

# Order of Worship for at Home Use

## February 21, 2021

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=4U8EPHdcscQ>

As we gather online it is important to remember that we are not alone. We gather with our brothers and sisters in this church and in Christ's church wherever God has placed us. We are, after all, the body of Christ and the family of God. As His people we gather for worship and we are reminded of the promise that Christ will be with us, even to the very end of the age. We are also reminded that as God's children we are a great community and even when distanced we remain God's children in communion with God and one another.

Today as we gather, I encourage you to create a comfortable space for worship where you are reminded of God's presence in your life and that He is with you in this moment. Surround yourself with the symbols of Grace. Find a place that is peaceful so that you might hear the still quiet voice of God when it speaks to you. Maybe light a candle as a reminder of God's light in the world and in your life, have your Bible with you as it is God's revelation to us in this moment.

Pastor Dana

## We Gather as God's Family to Worship

Prelude "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" J. Mansfield  
Dr. David Dorway, organist

Welcome Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

Welcome to worship with us at Grace Presbyterian Church, Las Vegas. We are thrilled you are worshipping with us. We gather remotely online and in person to give glory to God. We know that God has promised to be with us even to the very end of the age. During our time of worship, we celebrate that God has promised to be with us regardless of if we are at home or in the church. In times of celebration, in times of sorrow and in times of confusion, God is with us.

Today is the first Sunday of Lent. Lent is the time of the Christian year where we take stock in our lives, preparing our hearts and lives for the grace of God won at the cross and celebrated on Easter. During lent many Christians commit to acts of penitence, seeking God's forgiveness, others undertake acts of devotion renewing their commitment to God. As we worship today, I invite you to create a sacred worship space in your home that is quiet and reverent. Maybe light a candle and have your Bible with you. Open your heart and allow the presence of God to fill your space and touch your heart.

Now that all is prepared, let us worship the living God who is at our side now and always.

Call to Worship Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

One: Jesus said: I am the light of the world

**All: whoever follows me shall never walk in darkness.**

One: whoever follow Christ shall have the Light of life

**All: today we begin our Lenten journey. May we be willing to follow the one eternity has called the light of the world**

**All: Let us worship God**

Hymn "Here We Are" D. Moen/C. Cloninger  
Praise Team

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

Holy God, this morning we come before you and boldly claim the promise that when we pray you hear us. We know also that when we gather to worship you are present. In this sacred moment when we are aware of your presence and promise, we lift our hearts before you.

As we begin the season of Lent we are also aware that we have often wandered from your grace and we have not been faithful to your call on our lives. Forgive us for not seeing that the way of Christ is the light in our world and that we should more faithfully follow you. We pray for healing in our land. Heal our bodies and souls. Cast out this pandemic and help your people to rise above the challenge it has brought upon us. Teach us to be faithful followers, compassion healers, attentive listeners, caring providers and generous givers. Help us care for those in need with open and generous hearts. God, give us compassion towards those who challenge us. We also lift up those who are struggling to make ends meet. Provide for all us resource and opportunity that allow us to by Your people during these challenging times.

God we also pray that you will give us hearts of gratitude. Open our eyes to the blessings you have placed in our lives. Thank you for those who serve others. From store clerks to teachers, from medical workers to care givers, we are grateful for all who give of themselves to serve our community. We are particularly thankful for those who stand in harm's way on our behalf. For firefighters, military, public servants and police officers, we are very grateful and we pray for a special measure of your blessing upon all the servants out there. Make their cause noble and just and equip them for the task to which you have called.

Finally, God, do not let us become lazy. Help us to see the work that needs to be done and to lend a helping hand.

We pray this in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ 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 temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.*

*For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. 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

Special Music                      “Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal”                      arr. N. Harmon  
Chancel Choir

Reading of the Word                      John 8:12-20                      Pastor Dana Pope  
Message                      “I AM...The Light of the World”

Today we begin our Lenten sermon series. Lent is a liturgical season when we turn with intention back to God, we fast and pray, we contemplate our individual need of redemption and forgiveness, we work on spiritual formation and disciplines and we take time to meditate on the saving work of Jesus on the cross. This Lent we are looking at the person of Jesus Christ as we worship – specifically – Who He says He is. We invite you in the weeks ahead to turn with us to the Gospel of John, as we study the I AM statements of Jesus, as He reveals Himself to us in scripture.

Our scripture reading for today is John, chapter 8:12-20.

**12** When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

**13** The Pharisees challenged him,  
“Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.”

**14** Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. <sup>15</sup> You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. <sup>16</sup> But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. <sup>17</sup> In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. <sup>18</sup> I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.”

**19** Then they asked him, “Where is your father?”

“You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied.

“If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” <sup>20</sup> He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.

Here ends the reading of God’s Word for us today: *Thanks be to God!*

*Please pray with me... Holy God, it is in You we live and move and have our being. Help us now to understand more deeply Who You are through knowing Jesus, Your Son. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be pleasing to You, for You are our Rock and Redeemer. Amen.*

If we are to move forward into the future with confidence and trust, we must have a solid foundation. So, this Lent we are going to study the I AM statements of Jesus the Christ. When Jesus uses these words ( I AM ) to help us understand Who He is, He does not choose the words at random. He is calling to mind the foundations of our faith in Genesis and Exodus.

In the account of God’s call to Moses, in Exodus, God comes to Moses in the burning bush. We remember the story. Moses first asks, who am I that You would ask me to do this – to save Your people? And then he asks... Who - do I tell the Israelites - sent me? What is Your name?

God says to Moses: I AM WHO I AM. ...tell them I AM has sent me to you...

“The name I AM is how God chose to introduce himself...His self given name.

Prior to this moment with Moses, the Israelites called their God Elohim or El – which is a title, not a personal name – or “El Shaddai”, which is often translated as God Almighty. When God gives a name for His people to call Him it conveys His dominion, reveals His power, and His eternal nature: I AM. I AM is self-sufficient, self-sustaining THE God Who was, Who is, and Who is to come.” Bethany Verrett Online Commentaty

Our scripture in John tells us that Jesus was in Jerusalem for the feast of Tabernacles. This is one of the holy festivals that the Jews traveled to each year. Two things happened at this festival...The pouring out of water... where the priests would go get water from the pool of Siloam and return to the temple to pour out the water to symbolize the pouring out of the Holy Spirit when the Messiah comes...

And the second event of this festival is called the Illumination of the Temple... they would light lamps all around as they gathered for the feast, and in addition, 4 – 75-foot-tall – lamps were lit to illuminate the temple/Jerusalem. Since it is up on a hill, the city would shine out for miles. This was symbolic of God's Shekinah glory that led the people through the wilderness to the promised land...and it symbolically looks forward to the glory of the coming Messiah.

They were celebrating that God – in the Holy Spirit – in the Messiah – is or will be with the people. God, in God's glory leads the people and His glory will shine forth.

Jesus' words, spoken in this context, to these people... I AM ... the Light of the World... were unimaginable. Difficult for them to hear on the merit of the parallels with God's revealing Himself, giving Himself a name above every name, I AM... And additionally, because Jesus said He was the Light of the world. It was unthinkable that anyone would equate themselves with the God of the universe, Whose name was so sacred it was not spoken aloud or even written in full.

Jesus, calling Himself, revealing Himself to be, the light of the world, would have been very difficult for them to hear. On a sacred/ritual level, Jesus was using the festival lights (a beloved ritual worship experience) to point out all that they had missed, and gotten wrong. The giant lamps were lit and burned all night long. A wondrous sight to behold...for miles around... but by the morning, they were dying out. The oil had been spent. Some scholars think that as those fires were dying, as the sun rose at dawn, that is when Jesus spoke these words and said, I AM the light of the world...whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

People walking in darkness, often have a difficult time when you point it out to them. The Pharisees didn't take it too well, or really, they didn't even hear it, when Jesus said, you are so very religious...but you are missing the point. You are looking at the practice of religion, instead of the ONE you worship. You are living in darkness...come into the light... know Me, know the FATHER, Who sent me.

Truthfully, we have a difficult time when people point out our own darkness to us! We think we are getting along just fine in the relative level of semi-darkness in which we live. As we navigate the semi-dark landscape we might have a few bruises from the end table, or say some choice words when we step on that metal jack or lego left on the carpet. But really, we believe we are ok. Not too bad, really. Yet, even those of us who have seen the light, continue to deceive ourselves in many ways.

The extra glass of wine most nights isn't that big of a deal. The casual way we watch adult content online, isn't hurting anything. Or the half-truths we tell ourselves, our spouse, or our parents about our physical health, or how we are really doing – emotionally, is a form of “protection”. There are so many ways we choose darkness, or semi-darkness in this life...even as the people of God. Much too often when we examine our lives and our hearts, our relationships and our habits, we find that even we are trying to avoid the light.

But here's the thing. Jesus is the LIGHT of the world. From Him nothing is hidden. John 3: 20...reminds is that everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. Friends, this Lent, is an opportunity to choose the Light of Christ. To seek forgiveness and to live in the reality of the person of Jesus Christ.

Instead of listening, the Pharisees focus on the rules of their ritual and call Jesus, in effect, a liar! They then debate and work to discredit Him in order to keep their rules and paradigm intact.

As we consider today, Jesus, I AM the light of the world... our challenge is to consider the ways we have chosen to live in darkness, or semi darkness. Chosen ritual, or easy, or the path of least resistance, instead of the truth. Forsaking The Light that is life.

Jesus, as the light of the world, offers us a choice which can be difficult. For light exposes the truth. But, the other part of that truth is that nothing is ever hidden from God anyway. He knows, yet He loves and forgives and grants mercy.

If we choose to step into 2021 boldly walking in the light of Christ. Examining they ways we have chosen darkness, and turning to Jesus, the Light of the world, Jesus will help us leave the darkness behind...and the future will be ever more bright.

There is more to say about light, however, before I close. Jesus, the Light of the World, is not a harsh light. The Light of Christ is warm. Life giving, it helps us to grow and flourish. Light provides hope... the dawning of a new day brings another chance, another breath, another opportunity.

## We Respond to the Voice of God

Presentation of our Tithes & Offerings

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

We are blessed with many opportunities to give of our time talents and our resources... 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

“All My Hope”

D. Crowder/E. Cash  
Praise Team

Offertory Prayer

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

Holy God we thank you for all the blessings you have poured out in our lives. Thank you for our loved ones and our relationships. Thank you for our resource and the time you have given each of us. Thank you for your grace and the gifts of second chances. Out of gratitude we give these gifts and ask that you bless them and use them for the work of our kingdom.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Amen.

## We Go with God to Love and Serve

Closing Hymn

#375 “Jesus Shall Reign” vs. 1 & 4

Dr. Lisa Elliott

Benediction

Pastor Dana Pope

The Lord bless you and keep you,  
Make His face shine upon you  
And be gracious to you  
The Lord turn His face toward  
And give you peace.

Postlude

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

W. Wold  
Dr. David Dorway

Acknowledgements

**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)

Judy Aitken, Becky Aldridge, Fred & Mickie Bratschie, Bernard Buswell,  
Bill Carlston, Bob & Joan Clark, Carol Daniel, Ann Donithan,  
Rosamaria Duenas, Pennie & Wayne Everhart, Joice Franklin, Mary Gafford,  
Charlene Harper, Greta Hougnon, Pam Kodey, Christian and Lara Kolberg,  
Dorell Koon, Richard Lyle, Carole McKinnis, Sherrie Miles, Don Moore,  
Maggie O'Donnell, Alice Oiler, Dodi Palmer, Mary Phillips, Art Ritter,  
Aminta & Jorge Santanilla, Bruce Simon, Marty & Barbara Swartout,  
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  
Audrey Mitchell 12/1/2020  
Alice Black 12/23/2020 ?  
Phyllis McGuire 12/29/2020  
Carol Moore 12/30/2020  
Andrew Davis 1/1/2021  
Kay Stinson 1/3/2021  
Robert "Bob" Lockhart 1/16/2021  
Laverne Willman 1/11/2021