

Oak Grove is a joyful, inclusive, compassionate community of faith
seeking to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.

Loving God... Changing Lives!



OAK GROVE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2200 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington Minn. 55431
952-888-4621 | www.oakgrv.org

Dec. 17, 2023

Third Sunday of Advent

10:30 am



A Thought to Ponder (*from the Social Justice Committee*)

"We can't deter people fleeing for their lives. They will come. The choice we have is how well we manage their arrival, and how humanely."

– António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations

We Gather in God's Name

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Oslund Family

Reader 1: When God's people were surrounded by hardship, suffering, and grief, Isaiah proclaimed, The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit (Isaiah 61:1-3a)

Reader 2: We come today as people who are also surrounded by suffering and grief. And yet, the Spirit hovers among us, tending and anointing, inspiring freedom where there is captivity, declaring blessing in places the world has cursed, and igniting fierce joy where mourning and heartache prevail.

Congregation: **We wait as people who experience hardship and pain, yet we are called to witness to the persistent joy that sustains our life as God's people.**

Reader 1: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, just peace, and fierce joy. May our lives shine with the fierce, tenacious joy of the Light who lives in our hearts as we wait and work for the coming of God's kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Light three candles of the Advent wreath.

Hymn of Response

"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah" (verse 3)

85

Call to Worship (by Ann Weems)

Juliana Lucic

In each heart lies a Bethlehem, an inn, where we must ultimately answer whether there is room or not. When we are Bethlehem-bound we experience our own advent in his.

When we are Bethlehem-bound, we can no longer look the other way, conveniently not seeing stars, not hearing angel voices.

We can no longer excuse ourselves by busily tending our sheep or our kingdoms. This Advent let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that the Lord has made known to us.

In the midst of shopping sprees, let's ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts.

Through the tinsel, let's look for the gold of the Christmas Star.

In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos, let's listen for the brush of angels' wings. This Advent, let's go to Bethlehem and find our kneeling places. Let us worship God.

***Opening Hymn**

"People, Look East" (vss 1, 3–5)

105

***Prayer of Confession**

Juliana Lucic

God of hope and joy, of love and peace, we thank you for your advent among us. As we await Christ's birth again, fill us with a sense of your purpose and joy. Forgive us when we forget to put you first and ignore others in need. Comfort us when we are sad and discouraged. Strengthen us when we are weary. Turn us away from hurry and worry and lead us toward compassion and deep listening. In this season of waiting, as in every season, we are yours... (*silent prayer*).

***Passing of the Peace**

Juliana Lucic

We are loved and accepted by God – that is our joy this Advent season!
The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you. (*Exchange the peace with those around you.*)

We Listen for God's Word

Time for the Young & Young at Heart: The Sacrament of Baptism

Wyatt Rory Krentz

Child of Katie & Jake Krentz

younger sibling of Harper, Amelia & Aiden

(unison) **With joy and thanksgiving we welcome you, Wyatt, into Christ's Church. We promise to love, encourage and support you, to share the good news of the gospel with you, and to help you know and follow Christ.**

#Hymn of Response "Baptized in Water" (verse 3)

482

Presentation of Tithes & Offerings

Call to Offering

Offertory Music

***Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below, Praise God above ye heavenly host, Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. AMEN.

***Prayer of Dedication**

We offer these, our gifts, to you, O God, with praise and thanksgiving for the ultimate gift of Jesus. Use them and use us, we pray, to further God's work of justice, mercy and love in the world. AMEN

Prayers of the People/The Lord's Prayer

(^ Father, Mother or Creator)

Our God^ 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.

We Go Forth in God's Name

***Hymn** "Angels We Have Heard on High" 113
(During the singing, children who are in the pageant will come to the chancel.)

Christmas Pageant "Christ is Born!" Oak Grove Children

***Benediction**

Chorale Response "Prepare the Way, O Zion" (vss 1–2) 106

**Please rise in body or in spirit.*



Participants in worship today include:

Presiding Pastors: **Mary Koon & Bart Roush;**

Candle Lighters: **Sarah, Joey, Annabelle, Cassidy, Samuel & Ellery Oslund;**

Liturgist: **Juliana Lucic;**

Organist/Pianist: **Nancy Jensen** | Director of Music: **Judy Cooper;**

Sound, Light, Video: **Greg Johnson, Bob Gerdes & Ruth Dukelow**

Oak Grove Presbyterian Church

Welcome, Oak Grove members and visitors, we're glad you're here!

We are proud to be a Matthew 25, Green Care and More Light Congregation.

The congregation of Oak Grove values its roots that go back more than 150 years, even as we follow the movement of the Spirit into new ways of being and doing.

We always welcome your suggestions.

OAK GROVE & COMMUNITY

Advent/Christmas at Oak Grove

Thursday, Dec. 21: Longest Night Service (7:00 pm), in-person only

Sunday, Dec. 24: Advent Worship (10:30 am)
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (5:00 pm)

Sunday, Dec. 31: First Sunday of Christmas Worship (10:30 am)

Sunday, Jan. 7: "The Work of Christmas Continues,"
a special music Sunday (10:30 am)

Year-End Giving

Just a friendly reminder, all donations for this calendar year need to be received at Oak Grove by Dec. 31. Please note, any items that arrive in the mail after that date will be recorded in next year's contributions unless the postmark is Dec. 31 or earlier, then it can be included in your 2023 giving statement. If you desire to **donate stocks**, please be sure your financial broker gets the stock transfer into our account by Dec. 31. We have instructions to facilitate this transaction. Any questions, please contact Laura Nemcek in the church office for the information your financial planner needs.

Women's Retreat: Jan. 19–21, 2024

Please join us for the Oak Grove Presbyterian Women's Retreat at Clearwater Forest. The theme is, "The Wisdom of Trees," and what they can teach us about living lives of meaning and purpose. We'll be staying at Leaning Tree Lodge (2–3 to a room) with semi-private bathrooms. Bedding and towels are provided. The cost is \$120 but some scholarship funds are available. Please indicate if your attendance depends on this assistance. Questions? Contact Sue Greimel (sue.greimel@gmail.com or 612-805-2896). For more details and to register, visit <https://bit.ly/ogpc-womens-retreat24>.

Save the Dates! Oak Grove Men's Retreat: Feb. 2–4, 2024

Please join us for the Oak Grove Presbyterian Men's Retreat at Clearwater Forest. This is a great time of fellowship and recharging. Accommodations will be at Leaning Tree Lodge with Sat. breakfast, lunch & dinner, and Sun. breakfast provided. Cost will be determined by the number of attendees. If cost is a barrier, there are options to help cover for those who are in need. Questions? Contact Eric Duvall (952-567-4151) or Adam Wilkens (952-250-4877). Sign up in the narthex or by calling the church office (952-888-4621).

OAK GROVE & COMMUNITY



Dec. 19 | Tea for Caregivers (10:30–11:30 am)
Contact Pastor Mary

Dec. 20 | Ladies Who Lunch (12–2:00 pm)
Book: *Harry's Trees*
by Jon Cohen
Location: home of Bev Heise
Contact Pastor Mary

Dec. 21 | Men's Prayer Breakfast (7:30 am)
Contact Jack Kley (952-831-4138)
Denny's (4209 American Blvd W)

Dec. 28 | Antiracism Accountability (6:30–8:00 pm)
via Zoom (<https://bit.ly/3JQoN4I>)
Contact Kathy Howell (952-200-5129)

Jan. 1 | Singles Fellowship (4:00 pm)
Join us for a potluck, games & fun!
Home of Jody Milton
Please RSVP (612-730-3962)

All events are at Oak Grove unless otherwise noted.

December Issue of *The Circle* Now Available

Free copies of the December issue of *The Circle*, News from a Native American perspective are available in the narthex.

There are also a few copies left of the October and November issues. This is part of our ongoing commitment to inform the congregation about things happening in the Indigenous community.



Holiday Office Hours

- Friday, Dec. 22: the office will close at noon
- Monday, Dec. 25–Friday, Dec.29: the office will be closed for the holidays
- Monday, Jan. 1: the office will be closed in observance of New Year's Day

If there is an urgent matter, please contact Pastor Bart Roush at 210-551-1136.

Oak Grove's Purpose

Oak Grove is a joyful, inclusive, compassionate community of faith seeking to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.

Values

Beyond our faith in God, our example in Jesus, and guidance from the Holy Spirit, our congregational values are the underlying ethic by which we define our community.

Authenticity

Celebratory Joyfulness

Compassion

Deep Relationships

Humble Curiosity

Inclusivity

Justice

Statement of Land Acknowledgement

We collectively acknowledge that Oak Grove Presbyterian Church is located on the traditional and ancestral lands of Indigenous people. We reside on land that holds great historical, spiritual, and personal significance for the Dakota, Native Nations and Indigenous people of the region. The land was ceded by the Dakota to the U.S. Government through treaties created and upheld with racist underpinnings.

By offering this land acknowledgment, we affirm tribal sovereignty and will work to hold Oak Grove Presbyterian Church accountable to Indigenous people and Nations. We recognize, and continually seek to support and advocate for the sovereignty of the Native Nations in this territory and beyond.

For more information, please visit our website www.oakgrv.org.