

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD

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December 2018 & January 2019

The LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me. And this is the contribution that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, goats’ hair, tanned rams’ skins, goatskins, acacia wood, oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece. And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.”
(Exodus 25:1–8; ESV)

Dear Friends in Christ:

After God had brought the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, He gave them instructions to build Him a sanctuary, so that He might dwell in their midst. This tabernacle was to be built with the finest of materials, for it would be God’s dwelling place on earth.

The tabernacle and the many sacrifices performed within it were designed to point people to the coming of Jesus, the One who would rescue all people from their slavery to sin and death by His sacrificial death on the cross for their sins. Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, is also Immanuel, which means “God with us.” Our crucified and risen Lord Jesus dwells with us today in His Church as His Word and Sacraments are rightly proclaimed and administered.

Like that ancient tabernacle, our church, Grace Lutheran Church, is a place where God comes to dwell with His people. We know that Jesus is here, for He promises that “where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them” (Matthew 18:20). And, He says, “behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

Because Jesus is here, it is fitting that our church is beautiful, as was the tabernacle. Great care was taken by those who came before us to bequeath to us such a lovely building for the worship of our God. I am sure the Lannon stone and the slate roof were significant expenses when our present sanctuary was constructed. But I am very glad and grateful to God for the foresight, faithfulness, and generosity of those past generations of Grace members. Their faith and trust in the Lord are displayed in the craftsmanship and beauty of this place we call home. We are indeed “surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1), as we worship God in this beautiful church that they built for Him and for us.

Now, my friends, it is our time to continue their legacy. With profound joy and gratitude, I give thanks to God and to you that we are doing so. Our new elevator addition will be beautiful, too. Great care was taken so that the addition blends in with the rest of the building. Just as important, though, the elevator will serve a very needed functional purpose. It will allow more people to come into our church to receive from our Lord Jesus the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation that He won for them and for the world on the cross.

This combination of beauty and function comes with a significant price tag, though. The elevator addition will cost around \$1,000,000 in total when it is completed. I know this is a lot of money, but having witnessed almost daily the construction work, I understand why the price tag is so high. The

good news is that about half this amount will be paid from past gifts given to our congregation. We also had a very generous donor supply some of the building materials for us, including the steeple, doors, and windows. However, we will still have to borrow up to \$500,000 from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) for the balance of the project. These loan payments will be a major expense in 2019 and in the years following until they are paid off.

So, I am asking you, dear members and friends of Grace, if you are able, to increase your giving to Grace in the new year. In addition, please also consider making a year-end gift toward the elevator project. The more money we receive now, the less we will have to borrow. Your gifts will also have a positive impact on the rest of our church budget, which is projected to be tight in the coming year. (A specially marked donation envelope for the elevator project is included in this newsletter.)

Thank you again for your prayers and for your support of this project. I am excited that the elevator addition is almost completed. We hope it will be ready just in time for Christmas. What a wonderful gift that would be as we celebrate our Lord's birth! God gave us His very best in sending us His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. In response, we are moved by the Holy Spirit to give God our very best with our time, talent, and treasure. May God richly bless our work and giving toward this project, so that this elevator addition may glorify Him and help many to come to know and believe in Jesus, the One who is Immanuel, "God with us."

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Brian Crane

FROM THE BOARD OF ELDERS

Last time when I wrote a newsletter article, it was focused on the expected forthcoming changes Pastor Crane's recent installation would bring. Now over a year later, there have been some changes directly associated with Pastor Crane. And others like the elevator project and having one service that have been in the works long before his arrival are finally being implemented. We are now getting to the end of the tumultuous change period, and on the other side, Grace Lutheran Church should be stronger and more readily available to more people.

Just a reminder, these changes were made for the continued growth and spiritual health of the church. Although there may be brief inconveniences or disagreements, let's not lose focus on the reason that we, as members of Grace, come to church on Sunday: To hear the Word of God, be forgiven of sins through Jesus' death on the cross through the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and marked as a child of God through the Sacrament of Baptism. At the end of the day, all other disagreements are made trivial in comparison.

Although the period of ongoing change is coming to an end, the support required to keep the church going is still needed. Whether that is financial support for ongoing church operations or paying off the elevator or emotional and spiritual support for Pastor Crane and others in leadership, support is needed as often as you can give it.

Finally, with the Budget and Elections Voters' Meeting scheduled for Sunday, December 16th, another way to support the church is to serve. Whether volunteering to help on a previously scheduled event or committing to serve on a church board, you can make a difference. God gave you time and talents to serve him, so please utilize them for the Glory of God.

Respectfully submitted,
David Wait
Board of Elders

FROM THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

Sometimes people don't like it when pastors talk about stewardship. For some, it hits too close to home. It is easier to talk about bad people in Washington, in history, or overseas than it is to think about what our daily life in Christ is supposed to look like – how we are supposed to love our neighbor.

The fact that we don't like hearing about stewardship certainly means we ought to face it. Here are a few simple and practical realities.

God calls us to first-fruits, sacrificial giving. This means we should give off the top. We should set a percentage of our income as a deliberate gift for the work of the Church and give that first. We write the check to the Lord's work in the Church before we pay the mortgage or pay for our medicine or pay for anything else.

We don't pay for all the stuff we need, and think we need, and then give from what is left over. That is the first-fruits idea. It is hard because we think we need all sorts of other things first. But that is the point of "sacrificial."

Next, how could the starting point for Christian generosity and sacrifice really be anything less than a tithe – 10 percent? The ceremonial law of the Old Testament was never arbitrary. In the Old Testament, the Levites received this tithe, so they could be full-time ministers.

Does the New Testament have a ministry that is larger or smaller? It is far larger: "Make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19).

And we are still to have a full-time ministry: "The Lord has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14).

So, if 10 percent was needed in the Old Testament, and we have a bigger mission need in the New Testament, how can we expect the Lord's work to be done on less than a tithe?

First-fruits, sacrificial, generous giving – that's the way. We shouldn't fool ourselves into thinking that we've out-given God's goodness or that we've given plenty.

We might be tempted to think so but consider – no one in the Church has given plenty because no one has given all. No one has died for his or her sins. Only the sinless Son of God did that.

Or, as St. Paul said, bringing the Good News of Jesus into the discussion of our giving to support the Lord's work in the Church:

"I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:8-9).

As you can see, what the Bible commands about our stewardship can sting. It's law, and the law shows our sins. It calls us to repentance.

The law is meant to expose and accuse for the sake of showing us Christ and His fulfillment of the law. If first-fruits, sacrificial giving has you squirming, that's the point.

In Mark's account of the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus took the disciples' five loaves and two fish and blessed them. It was nothing among so many, but, of course, it was plenty. Jesus makes something from nothing.

Mark doesn't say that all the disciples gave Jesus all the bread they had. It is quite possible some of them held something back. But even if they did, that didn't stop Jesus from blessing them. Jesus makes something out of nothing.

He, who fed His people in the desert with Manna every morning, doesn't need their bread. But they need to give it. And what they give, however little it might be, however grudgingly they do so, He blesses it.

He not only blesses those whom He feeds with it, but He blesses them, the givers – not just in that they wind up with a basket full for each loaf but that they learned to trust and rejoice in Him.

The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. The Lord gives abundantly or asks us to fast. We do not know what will happen. Blessed be the Name of the Lord.

He does all things well and works all things together for good. The disciples don't give their bread to Jesus because it is a good investment. They give it because He is good, they love Him, and they trust Him. Let us go and do likewise.

ADVENT MIDWEEK SERVICES 2018

As we anticipate the Christmas celebration, we are reminded of the fact that another new church year will soon begin. The Season of Advent marks the beginning of the new church calendar. Advent, which means "coming," gives us time to prepare for the celebration of our Lord's birth. The following Wednesdays in Advent give us the opportunity to prepare for the Christmas celebration. (Please note that all Midweek services are held at 6:30 PM.)

Midweek Advent Services ***What Child Is This?***

Wednesday, December 5th

"The Child Who Is Zechariah's Hope" (Luke 1:5–25)

Wednesday, December 12th

"The Child Who Is a Virgin's Great Son" (Luke 1:26–38)

Wednesday, December 19th

"The Child Who Is John's Joy" (Luke 1:39–45)

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**ADVENT SUPPERS** – The Board of Parish Fellowship is once again going to serve Advent Suppers. Doors open by 5:00 PM and suppers begin at 5:15 PM. Everyone is encouraged to bring a side dish, dessert, etc., to accompany the meal. Free-will monetary donations will be gladly accepted. Come enjoy the fellowship and food!

#### **HERE'S THE MENU**

Wednesday, December 5<sup>th</sup> – Barbeque

Wednesday, December 12<sup>th</sup> – Hot Beef

Wednesday, December 19<sup>th</sup> – Tacos

## FROM THE BOARD OF MISSIONS AND EVANGELISM

### **November 2018 Missions Update from the Mahlburgs in Sri Lanka**

“**STOTHIRAM**” is a common greeting among Lutherans in Sri Lanka. It means “Praise God.” The Mahlburg family praises God for the amazing opportunity to live and serve the Lord in Sri Lanka in partnership with the Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Rev. Steven Mahlburg writes in their August Newsletter: “Always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry’ 2 *Timothy 4:5*. An evangelist is someone who proclaims repentance for the forgiveness of sins in Jesus’ name to all nations (Luke 24:47). This is at the heart of what we have been called to do together as missionaries in Sri Lanka. We, includes you. Your prayers, encouragement, and financial support are every bit as important as what we do in the field. The Lord uses your partnership to carry out His mission work.

Over the past year of serving in Sri Lanka, I am constantly reminded of how important your prayers are. The Lord hears and answers your prayers. The Lord has seen us through good and bad times, through sickness and celebrations, through frustrations and through accomplishments. We thank the Lord for you and for His help.

Over this past year, I have come to know and love the people, pastors, and evangelists of our partner church in Sri Lanka. I know God has important work in store for them. I look forward to our continued work together in God’s kingdom. Our church partner is restructuring to better serve the people and reach out to more with the Gospel. I assist and encourage our church partner in this effort. Our goal is that our Sri Lankan brothers and sisters will have a healthy, Christ-centered, mission-focused church body.

We are reaching out to others, working to spread the Gospel, and providing theological education. We are working toward an independent, self-sustaining church body. We praise God for His work here in Sri Lanka.”

Martha Mahlburg writes, “Our family had many great experiences with our brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka. The Lord has brought us through some struggles as well. This August, we sent Autumn off to college in the USA, and look forward to seeing her at Christmas. Thank you for your prayers and support.”

Following are “glimpses” from the Mahlburgs’ Facebook ministry page:

August 5 – A most joyous day and a sad day. Our daughter Rose was confirmed with Rev. Devanesan's daughter, Andriya. Then we had a Farewell and Godspeed for our daughter Autumn. This is her last Sunday with us. She will travel to the U.S. this week to attend University.

August 9 – I had one of the toughest moments in my life today. I said goodbye to my oldest child, Autumn, who left for the US to attend college. I am excited for her, but very sad she is leaving us. In addition, Martha is going back to help her settle in. This will be one of the longest times we have been apart.

August 29-31 – CELC 2018 Youth seminar led by national pastors and evangelists along with fellow missionaries.

September 2 – First day of school for Liberty, Skye, Rose, and Duncan.

September 16-20 – I flew to Taipei, Taiwan, for the LCMS Asia region mission workgroup and learned quite a bit. We are blessed with a great team and leaders and had a fantastic workgroup meeting with the regional missionaries. It was a good week, but I'm ready to see my family.

September 23 – Praise the Lord for the saints at Eila and their faithful Shepherd, Rev. Gnanakumar. I was blessed to visit them Sunday with some of our international mission leadership.

October 1 – All glory to God. Sunday, Rev. Devanesan confirmed a new member at Emmanuel Lutheran Church.

October 2 – At the train station in Colombo, waiting to begin my trip upcountry to spend time among the people of our partner church, teach, preach, and serve the Lord in my vocation.

October 5 – It was an honor to join the group of believers at Desfort for a prayer meeting, and to share Christ with them in the account of Jacob's ladder.

October 7 in Norwood – I had the great honor and joy of baptizing Viyola Jansike. All praise to God.

October 14 in Colombo – This morning I had the joy and honor of baptizing Alfred James Naumann, born to an amazing missionary family who serves with us in Sri Lanka. He is now covered with Jesus' righteousness. Praise be to God.

October 21 – Rejoice in the Lord always! Today was a marvelous day. We give thanks to God for restoring Good Shepherd Westward Ho to the Lutherans in Sri Lanka. This morning we celebrated Good Shepherd's first day as a Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church congregation.

October 22-24 – The CELC pastors and evangelists had a great three-day workshop learning Christology and early Christian hymns. Thanks to Dr. Karsten, pastor of Holy Cross, Moline, Illinois, a longtime friend of Sri Lankan Lutherans.

October 28 in Kotagala – We were blessed to join with the congregations of the Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church with guest Rev. Dr. Karsten to celebrate the Reformation. Thanks be to God.

#### PLEASE PRAY FOR

- Wisdom to better help and encourage our church partner in Sri Lanka.
- More opportunities to share the Gospel of Jesus.
- Autumn as she begins university in the U.S.

#### GIVE THANKS AND PRAISE FOR:

- New believers.
- The opportunity to spread the message of Jesus around the world.
- People who are not ashamed of the Gospel.
- The many congregations and individuals who pray for, encourage, and partner with us.

In His Service, Steven & Martha, Autumn, Liberty, Skye, Rose, and Duncan

Follow them on Facebook at [Mahlburg Missionaries In Sri Lanka](#).

Read their blog at <https://missionsrilanka.wordpress.com/>

Birthdays:

Wedding Anniversary: Aug. 11

To support the LCMS through the work of Steven Mahlburg, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, P.O. Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and mark checks "Support of Mahlburg Sri Lanka."

Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on the online giving page at [lcms.org/Mahlburg](https://lcms.org/Mahlburg).

**FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE BOARD OF YOUTH**

**Youth Schedule:**

|                                                     |                            |                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| December 9 <sup>th</sup> (Sunday)                   | Christmas Caroling         | 11:30 AM – ?        |
| December 15 <sup>th</sup> (Saturday)                | Christmas Service practice | 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM  |
| December 16 <sup>th</sup> (Sunday)                  | Christmas Service          | 4:00 PM             |
| December 23 <sup>rd</sup> (Sunday)                  | Christmas Party w/SS Kids  | 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM |
| December 31 <sup>st</sup> – January 1 <sup>st</sup> | Lock-in                    | 6:00 PM – 7:00 AM   |
| January 6 <sup>th</sup> (Sunday)                    | Meeting                    | 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM  |
| January 18 <sup>th</sup> (Friday)                   | Family Game Night          | 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM   |

There will be no Sunday School or Youth Bible Study on **Sunday, December 30<sup>th</sup>**. Classes will resume on **Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup>**.

On **Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup>**, the Youth Group invites the congregation to join them to go Christmas caroling to our shut-ins. We will have a light lunch at church around **11:45 AM**. After lunch, we will carpool to our shut-in members' residences. It is always a fun time to bring some cheer and happiness to our shut-ins during this season of preparing for our Savior's birth!

Thank You! The Grace Youth Group would like to thank all those who attended our Fiesta Luncheon on Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. Around 60 people attended, and the proceeds totaled slightly over \$650. Thank you to those who donated blankets, afghans, and other items for the raffle. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF OUR YOUTH GROUP!**

On **Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>**, at **4:00 PM** the Sunday School and Youth will be having a Christmas service. The service is based on the familiar hymn, "What Child Is This". We encourage you to invite your family and friends to this service as we celebrate the birth of Jesus! Following the service, there will be a light reception that all are invited to. The congregation is encouraged to join us for this Christmas service and to hear the younger members of our congregation share the wonderful news of CHRISTmas with you!

Sunday School and Youth Parents: On **Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup>**, from **9:00 AM – 10:30 AM**, we will be having a Christmas service practice at church. It is important that the children are there to practice. Please continue to work on the hymns and recitations with your children at home.

There has been some confusion on what doors will be open for parents who are picking their children up from Sunday School and have not stayed for Bible Study. The doors by the handicap entrance (by the ramp) on West Lawn will be unlocked. The rest of the church doors will be locked for the safety of the congregation. We ask that all parents come to their child(ren)'s classroom and pick them up at 11:30 AM when Sunday School is over. Thank you for your patience and understanding!

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**VOTERS' MEETINGS: Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>**  
Agenda: Elections and 2019 Budget at **10:30 AM**. Regular Quarterly Voters' Meeting **Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup>**, at **10:30 AM**. Please join us!  
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**ELEVATOR FUND:** As of Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, we have raised \$22,230.25 for the Elevator Fund. Thanks be to God! To make additional donations, you may use the specially marked white envelopes in the pew racks.

**PORTALS OF PRAYER:** Quarterly daily devotional books for January through March are available in the narthex. Please help yourself! If you wish to donate to cover the \$5.00 cost per year, please place your gift in the appropriate slot in the narthex. Thanks!  
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**KWIK TRIP & SPEEDWAY GAS CARDS** are for sale in the Office Equipment Room. Grace gets 5% back on all cards sold. Many thanks!

# CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup> – 4:00 PM  
CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS SERVICE**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23<sup>RD</sup> – 9:00 AM  
WORSHIP SERVICE WITH HOLY COMMUNION  
(FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT)**

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup> – 6:30 & 10:00 PM  
CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE  
WITH HOLY COMMUNION**

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup> – 10:00 AM  
CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP SERVICE  
WITH HOLY COMMUNION**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup> – 9:00 AM  
WORSHIP SERVICE WITH HOLY COMMUNION  
(FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS)**

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup> – 6:30 PM  
NEW YEAR’S EVE WORSHIP SERVICE  
WITH HOLY COMMUNION**

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**CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION:** On **January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019**, we will have our kick-off Divine Service at **9:00 AM** starting the celebration for the centennial year for Grace. Our guest preacher for this service will be Pastor Emeritus, the Rev. Randal A. Poppe, who faithfully served more than 34 years as Pastor at Grace from 1983-2017. Following the service, we will have our normal Sunday School and Bible Study hour and then a Pot Bless luncheon following around noontime. There will also be some historical items on display down in our Bartz Fellowship Hall, so please join us if you can!

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**THRIVENT CHOICE:** If you are a Thrivent member, you may be designated Choice Dollars based on your eligibility. These Choice Dollars can then be designated by you to Grace or to other charities. Call 1-800-847-4836 or visit [Thrivent.com](http://Thrivent.com) for more information. Thank you!

**FUTURE NEWSLETTER DELIVERY:** We are looking into not renewing our bulk mail permit next year as a possible way to save money for the church. As we make this decision, we would like to know how you would like to receive your future newsletters. Would you like to pick them up at church, have them emailed to you, read them on our website, or continue to have them mailed to you? Please let us know your thoughts. You can contact our church office or leave a note in the suggestion box. Thank you!

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**THE GROWING STRONG WITH GRACE** group will continue with our monthly meeting on **Wed., January 16<sup>th</sup>**, at **11:00 AM** with Racine County Executive Jonathan Delagrave. Please bring a dish to pass. Hope you all can make it!

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**2019 FLOWER CHART** is now available for sign up in the narthex. The cost is **\$27.00** for two bouquets. Please make your checks payable to “Grace Lutheran Church” and place in the secretary’s box in the Communication Center. To reserve a Sunday, please sign your name and the occasion. **There are still some Sundays available in 2018.** Thank you!

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**SEWING MISSION PROJECT:** Starting a new year with a new mission project; we are going to make lap robes 40” x 50” and clothes protectors (bibs) for St. Monica’s Senior Center. Our goal is to make 50 of each. We could use donations of flannel, velcro, and queen- and king-sized pillow cases. If you could cut or sew, please contact Ruth at 637-0367.

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**FREE QUILTING FRAME:** 27.5” x 16.5” quilting and rug hooking frame, model 100. If you’d like this, please contact Ruth at 637-0367.

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**BARTZ SCHOLARSHIP FUND:** The Board of Education would like to remind you that you can donate to the Bartz Scholarship Fund at any time. This goes to help our members who are studying to enter church work.

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**UPDATE CONTACT INFORMATION:** Stop by the Office Equipment Room to update your contact information. You can note any changes directly on the directory located there or you can place a note in the secretary’s mailbox. You can also call or email the church office. Thank you!