

**HYMN: #246 (Blue Hymnal) “Joy to the World”**

**TO BE SENT FORTH**

**\*BENEDICTION:**

**Pastor Roger**

**REFLECTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR:**

While creation reveals much about both ourselves and the God who authored it, creation is also limited by our inability to unlock its mysteries and its inability to speak our language and understand our condition.

The birth of Jesus changes all of this. His life reveals the character and person of God in remarkably clear and understandable ways. Because of Jesus we know and understand more fully not only who God is but also who we are.

Through Jesus we know that God is transcendent and ever beyond us but also near, loving, compassionate, the initiator of love, justice, and goodness in the world. Through Jesus we know that we are made to be God’s beloved children, fashioned in God’s image and created for good works as our way of life (Eph. 2:10).

This loving and gracious creator God is always with us. We will never be outside the reach of God’s presence and love in this life or the next.

This is the good news we celebrate during the season of Christmas—and all year long. - Bishop Rueben P. Job

**WORSHIP LEADERS**

**Ministers: All the People**

**Organist: Mark Forkner**

**Pianist: Sharon Fangsrud**

**Ushers:**

**Pastor: Roger Grafenstein**

**Violinist: Kay Forkner**

**Choir Director: Kyle Schwartz**

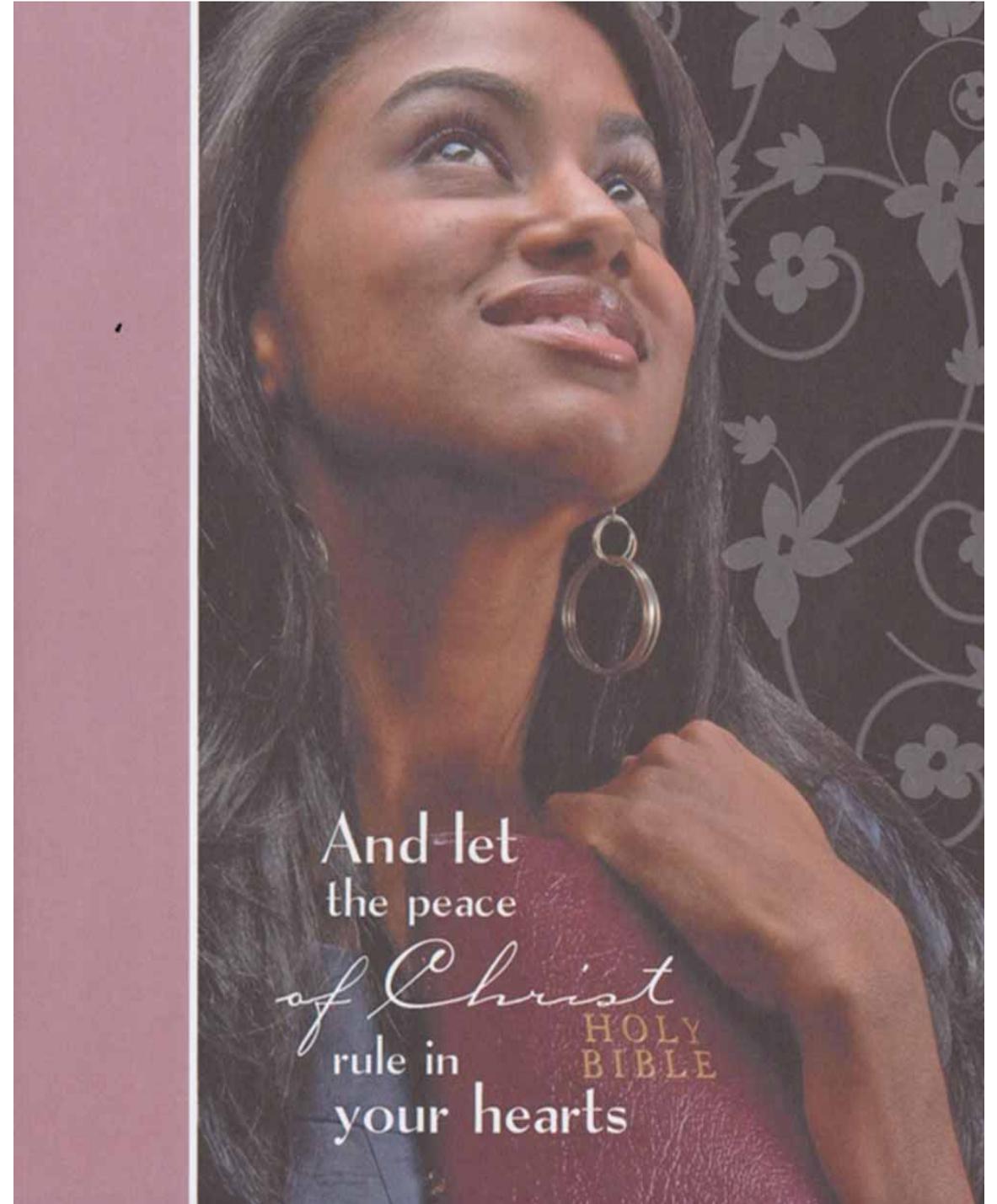
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GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
ORDER OF WORSHIP

December 27, 2015

1st Sunday after Christmas

10:00 AM

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The Church of the Neighborhood  
Making Disciples of Christ to Transform the World.

**WE GATHER TO PRAISE AND PRAY**

**GATHERING PRELUDE:**

Three Chimes calls us to our gathering announcements and Worship  
**Announcements**

\*Indicates those able may stand

***FESTIVAL OF THE NINE LESSONS***

**WE GATHER TO PRAISE AND PRAY**

**FIRST LESSON: Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19 (NRSV) Bonnie Christopherson**

Sin enters the world in the Garden of Eden through the very human actions of Adam and Eve: poor decisions, passing the blame, unwillingness to admit to doing something wrong while feeling the guilt within. God may have forgiven. They did not ask.

**HYMN: #196 (Blue Hymnal) Men: 1<sup>st</sup> verse & Women: 2<sup>nd</sup> verse**  
**“Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”**

**SECOND LESSON: Genesis 22:15-18 (NRSV) Lori Burkhardt**

God promises Abraham and Sarah, an elderly childless couple, that they and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed by their descendants. Even as humans lose their way, God seeks a way to guide and bless all people.

**THIRD LESSON: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 (NRSV) Naomi Grow**

The prophet foretells the birth of a holy king to a people who live in dark times.

**HYMN: #230 (Blue Hymnal) “O Little Town of Bethlehem”**

**FOURTH LESSON: Micah 5:2-5a (NRSV) Kathy Anderson**

A holy and humble king is coming who will usher in a reign of justice for the poor and peace for all God’s people.

**HYMN: #238 (Blue Hymnal) “Angels We Have Heard on High”**

***SHARING OF JOYS, CONCERNS, AND PRAYERS:***

**Pastor Roger Grafenstein**

**THE LORDS PRAYER #895 (Blue Hymnal)**

**FIFTH LESSON: Luke 1:26-35, 38 (NRSV) Paul Anderson**

(Angel Gabriel Enters)

God sends a messenger—the angel Gabriel—to invite a young woman named Mary to be part of a world-changing plan. She says “yes” to the king and invites us to decide how we can say “yes” to God’s plans today.

**SIXTH LESSON: Luke 2:1-7 (NRSV) Nancy Howe**

(Mary, Joseph & baby Jesus Enter)

Amidst a backdrop of confusion, emperors, taxes, greed, and a housing shortage, Jesus is born.

**SEVENTH LESSON: Luke 2:8-26 (NRSV) Julie Possehl**

(Shepherds Enter)

The first to greet the new king are those on the fringes of society, working the night shift, following the sheep. Their hearts are ready.

**HYMN: #245 (Blue Hymnal) vv. 1-3 “The First Noel”**

**North Side—1st verse, South Side 2nd verse, All—3rd verse**

**EIGHTH LESSON : Matthew 2:1-11 (NRSV) Stephanie Grow**

(Wise Ones Enter)

Those who can read the signs, even if they come from foreign lands and religions are the next to gather around the baby Jesus. Royalty recognizes royalty—and brings gifts.

**OFFERING HYMN: #234 (Blue Hymnal) “O Come, All Ye Faithful” VV.1-4**

Ushers please bring offerings to the manger during the 4th verse.

**NINTH LESSON: John 1:1-14 (NRSV) Pastor Roger**

From the very beginning God’s love was beyond our imagining; as soon as we think we can fully comprehend we hear, God’s son was with God and was God and was part of the act of creation itself. Jesus was the Word of creation, the light of the first day, the part of God that put on flesh that we might put on eternity.