

Worship

November 27, 2011
First Sunday of Advent

Here, then, is real hope: not that we passionately want to be more and do more, but that the one who creates and sustains and cares for the universe waits for us to create and sustain and care, too. So consider: Hope doesn't start with you, depend on you, or end with you. It starts, depends, and ends in Jesus Christ. He connects you to the Father and fills you with the Spirit, empowering you to meet others with the grace that every relationship will require. And when grace is mutually given, hope begins moving afresh.

So, what might happen if, somehow, that hope began abiding in me? Will I hope for all that can be? Will I grasp that the Creator of the universe knows more of me than I can ever imagine? Hope says yes. - Alex Davis, *On Advent*.

Expressing Our Love and Praise: Worship in Song

Community Together: Prayers of the People

Welcoming Each Other (Kids may go to Sunday School)

Giving Back to God: Offering

Please use the tear-off on the back so we can let you know about upcoming events. Gifts to Grace Hill support the life and work of our community; our budget maintains for twenty percent of gifts to go to works of local and global mission.

Hearing God's Word: Scripture Reading Luke 1.5-25

5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

8 Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, 9 according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. 11 And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And

Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. 14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, 15 for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, 17 and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

18 And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." 19 And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. 20 And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." 21 And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. 22 And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. 23 And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

24 After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, 25 "Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

Understanding God's Word and Our Lives: Sermon

Be Prepared

1. Elizabeth and Zechariah were in need of a blessing Luke 1:5-7
2. God chose to bless Elizabeth and Zechariah in His timing Luke 1:8-14
3. Zechariah and Elizabeth had prepared differently for the blessing Luke 1:15-25



Grace Hill Church

To live out a hopeful, credible, Biblical picture of God's grace and truth in Jesus Christ
and to grow together in maturity and mission.

Recognizing our Brokenness: Confession of Sin

Public Reading

Father, forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. (Matthew 6.12,13)

Father, we confess many of us hold on to personal disappointments and disgraces in a deep, dark interior closet kept from view. We don't think that your love and strength can heal them, so we don't let see them or let you in. But it is not our place to determine what you can do and desire to do in us. Forgive us. Give us faith and courage to offer you our pain as well as our praise.

Private Reflection

The Grace and Forgiveness of Christ

Jesus came into this world in a morally suspect birth. He had no riches, no home, his friends deserted him in his arrest. He was mocked, spit upon, and scourged as a most treacherous criminal. He died the most ignominious and embarrassing death possible. He was buried in a borrowed tomb. He chose this. He has taken our shame. Our disgrace ends with his death. Our reproach and self-reproach are swallowed up in his resurrection. In Christ we are forgiven and remade. He has the authority to declare who we are, and in Him, by his death and resurrection, he says we are clean, honorable, acquitted and loved.

Remembering Jesus with Bread and Cup: Lord's Supper

Jesus called those who find their life in His death and resurrection to receive the bread and cup as a tangible sign to remember and be strengthened by His Gospel. It is a spiritual meal for all who believe in Him. While Jesus spent time with everyone, he also shared the bread and cup only with those who followed him. Children who have not yet become *communing members* should not take the bread and cup but talk with our pastor or an elder about their personal faith.

On the first and third Sundays of the month, we come forward as families, groups and individuals to receive the bread and cup and for a prayer of blessing. The second, fourth and fifth Sundays, we remain seated, with time to personally remember Jesus' death and resurrection for us with the bread and cup. Whether you take the elements or not, we encourage you to either come forward for prayer or use the time for personal reflection about your relationship with Jesus.

**Juice is in the outer ring; wine is in inner rings.*

Taking hold of the Good Word: Benediction ("the good word")

"May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word." 2 Thess. 2: 16, 17

Prayers for Those Not Taking the Bread and Cup

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth

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

Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am more wicked and sinful than I ever dared allow, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt on the cross, to give me complete forgiveness and rightness with God. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, in joy I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Amen.

Grace Hill Financial Information:

- Ave. Monthly expenses (approx.): \$14,000
- Ave. Monthly 2011 Core Group giving: \$11,146
- October 2011 Core Group giving: \$9,154
- Starting January 2012, monthly external giving will be: \$1,667
- Projected monthly shortfall starting Jan 2012 based on Oct giving: \$3,179

Grace Hill Upcoming Events:

- December 4th: Birthday Party for Jesus. 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm. Crafts, singing and potluck for the whole family. Please RSVP at [facebook.com/gracehillchurch](https://www.facebook.com/gracehillchurch).
- December 24: Christmas Eve Service. 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm. A family oriented time to remember Jesus' birth.
- December 25: Christmas Day. 10:00 am. A simple family worship service.
- Interested in joining the next cycle of Women's Tues pm study? Talk to Cathy Durham.
- Men's Tues am study, 6:30 am at Grace Hill.



**Grace
Hill
Church**

Grace Hill is a church that seeks to live by and testify to the grace and truth of Jesus Christ (see John 1.14-18). We are affiliated with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, a denomination with a rich history of Christ's grace and truth. Our pastor is Ross Durham; he can be reached by email at ross@gracehillchurch.net or by cell phone at 919.593.2169.

Our Worship Director is Michael Musser and our Children's Ministry Co-Directors are Robyn Musser and Kaylyn Fernandez.

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