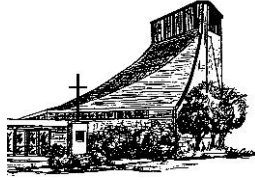


Message of Grace

Web Version

December 2011
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Get on our email list. Send an email to office@gracelutheran1.org to let Sue know you want to be added to the list.

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Preparation

Luke 2:10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: (2:11) to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.



Advent is a time of preparation. All of us know what it is like to get ready for something. We prepare ourselves in the morning to go about our day. We prepare our kids for new experiences and challenges in life. Preparation is about getting ready for an important future event. This month we prepare for a lot as Christmas is just right around the corner. Many of you are getting ready to travel or getting ready to host family members at your homes. While thinking of this idea of getting ready for something I cannot help but think of Mary and Joseph preparing for Jesus.

We all know that Jesus' birth was no ordinary event. Mary and Joseph were on the road and were worried. They understood that Jesus was the Son of God and were nervous they were not adequately prepared to be his parents here on earth. Furthermore, since they were on the road, and away from home, they could not find a suitable place to give birth to Jesus. So they went to a barn, the only place they could go.

Mary and Joseph did not feel prepared to be parents to the Son of God. When they were told, their first reaction was not excitement—their first reaction was fear. But *God was with them* and worked through them so that they could fulfill their task as parents. There are many times in life where we feel unprepared for the tasks that God has called us to. Like Mary and Joseph we may feel unprepared to handle the challenges life sometimes brings. But *God promises to be with us no matter what*. Christmas will bring many things. We may receive gifts and time with loved ones. But the most important thing that comes to us is the light of Christ.



In Christ
Pastor Andy

Council Meeting Notes November 15, 2011

George and Elise Zimmermann addressed the Council with a proposed new ministry with the purpose of caring for our members in time of need, such as illness or recovery after hospitalization, and elder care. They had prepared a short list of suggestions and concerns to be considered by the Council. It was agreed that they would flesh out the description and the Outreach Team will work with them to get something started. The other main topic at the November meeting was the budget for 2012. A draft of the proposed budget will be available for the members to view and comment on in December. The final draft will be available in January a week before the congregational meeting. The next council meeting will be held Dec 13th at 7:00 pm. Joint team meetings will be held Dec 6th at 6:30 pm.

Grace Lutheran Financial Report – October 2011

Income vs Expenses	Income YTD	Expenses YTD	Income Oct	Expenses Oct
Budget	\$211,307	\$211,307	\$21,131	\$21,131
Actual	\$196,061	\$198,019	\$22,181	\$22,770
Over/Under Budget	(\$15,246)	(\$13,286)	\$1,050	(\$1,639)
Balance 10/31/11: [\$3,257] (negative balance)				

Praise Report from Joan and Rick Rzonca

It was requested that the message below be shared with you –

Veterans Day was this past November 11th, a Friday, and both my husband and I went to one of the many Veteran memorial services held in McHenry, this one being at NIMC hospital. I was able to get a listing of the approximately 75 items most needed by our military serving overseas. The next morning I emailed about 10 members of our congregation, copied the list of items and asked if any of these items were in their home or, if they were going out shopping would they pick up one or two of the items listed and bring to church the next day Sunday. You cannot believe how many bags of items were received in just 24 hours. The bags were collected and brought to NIMC where they would be mixed in with hundreds of other items to be shipped for the holidays to individual military personnel with APO, etc. addresses. This was truly a show of 'over and above the call of duty', and in our lives how the true Christian spirit and love of one another works within us.

Stewardship Ministry

We would like to thank everyone for participating in our "Shower of Blessings", especially those who did the readings and Bible verses for us and Marty Heynis for all the work he did producing the "Showers" for our finale of Showers of Blessings project. He is our model steward.

We handed out the pledge cards on Nov. 20th. We would like you to put them in an envelope and return them to the church by Dec. 4th. We are trying to save money by not mailing them. However, those who we do not receive a card from by Dec. 4th will receive a letter and card in the mail. We all have the abilities to be stewards. Many good things have been accomplished in the past four months. Please help us continue to grow with your Talents, Time and Treasures.

Stewardship Contact: Carol Jean Steadman kate@stans.com or 815-338-0490

Treats for the Food Pantry!



Oct 30th, members of Grace Lutheran Sunday School are about to set out to the Richmond food pantry with items they had collected at the Trunk or Treat event the night before. Great job!

From the Outreach Team



The **Outreach Cafe** normally serves breakfast on the fourth Sunday each month but since that falls on Christmas Day, there will be **no Café in December**. Please remember the food pantry! What a blessing if everyone would donate just one item each Sunday.

To donate or volunteer to serve for **PADS** December 1st or January 5th, see Curt Bjorklund, email him at chbjorklund@hotmail.com or call 815-529-7746.

Outreach Contact: Chris Bjorklund dreamstar_00@msn.com, 815-675-2765

The Gifts for the Giving Tree at Christmas Are Due Back Dec 4th!

Thank you for adopting all of the children on the Giving Tree again this year! The **Salvation Army and Angel Tree Prison Ministry (for children of incarcerated parents) fill a great need and you are helping them do that**. Please consider helping out with packing and delivery. All gifts are to be brought in by December 4th. There are also other ways you can help the Salvation Army efforts, like unloading gifts, displaying them and assisting the shoppers. See Chris Bjorklund for a list or go to their website www.salarmycl.org.

Please Join Us for Christmas Caroling December 4th!



Outreach will be Christmas Caroling on Sunday, December 4th and we'd like to invite everyone to join in the fun. **Families are invited to bake Christmas cookies together and to decorate the bags that will hold the cookies**. Anyone wishing to bake cookies at home and donate them may drop off their cookies on the Welcome Center through December 4th. If you'd like to sing, we will be leaving the church parking lot at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday the 4th and caroling in several Richmond neighborhoods. Music sheets will be provided. This event is a great way to share the true spirit of Christmas with each other and with our community. See Tina Peterson if you have questions.

New Members Received November 6th

We were blessed to have SEVEN families join us on November 6th. Please welcome them!

Dave & Deb Billig, Sam, Seth and Nate; Lisa Clark, Rocco, Madelyn, Mason, Holly, Chloe and Julianne; Jay & Thorey Ellis, Joseph, Matthew and Justine; Monica Heide, Sheri and Dean; Chuck & Elaine Oslakovic; Kim Schmidt, Liam and Dylan; Corey & Dawn Weinfurter, Owen and Erynn.

If you see someone you don't recognize, please introduce yourself and make them feel welcome.

What Happened to the Shepherd's Dinners??

Due to the great number of activities this fall and Pastor's busy schedule, it has been decided to postpone the Shepherd's Dinners until after the holidays. If you had already signed up we hope you will still participate. We'll have specific dates for you to sign up for beginning sometime in January. Thank you for your understanding.

Do We Have Your Correct Address & Phone Number?

Since many people are dropping their land-line telephones for cell phones and others have moved or changed emails in the last few years we'd like to make sure we put good information in our new directory. December 4th and December 11th you will have an opportunity to see what contact information we have for you and make changes or corrections before the directory is printed. If you won't be in church either week, please contact the church office at 815-678-3082 or by email at office@gracelutheran1.org no later than December 11th to make any changes.

Thank you!

News from Women of the ELCA (WELCA)

Entering another busy month with the Holy Days coming up and with days ahead filled with excitement, happiness and a continuing spirit of goodness, sharing and benevolence in all that we do for our church and for all peoples who need a helping hand. Each group has a commitment to each other and WELCA strives to help with the needs of the church and its other ministries.

At this time, we are about to close our reservations at Twin Oaks Country Inn restaurant for WELCA's annual Christmas Luncheon on Saturday, December 3rd. Other members from other ministries join in the festivities as it is time for a celebration of faith and camaraderie.

Next month we'll let you know how much money we made at the Bake, Craft and Silent Auction sale held on November 20th. The figures are still coming in and for those items where no bids were received WELCA will display the items again. Some of the craft items will also be displayed again.

The Sunday school will be having their Christmas program on Sunday, December 18th and we have been asked to bake some cookies for their program.

The remaining budgeted item for this year that WELCA agreed to was the recovering of the vinyl chair seats or backs, or both, where needed. There are about 30+ at last count. Scheduled completion is sometime mid December.

We will not be holding a regular meeting in December for the WELCA ladies. We will have a brief meeting at our Christmas luncheon on December 3rd at the Twin Oaks Country Inn restaurant.

The following is a heads up for January's meeting. As in the past, Marie Pickering will be hosting the WELCA meeting at her lovely home in Richmond which will remain decorated from the Holidays. The time and date will be Monday, January 9th at 4:00 pm and all ladies of the church are invited. If you need a ride to or from a meeting, please contact Carol Heuer

WELCA Contact: Carol Heuer at 815-678-7516

Won't you put these items on your list?

Deposit your food pantry items into the basket in the Narthex hallway by the office or in the baskets by the communion rail. Remember more families must rely on their local food pantry for food during these difficult economic times. We are still collecting the tabs from aluminum cans the proceeds of which benefit families of ill children while they are cared for at the Ronald McDonald facility in Milwaukee. Continue to save your Sentry store receipts from the Twin Lakes and Burlington stores. Ask the clerk to please put the sticker marked 'Funds For Friends' on your receipt and bring them to church and deposit in the box in the Narthex marked accordingly. We receive \$.01 for every dollar spent and you would be surprised how the pennies add up to dollars.

† Always Remember †

† Prayers for our shut-ins and those recuperating from an illness or surgery. † Prayers of comfort, a card, a call or even a visit can make a difference in someone's day just knowing they were thought about. † Prayers for our service men and women who are away from home during this holiday season need your prayers and letters now more than ever. † Also, families at home need our prayers of assurance that we are supporting them and their soldier. Bless our military for the sacrifices they make daily to ensure our freedoms. **GOD BLESS AMERICA.**

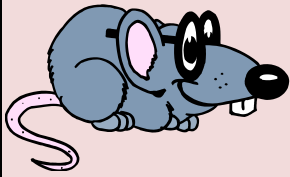
Fellowship Committee News

Two items requiring attention for the month of December are baking cookies for the Sunday school Christmas program which will be held on Sunday, December 18th at the 10:15am service.

Also, baking cookies for the Christmas Caroling on Sunday, December 4th at 3:00 pm. The carolers will be visiting areas of the Richmond community singing the songs of the Holy Season and offering homemade cookies.

Plans for the future include a Chili-fest and a 'Dress Your Own Baked Potato' and other get-togethers in the spirit of fellowship to bring us all together. More definite plans - dates, times, etc. will be in our future newsletters.

Contact: Doris Rockenbach 262-248-0577



Bits and Pieces from The Church Mouse

Hello – Are you getting ready for Christmas? It is December already and I noticed people scurrying around getting things ready for Christmas. In our congregation (my family), everyone has been very generous in giving; such as with the Giving Tree for the Salvation Army and the Angel Tree Prison Ministry. Remember that all gifts are to be brought in by December 4th. Even though I am small, I like helping out because it makes me feel all warm inside. Contact Chris Bjorklund at 815-675-2765 if you have any questions.

*The **Christmas worship schedule is Christmas Eve at 5:00 pm and 11:00 pm. On Christmas Day, worship is at 10:00 am.** I love going to church on these special occasions. I get to see all of my friends and smiles on their faces.*

A special "Thank you" to Chuck and Dorothy Simmerman for their donation of the beautiful oak table in the Narthex.

*The **Young At Heart Seniors** will be meeting on **Thursday, December 1, 2011 at 11:15 am.** Cheryle Walls will be preparing the meal. The menu will be sirloin tips with gravy, noodles, vegetable, salad and rolls. Mario, a One-Man Band, will be the entertainment. This would be music to ears and a full belly for me! If you have any questions, please contact Carol Heuer at 815-678-7516 or Doris Rockenbach at 262-248-0577.*

*Your donations for the **food pantry** are appreciated especially at this time of year when the need is great.*

Remember to keep the military and their families in your prayers. They need all of our support.

Merry Christmas to you and your family! (That's my cousin Nick decorating the tree.)



See you next month, er, that would be next YEAR!

Christmas Services Planned



The Sunday School will meet December 4th, 11th and 18th

On Sunday December 18th, at the 10:15 am service, the Sunday School will present their Christmas program. Don't miss it!

Christmas Eve Services Saturday December 24th

5:00 pm

11:00 pm

Christmas Day Service Sunday December 25th

There will be just one service on Christmas Day at 10am

Mark your calendars - on Jan 1st there will be one service at 10 am



December 2011						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>The Advent Season begins 4 Sundays before Christmas, which is Nov 27th this year. Learn more at www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Worship/Planning/Advent.aspx</p> 			<p>FYI, Jan 1st we will have one service at 10:00 am.</p>	<p>1 11:15am Young at Heart</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3 WELCA Christmas Luncheon</p>
<p>4 8:00 am Holy Communion Service 9:15 am Sunday Sch 10:15 am Holy Communion Service</p>	<p>5 4:00 pm WELCA</p>	<p>6 6:30 pm Joint Committee Meeting</p>	<p>7 5:30 pm ALPHA 7:00pm Choir rehearsal</p>	<p>8 5:30 pm Youth Group</p>	<p>9 5:30-10pm Alpha Kid-sitting –Parents' Night Out (or shopping time). No kids in diapers please! Members only</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>11 8:00 am Holy Communion Service 9:15 am Sunday Sch 10:15 am Holy Communion Service</p>	<p>12 Newslett er article deadline</p>	<p>13 7:00 pm Council Meeting</p>	<p>14 5:30 pm ALPHA 7:00pm Choir rehearsal</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>
<p>18 8:00 am Holy Communion Service 9:15 am Sunday Sch 10:15 am Holy Communion Service & Sun Sch Program</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21 7:00pm Choir rehearsal</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 Christmas Eve 5:00 pm Holy Communion 11:00 pm Holy Communion</p>
<p>25 Christmas Day 10:00 am Holy Communion Service</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 New Year's Eve</p>

WORSHIP VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE DECEMBER 2011				
Position	Dec 4 - 8:00	Dec 4 – 10:15	Dec 11– 8:00	Dec 11 – 10:15
Lector	Rita Popenhagen	Mark Greenleaf	Jean Schenk	Tina Atwater
Assistant:	Andy Mayer	Clark Atwater	Nancy O'Connor	Sandy Messick
Computer	Marty Heynis	Denise Lemke	Phil Giannini	Katie Arizzi
Acolytes	Allison Lindley Cody Harren	Alex Hosken Tyler Bassett	Justin Haley Alexis Haley	Rachael Hayden Jacob Renz
Counters	Chris Bjorklund & Marty Heynis		Ron & Sue Chandler	
Ushers	Marty & Jan Heynis	Kim Bokan and Brian Morris	Dave Nelson Tom Ott	Dave & Shannon Borst
Position	Dec 18 – 8:00	Dec 18 – 10:15	Christmas Eve Dec 24–5:00pm	Christmas Eve Dec 24–11:00pm
Lector	Marty Heynis	Kim Bokan	Pam Johnson	Tina Peterson
Assistant:	Dave Popenhagen	Dave Oelert	Tom Weaver	Kelly Steadman
Computer	Tom Ott	Chris Bjorklund	Ken Lapinski	Art Stoike
Acolytes	Sandy Schenk Tiana Ohara	Matthew Borst Madison Woods		
Counters:	Sandy Messick and Deb Oelert		Donnie & Colleen Vineyard	
Ushers	Gary and Stephanie Haley	Carol Heuer Chuck Simmerman	Carol Heuer, Bob & Linda Ketelsen Chuck Simmerman	Marty & Jan Heynis, Rick Rzonca, Art Stoike
Position	Dec 25 – 10:00			Altar Guild for December Jan Heynis Carol Heuer
Lector	Dave Baker			
Assistant:	Clark Atwater			
Computer	Linda Poehlein			
Acolytes				
Counters:	Jon Petersen and Cheryle Walls			
Ushers	Ron & Carol Jean Steadman			

Visit our Website: www.gracelutheran1.org
 Click on Member Directory to look up member photos, phone numbers and addresses.
 Password: martin
 Look for the new directory pages coming soon!

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Services and Classes
 ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
Sunday Worship: Regular : Services at 8 and 10:15 am
Coffee & Fellowship: 9:00 am
Sunday School: 9:15 am; Adult Bible Study: 9:15 am
Family Hour 4th Sunday of the Month w/Outreach Café: 9:15