

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. 24, 2023

Fourth Sunday of Advent

10:30 am



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

"My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?" – Bob Hope

We Gather in God's Name

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Mattie Hawley & Paige Arndt

Reader 1: When the angel Gabriel visited Mary, announcing God's plan for her to conceive and give birth to the Messiah, "Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'" (Luke 1:34) And yet, only a few months later, Mary sings to Elizabeth, "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name."
(Luke 1:46–49)

Reader 2: We, like Mary, hear God's call to be part of making God's dream for our salvation and flourishing a reality, and we question, "How can this be? I am only..." Yet, like Mary, the "onlys" that make us hesitate are gifts God can and will use as God's love transforms us into bearers of good news.

Congregation: **We wait as people who have encountered divine Love that disrupts the status quo and ushers us into abundant life marked by mutual love and peace that flows from the flourishing of all people.**

Reader 1: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, our fierce joy, and the love that transforms us. May Love grow within us, transforming us into bold witnesses of God's salvation with our voices and our lives. Amen.

Light four candles of the Advent wreath.

Hymn of Response

"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah" (verse 4)

Call to Worship

Chris Hawks

All creation holds its breath.

The time is almost here.

The heavenly choir of angels waits for its cue to sing.

Excitement is all around us.

Prepare your hearts—The grace of God takes on human form. Good news!
Emmanuel, God-with-Us, comes to us.

We gather to make ready our hearts for the coming of Christ, our hope. Let us worship God!

*Opening Hymn

“People Look East” (vss 1, 4–5)

105

*Prayer of Confession

Chris Hawks

Lord God, we praise you for sending light into this world. We confess that we live as though the light had never defeated darkness. We confess that we ignore the Savior you sent to be among us and to live in us. We’ve kept the birth of your Son confined to the Christmas season and do not yearn for his coming each moment in our waiting hearts. Forgive us for not opening our eyes to Jesus. Prepare us for His return. Help us rejoice in the light so that your grace can illuminate the darkened places of our hearts. Amen.

*Assurance of Grace

Chris Hawks

Even now—yes, even in this very moment, God comes to us, bringing hope, bringing forgiveness, bringing grace as freely offered gifts to us.

May we open our hearts to the God who is with us, and receive the gifts which have been offered to us. Thanks be to God. Amen.

*Passing of the Peace

Chris Hawks

Let us greet one another as new beings, reconciled to God and one another.
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

Hymn of Response "He Came Down" 137

Scripture Luke 1:26–38 (NT: p. 56 | LPNT: p. 69)

Message

Presentation of Tithes & Offerings

Call to Offering

Anthem/Offertory "Child of the Poor" *Scott Soper*

*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 our gifts to you, Lord, with grateful, cheerful hearts. Thank you that you meet our needs on the journey, providing what we need when we need it. Trusting you, we can share what we have with others, and we do this joyfully, together, today, in Jesus` name, 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.

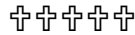
We Go Forth in God's Name

*Closing Hymn "My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout" (vss 1–2, 4) 100

*Benediction

Postlude

**Please rise in body or in spirit.*



Participants in worship today include:

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

Violin: **Jennifer Lang** | Marimba: **Caitlin Lucic;**

Candle Lighters: **Mattie Hawley & Paige Arndt;**

Liturgist: **Chris Hawks** | Musicians: **Chancel Choir;**

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

Sound, Light, Video: **Greg Johnson, Pierce Flanagan & 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.



Prayer Requests

Please contact the church office to let us know when you have new requests or updates for family and friends, or when a death occurs so we can support and care for you or your loved one.

ogpc@oakgrv.org

952-888-4621

OAK GROVE & COMMUNITY

Advent/Christmas at Oak Grove

- Sunday, Dec. 24: 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. For more details and to register, visit <https://bit.ly/ogpc-womens-retreat24>. Questions? Contact Sue Greimel (612-805-2896 or sue.greimel@gmail.com).

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. 28 | 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/3JQoN4l>)
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)
- Jan. 2 | Burgers 'n Brew Men's Fellowship (noon)
Contact Jim McCarl (952-948-2991)
Zeke's (7700 W Old Shakopee Rd)
- Jan. 2 | Evening Star Circle (3–5:00 pm)
Contact Connie Nesbitt (612-702-0684)
- Jan. 3 | Bill Cross Memorial Service (2:00 pm)
Visitation begins at 1:00 pm
<https://bit.ly/ogpc-bill-cross>

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.

Sunday, Dec. 31 Piano Duets

Judy and Nancy will play a 15-minute prelude of Christmas piano duets. Please join us at 10:15 am and enjoy the wonderful music!



Holiday Office Hours

- 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.