us.

The truth is, God's dreams often come to pass by Holy Disruption (Jill Webber) Abraham - life interrupted and sent in a new direction,

Gideon – hiding minding his own business...interrupted,

Jonah – no, not Nineveh...interrupted,

The disciples (fishing) come follow... interrupted.

It is really the Biblical narrative... Each one interrupted from their routines... and because they were awake, they were able to step into God's dream...a dream much bigger than their own.

How is God interrupting you, me, the church this Advent? Do we sense an invitation to step into God's dream? Where are the places in our lives that we would rather sleep through... is that the place of invitation... of God's dreaming for us or for the world?

Langston Hughes:

Hold fast to dreams; for if dreams die;
life is a broken winged bird; that cannot fly

Friends, Keep Awake, become a dreamer...accept the invitation... amen.

We Respond to the Voice of God

Presentation of our Tithes & Offerings

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kJxW0JifAA>

We are blessed with many opportunities to give of our time talents and our resources...this is not about funding the church or fundraising, it is an act of worship. We respond to God's Word, His love for us, and His mercy by giving of ourselves. We give all sorts of things, including our hearts, our finances, our time and our gifts. Let us now participate in God's kingdom by returning God's tithes and our offerings to the church via mail or online giving, using text to give or the following link: <https://onrealm.org/gracepclv/-/give/now>

Offertory

"Noel"

Tomlin/Cash/Redman

Praise Team

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zjt9ehqViBE>

Offertory Prayer

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kg4VT5IPjbA>

Holy God, as we complete this weekend of Thanksgiving rituals and traditions, and we enter into this time of Advent, a time of hope and expectation, we are aware of our many blessings. Our tithes and offerings this day are given out of gratitude for the gifts we have received from you. Use these gifts to bless your people and bring hope to our world this Christmas season.

We Go with God to Love and Serve

Closing Hymn

#262/261 "Away in a Manger" vs 1 each

Lisa

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itX21f3AVwo>

Benediction

Pastor Dana Pope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bN3JVLAIguU>

Postlude

“Noel XII” L.C. Daquin Dr. David Dorway, Organist
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0phblcSPRE>

Acknowledgements

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eIbU26NaTsw>

**As you continue to worship this week, please keep the following people
in prayer, and reach out to one another in word or deed.**

In Need of Prayer

Dolores Harris (Merrill Gardens)

Alice Black (Skilled Nursing at Las Ventanas)

Judy Aitken, Becky Aldridge, Bernard Busswell, Bill Carlston, Bob & Joan Clark,
Tanner Cordon, Carol Daniel, Ann Donithan, Rosamaria Duenas,
Jill and Robert Eaton, Pennie Everhart, Joice Franklin, Mary Gafford,
Terry Glaser, Pam Kodey, Lara Kolberg, Dorell Koon, Carole McKinnis,
Sherrie Miles, Audrey Mitchell, Maggie O'Donnell, Alice Oiler, Dodi Palmer,
Taylor Palmer, Mary Phillips, Russ & Pat Reid, Aminta & Jorge Santanilla,
Bruce Simon, Marty Swartout, Nick Vogelzang, Mike Walsh, and Dick Wohletz

In Memoriam:

Jack Crockett 3/18/2020

Randy Innis 3/18/2020

Clark Trapp 3/18/2020

Ruthy Stull 3/19/2020

Ted Phillips 4/1/2020

Violet Cross 4/4/2020

Bill Franklin 5/4/2020

Greg Holt 5/7/2020

Carol Mohr 5/25/2020

Priscilla Taylor 7/4/2020

Louis Romero 8/8/2020

Bettye Hodgkins 8/11/2020

Gary Oiler 8/23/2020

Donna Gibson 9/14/2020