



8989 Woodlands Pkwy, The Woodlands TX. 77382 / Phone: 281-296-0911 / [www.gracewoodlands.org](http://www.gracewoodlands.org)

*To all who are spiritually weary and seek rest;  
to all who mourn and long for comfort;  
to all who struggle and desire victory;  
to all who sin and need a Savior;  
to all who are strangers and want fellowship;  
to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness;  
and to all who will come,  
this church opens wide her doors  
and offers welcome  
in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

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**Church Staff & Officers**

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**David J. Wilcher**  
*Lead Pastor*

**Kyle Bobos**  
*Children's Ministries*

**Caleb McDuffee**  
*Student Ministries*

**Elders**

*Brent Allmon  
Dan Brink  
Jon Green  
Rob McIntosh  
Mark Moore  
Andy Yung*

**Deacons**

*Matt Bradshaw  
Mike Bellin  
Rhonnie Bellin  
Jeff Cranford  
Mark Hill  
Scott Johnston  
Mike Ryan  
Joe Tison  
Sunny Yung*

Grace Church is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

## *Reflections*

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Spirituality is a slippery term but the phenomenon itself is not new. Christian spirituality is nothing other than life in Christ by the presence and power of the Spirit: being conformed to the person of Christ, and being united in communion with God and with others. Spirituality is not an aspect of the Christian life; it is the Christian life.

– Michael Downey  
*in America*

Feelings come and go, and when they come a good use can be made of them: they cannot be our regular spiritual diet.

– C.S. Lewis  
*The World's Last Night*

# Grace Presbyterian Church

The Lord's Day, December 29, 2019

*First Sunday in Christmastide*

10:30 am

## Prelude

## Words of Welcome

## Preparation for Worship<sup>1</sup>

\_\_\_\_\_ *Praise* \_\_\_\_\_

## Call to Worship

- based on Isaiah 9:2

Minister: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;

*People: On those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.*

Minister: Jesus Christ is our life and light.

*All: In his name and in his power, let us worship God!*

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<sup>1</sup> As a courtesy, please program all communication devices to silent mode. Thank you!

**Song of Praise**

*Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*

**Prayer of Adoration**

**Song of Adoration**

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

**Private Praise and Adoration**

\_\_\_\_\_ *Renewal* \_\_\_\_\_

**Scripture Reading**

**Isaiah 55:6-7**

Seek the Lord while he may be found;  
call on him while he is near.  
Let the wicked forsake their ways  
and the unrighteous their thoughts.  
Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them,  
and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

**Confession of Sin**

*Minister &  
People:*

*God of love, all year long we pursue power and money, yet you come in weakness. All season long we covet great material gifts, when you alone offer what is lasting. Through the work of this Lord Jesus, who comes among us full of grace and truth,  
forgive us,  
heal us,  
correct us.*

*Then open our lips, that we may sing your praise with the angels, and remake our lives, that we may witness to your transforming love. Through Christ, our Lord.*

**Private Confession and Reflection**

## Words of Encouragement

—based on Isaiah 52:9-10; Luke 2:14

Break forth together into singing,  
you ruins of Jerusalem;  
for the Lord has comforted his people,  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.  
The Lord has bared his holy arm  
before the eyes of all the nations;  
and all the ends of the earth shall see  
the salvation of our God.

People of God, through the coming of Jesus Christ,  
whose birth we celebrate,  
the Lord has comforted and redeemed us too!  
In Christ we receive the salvation of our God.  
Glory to God in the highest!

## Song of Thanksgiving

*Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

## The Peace of God and Announcements

Minister: The peace of Christ be with you.

*People: And also with you!*

If parents prefer, children 4 years old – 2nd grade are invited to attend Children's Church in the Education Building at this time.

## The Prayers of the People (concluded with the Lord's prayer)

*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 forever. Amen!*

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*Commitment*

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**The Offering**

The offering is a way for members and friends of Grace Church to support the church's mission and ministry. If you are our guest today, please feel under no compulsion to give.

**Scripture Reading**

**Romans 7:21-25**

So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? 25 Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

**Sermon**

**Mr. Brad Wright**

*Spiritual Struggle and Triumph*

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*Communion*

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*Guidelines for Reception of Communion*

*Communion is the family meal for Christians. We welcome all committed followers of Jesus Christ to partake of this sacrament: those who are baptized members of a congregation which proclaims the gospel, who are at peace with God and with their neighbor, and who seek strength to live more faithfully for Christ. If you are not a Christian, or if you are not prepared to share in this meal, we encourage you to spend this time in prayer using the prayers that follow as guidelines. We hope that this time is helpful as you consider your relationship with Jesus Christ, and with his people, the church.*

## The Great Thanksgiving

Minister:       Therefore, lift up your hearts.  
*People:*        *We lift them up to the Lord.*  
Minister:       Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.  
*People:*        *It is right to give him thanks and praise!*

## Song of Communion

*Angels We Have Heard On High*

## Prayer of Consecration and the Words of Institution

### Prayer for those not communing:

#### Prayer for Covenant Children (Not Yet Confirmed)

Lord Jesus, thank you for placing me inside your family, the church. Help me more and more to know you, to love you, and to follow you as your faithful disciple. Amen.

#### Prayer for Those Searching for Truth

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth and the life. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life that you promise. Amen.

#### Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but, through you, I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared to hope. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior. Amen.

#### Prayer for Those Struggling with Sin

Lord Jesus, grant that I may see in you the fulfillment of all my needs, and may turn from every false satisfaction to feed on you, the true and living bread. Enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely, and run with perseverance the race set before me, looking only to you, the author and finisher of my faith. Amen.



### Prayer of Commitment

Lord Jesus, you have called us to follow you in baptism and in a life of committed discipleship in your church. Grant that I may take the necessary steps to be one with your people, and live in the fullness of your Spirit. Amen.

### **Distribution of the Bread and the Cup**

Grace Presbyterian uses wine in the celebration of Holy Communion. If you prefer non-alcoholic grape juice, please take a cup from the outer circle of the tray. Gluten-free wafers are provided in cups in the center of the cup trays. Please hold the elements until all have received so we can celebrate this meal together.

### **Silent Prayer during Communion**

### **Song of Commitment**

*Joy to the World*

### **Benediction<sup>2</sup>**

The joy of the angels,  
the eagerness of the shepherds,  
the perseverance of the Magi,  
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,  
and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas.  
And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be upon you and remain with you always. Amen.

### **Dismissal**

Minister: Now, let us go forth to serve this community and the world as those who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

*All: Thanks be to God!*

The pastoral staff and other church leaders are available following the service to pray with you or to answer your questions about the Christian faith or Grace Church.

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<sup>2</sup> The benediction is much more than a wish or even a prayer. It is a renewed ordination of the people of God to their service to each other, to their community and the world. God declares his own favor toward his people.

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*Worship Music*<sup>3</sup>

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Thank you for sharing your gifts and talents with Grace Presbyterian Church.

Brent Allmon, saxophone  
David Fox, keyboard  
Damon Henrichs, guitar

Debra Moses, flute  
Rae Moses, piano  
Jennifer Reddick, flute

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**Sermon Notes**

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**Romans 7:21-25**

*Spiritual Struggle and Triumph*

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<sup>3</sup>All songs except hymns are copied under CCL # 1214497. The hymns are reprinted from *Trinity Hymnal* (© 1990, Great Commission Publications). Used by permission. All Scripture is quoted from, unless otherwise indicated, the *THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION*®, *NIV*® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by *Biblica, Inc.*™ Used by permission

**Welcome, Guests!** We are excited you're here with us today. We hope that you were warmly welcomed and would love for you to be a part of Grace. Please take a moment to fill out the visitor information on the back of the bulletin, tear it off and drop it in the offering plate or give it on to an usher.

**Parents of Infants - Three-Yr Olds:** Our nursery and early-childhood classes provide a warm, nurturing, and well-supervised environment. Our workers welcome the opportunity to love your child! When using the nursery, please check in and label all items (bags, cups, etc.) with your child's name. If you need assistance or have any questions about the Nursery, please contact our Nursery Coordinator, Kate Weimar, at [mothersdayout@gracewoodlands.org](mailto:mothersdayout@gracewoodlands.org).

**Cry Room:** A cry room is available for the comfort of our new parents in order to ensure that everyone enjoys our services. It is located in the back of the sanctuary and it is well equipped (comfortable rockers, changing table, etc.) but if you are in need of anything, one of our ushers will be glad to assist.

### **Sunday Mornings at Grace**

8:30 am Prayer	10:30 am Worship
9:30 am Christian Education Classes	11:45 am Intercession
10:15 am Coffee Break	

**Sunday Morning Prayer Ministry:** To clasp hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world. We would like to invite you to be a part of this uprising at 8:30 each Sunday morning in the Prayer Room (114). Join us as we pray for the expansion of God's Kingdom.

**All Christian Education Classes and Community Groups** are on holiday break and will resume in the New Year.

**Grace Life: New Year's Sunday Lunch January 12th, 2020** - Let's ring in the New Year together! There will be a potluck immediately following worship. Please bring one of your favorite dishes to share (the sign-up sheet is available on the Narthex Table). We will also have the opportunity to meet and greet one of our new mission partners, Krystal Watson. Krystal is with Pioneers Missions and will be serving with the Bosnia Team in 2020. If you can help with set up/clean-up, please text Wendy Fox.

#### **Children's Ministries:**

- **Children's Christian Education** classes are offered for Preschoolers (2-3yrs old), Pre-K and Kindergarten, 1st-2nd Grade, 3rd-4th Grade, and 5th-6th Grade. Classes meet in the Education Building at 9:30 am 2nd Grade and under are on the 1st floor, 3rd Grade and above meet on the 2nd floor.
- **Children's Church** is offered for children ages 4 years old through 2nd grade. During passing of the peace, the children line up with their leader in the back of the sanctuary to exit worship. During the song of communion, children will rejoin their families to observe communion with the rest of the church body. We gather in room 108 in the Education Building to sing songs, pray, and hear a children's sermon. We also collect a children's offering during the service. This format is designed to model worship for our children and teach them the importance of meeting together as the body of Christ.
- **SNiCK and 56ers** are on holiday break and will resume in the New Year.

**Student Ministries** is designed for students 7th grade through 12th grade. If you would like to be put on the mailing list for Student Ministries, or would like more information about an upcoming youth event, or have any questions at all, contact Caleb McDuffee at [caleb@gracewoodlands.org](mailto:caleb@gracewoodlands.org). Have your student connect with us on Instagram (called GPCyouth) or ask to be put in our Youth group GroupMe, our primary medium for communication to hear about upcoming youth group events!

- **Christian Education:** On Sunday mornings from 9:30-10:15 am, we gather to know more deeply about our Lord and Savior and who we are in Christ. Join us on Sunday mornings in room 206. Currently we are on break until January 12th.
- **Youth Group** on Wednesday nights is on break until January 15th.

- **Ranchopalooza** is our annual Sr. High retreat on February 28th to March 1st at Stoney Creek Ranch! The cost per Student is \$155 for the weekend. At Ranchopalooza the gospel is preached, relationships are strengthened, students are introduced to college ministers, and Christ is celebrated. This year's speaker is Wil Nettleton, the campus minister for RUF @ Trinity University. Talk to Caleb to sign up or ask for more information.

**Women's Ministry Events and More!** If you have any questions about Women's Ministry contact Natalie Webster at nataliekate.webster@gmail.com or join the Women's Ministry on E-Connect to get involved.

- **Women's Bible Study** is on holiday break and will resume in the New Year.
- **Rain Walks** is a grief support group for women who are dealing with the loss of a loved one, either recently or in the past. Please come to listen (and share if you like) as we discuss our journeys and ways to "walk" through our loss. Rain Walks meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 8:30 am at Black Walnut Cafe in The Woodlands. Contact Sabrina Amell for more information.

**Men's Fraternal:** We are looking for men who would like to support the men's events and planning. Please contact John at John.weimar@icloud.com, with interest and to learn more on the specific needs.

- **Brew Night:** Our next monthly men's gathering is set for Thursday, Jan. 16th for dinner and fellowship starting at 6:30 pm. Join us at Wings 'N More (16580 I-45 South) for dinner and fellowship starting at 6:30 pm.

**GraceCares:** Caring for the church and the community. If you are interested in helping with GraceCares and the needs of the church and the community, please contact Joe Tison.

- **Autumn Grove:** Just a few minutes drive from Grace, Autumn Grove Cottage, a sixteen resident assisted living home, provides care to men and women with Alzheimer's. A small group from Grace visits roughly once a month for about 30 minutes or so to sing, pray and visit with the residents. Contact Dan Brink for more information. We welcome anyone and everyone.
- **Meals Ministry:** There are events in life when we all need the help and encouragement from our community. The Meals Ministry seeks to enter into these times by providing meals. If you are in need of meals, or would like to help provide meals for others, please contact our Coordinator, Rhonnie Bellin.
- **Giving:** If you would like to know the best way to support those who might have needs in our church and community, we would encourage you to consider giving to the Deacon's Fund. It is through the deacons and their ministry that Grace church provides for, supports and comes alongside those who are in need. If you have questions, please contact Matt Bradshaw.
- **Prayer Ministry:** Our desire at Grace is that we take seriously the privilege of prayer and there are several ways you can participate. If you become aware of a prayer need, please communicate this to us in one of the following ways:
  - **In writing:** Fill out the back page of the bulletin and place it in the offering plate.
  - **By phone:** 281-296-0911 (Church Office)

Your requests will be communicated to our Church Staff, Officers, and our Prayer Team. If you would like to be on our Prayer Team, please let us know.

**Missions Service Opportunities & Events:** Contact John Zeigler for more information or to be added to our GraceMissions email list or to connect with a missions team advocate at 936-494-8631.

- **December Prayer Partners**
  - Grace Presbyterian Diaconate
  - Wil and Mary Nettleton, RUF @ Trinity University
- **Thank you from Tamina!** Shirley and Ranson Grimes send Christmas greetings and a warm thank you to Grace for all the Christmas gifts that were donated. The children and their parents are so grateful for your generosity.
- **Local Missions Partners**
  - Cornerstone of Houston Team Counseling | The Woodlands, TX
  - Interfaith Family Services | The Woodlands, TX
  - Montgomery County Women's Center | Montgomery County, TX
  - Pregnancy Assistance Center North | The Woodlands, TX
  - Redeemed Ministries | The Woodlands, TX

- Tamina Community Center | Conroe, TX
- Oaklawn Presbyterian Church | Houston, TX
- Juan Carlos & Samara Martínez | RUF | Rice University
- Brooks & Meredith Harwood | RUF | University of Houston
- Grace Presbyterian ESL Ministry
- Grace Presbyterian Diaconate
- **National Missions Partners**
  - Robbie & Kelly Mills | New City Fellowship Dallas | Dallas, TX
  - David & Kelly Richter | Somerville Project | Boston, MA
  - Way & Amy Rutherford | RUF | Baylor University
  - William & Katherine Bondurant | RUF | Texas A & M University
  - Ryan & Laura Anderson | RUF | Texas Christian University
  - Wil & Mary Nettleton | RUF | Trinity University
  - John & Chrissy Trapp | RUF | University of Texas
  - Curtis & Marian Castleberry | RUF | University of Texas at San Antonio
  - Francis A. Schaeffer Institute, Covenant Theological Seminary | St. Louis, MO
  - Southwest Church Planting Network | Dallas, TX
- **International Missions Partners**
  - Arab Baptist Theological Seminary / Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development | Beirut, Lebanon
  - Titus & Crystal Bagby | RUF International | Texas A & M University
  - Terry & Mary Rose Dykstra | RUF International | University of Texas
  - Charles & Bonita Davidson | MTW | Monterrey, Mexico
  - Joe & Felicity Congdon | MTW | Yokkaichi, Japan
  - Andy & Missy Shadburne | MTW | Fremantle, Perth, Australia
  - David & Eowyn Stoddard | MTW | Berlin, Germany
  - Kay Burklin | MTW | Refugee Liaison, Europe
  - Mission to The World | Atlanta, GA

**Banners Explained:** Advent is the beginning of the Church Year for most churches in the Western tradition. The primary color is Purple. This is the color of penitence and fasting as well as the color of royalty to welcome the Advent of the King. This color is also the color of suffering and points to an important connection between Jesus’ birth and death. Advent is marked by a spirit of expectation, of anticipation, of preparation, of longing.

The banner on the left comes from Isaiah 11:1 “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.” The prophet Isaiah looks forward to a time when Jesus, a king far mightier than David Jesse’s son, would come to rule the world with justice, mercy, and love.

The banner on the right depicts an advent wreath. The green leaves and holly symbolize life brought to us in Jesus, and each Sunday a candle is lit in preparation for the arrival of the Messiah. The white center candle is lit on Christmas eve, and symbolizes purity and truth.

**Stewardship Update:** Grace thanks you so much for your generous gifts and offerings to our Savior for November 2019.

	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Budget	62,666	689,326
Actual General Fund	63,721	708,813
Variance	1,055	19,487

**Grace Online** gives users access to the church directory and event calendar. Users can also join groups, print giving statements and give online. If you need any online instructions contact Dianna in the office at 281-296-0911 or admin@gracewoodlands.org.

- **Website:** Grace Online directory link, gracewoodlands.org under the Connect tab.

- **Mobile App (Elexio Community)** can be found by clicking the Apple App Store and Google Play icons on the church website. To log on, replace "Domain" with gracewoodlands and use your directory username and password for the app.
- **Online Giving:** If you would like to give online, you will need to set up an account, the link is under the Care tab on our website.

We are glad to have you as our guest today. Please use this page to let us know of your visit and to make us aware of any ideas, suggestions or concerns you may have. You may deposit this page in the offering plate as it comes by, or give it to an usher or greeter. Have confidence that no one will call or drop by your home; this is for us to have a record of your visit or your prayer requests.

Name, Email & Cell Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse, Email & Cell Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Children, Age & Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Please let us know if you are:

- Visitor                       Regular Attendee                       One time visit from out of town

I am interested in learning about:

- Community Groups     Music                       Usher, Greeter  
 Sunday Volunteer     Children's Ministry     Women's Ministry  
 Student Ministry       Men's Ministry           Membership

Prayer Request:

I would like to speak with someone about this prayer request or other spiritual concern; please have someone contact me at: \_\_\_\_\_.

I would like the prayer team to pray for the following needs or concerns:

*Prayer of Belief...*

*Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am weaker and more  
 sinful that I ever before believed, but through you, I am  
 more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope.*

*I thank you for paying my debt on the cross, bearing my  
 punishment and offering forgiveness.*

*Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn  
 from my sins and receive you as Savior and Lord. Amen.*