

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD

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December 2019 & January 2020

“And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger.” (Luke 2:6–7; ESV)

Dear Friends in Christ:

As I write this article on Monday, November 11th, several inches of snow have already fallen this morning, and more is predicted for later in the day. Like we sing in the old holiday song, “It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas, everywhere you go!”

Winter seems to be coming early this year. The snow and ice, the cold temperatures, and the short days remind us that Christmas isn’t too far away. It’s a good thing that as hearty Wisconsinites, we don’t allow the snow and cold to keep us from getting out and enjoying this “most wonderful time of the year.”

That being said, I know the snow and cold aren’t for everyone, especially in November. But, even if you don’t like the winter weather, this is still a great time of year, for we get to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, for us. This, of course, is the “reason for the season.” “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11; ESV).

To help us celebrate the Advent and Christmas seasons, we will have many worship opportunities at Grace during the month of December in addition to our regular Sunday Divine Service at 9:00 am. On the Wednesdays before Christmas, we will have our midweek Advent Vespers services at 6:30 pm, each preceded by a pot-bless dinner at 5:15 pm. Our Children’s Christmas Service will be held on Saturday, December 14, at 2:00 pm. To celebrate Christmas itself, we will have our Christmas Eve Candlelight services at 6:30 pm and 10:00 pm and our Christmas Day Festival Service at 10:00 am. We will close the month, year, and decade with our New Year’s Eve Divine Service at 6:30 pm.

Two other special events will take place during December as well. On Sunday, December 8, at 9:00 am, we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the installation of Pastor Herman Bartz as the first pastor of Grace. A pot-bless luncheon will follow the worship service. And on Friday, December 13, at 7:00 pm, we will host a Christmas concert of the Milwaukee Handbell Ensemble. Please see the enclosed press release for more information. You can also visit their website at milwaukeehandbells.org.

As you can see, December will be a busy—but exciting—month for us at Grace. So, I’m glad that it’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas. The snowy weather reminds me that Christmas is almost here. I’m sure that I’ll be ready for the snow to go away come January. But, right now, “let it snow, let it snow, let it snow.”

As the cold and snow blanket the earth, may our hearts and minds be warmed by the Good News of our Savior’s birth for us. I hope that you can come to Grace often this December to worship our newborn King and receive His gifts of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation for you. Jesus was born at Christmas to die on the cross for you, for me, and for all, so that by faith in Him, we may have His life and have it abundantly (John 10:10).

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Brian Crane

FROM THE BOARD OF ELDERS

I love this time of year at Grace. I love seeing the church decorated for Advent. I love to hear the familiar hymns of the season that some of our members have known for decades and our youngest members can also sing along with. I love how full our church feels on Christmas Eve.

The story of Christmas, of our Heavenly Father's love for us becoming manifested in the birth of Jesus, is easy to understand and embrace. But the story doesn't end there.

The word "advent" is derived from the Latin word for "arrival" or "coming." The season of Advent is the beginning of the church year and the celebration of the arrival of Jesus on Earth. As important as Advent and Christmas are, they would be rendered powerless without Jesus living a perfect life that we could not and overcoming sin and Satan in His death and resurrection.

We hear that continuation of the story of Jesus and His love and sacrifice throughout the church year. Every week at Grace is another opportunity to learn of the creation of the world, God's protection for His chosen people, the prophecies that foretold the advent of Jesus, the life and works of Jesus, and the spread of Christianity following His ascension.

We also have the opportunity to join with our brothers and sisters in Christ in singing hymns passed down from generation to generation. We recite the creeds and the prayers that form the cornerstones of our faith. And we receive the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, a gift to us made possible only by Christ's immense love and sacrifice.

There is a lot to love about Advent and Christmas and "Joy to the World" and "Silent Night." But there's so much more to the story of God's Love, and I look forward to hearing it along with you every week at Grace, as we begin our second century.

God's Blessings,
Matthew Olson

FROM THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount, is teaching those who follow Him that worrying about the necessities of life is idolatry: worshipping a false god. This is because worry and anxiety show what we care about. Our anxiety reveals what we love and to what we're devoted. It reveals what we trust in.

This is why our Lord begins this section with an overarching principle: "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

But you say: "I must eat and drink. I must have clothing to wear and have a home in which to dwell." Yes, all these things you need. And Jesus says that your Father in heaven will ensure that you have them. He demonstrates this with a simple argument.

Your Father in heaven feeds the birds of the air, who neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns. He clothes the lilies of the field, who neither toil nor spin but are arrayed more luxuriously than Solomon in all his glory. If, then, your Father in heaven feeds the birds and clothes the lilies, how will He not also feed and clothe you when you are worth more than they are?

For you know that you are worth more than them. You are worth infinitely more. You are worth the price of the eternal Son of God. Did the Son of God come down from heaven and become a lily? Did he descend and take on the form of a bird? No!

He came down from heaven and became a man: flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. He is one of us, our brother. And what did He do when He became flesh to dwell among us? He gave His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death, that you might be His own and live under Him in His kingdom forever.

God became man in Christ Jesus. He lived the life we failed to live, and He died the death we deserve because of it. He was raised again on the third day to overcome sin and death ... for us. He was crucified for our transgressions and raised for our justification. So, if your Father in heaven has given His Son to die for us in order that we might live with Him eternally, how will He not also give us all things to support this body and life?

To be anxious about the necessities of life, to devote yourself to food and clothing, to care about this and find security in it, is to serve another god. It is to deny that you will live forever because Jesus, the Son of God is risen from the dead, lives and reigns for all eternity. It is to believe that God – who created you, redeemed you by the death and resurrection of His Son, and sanctifies you by His Spirit – will not keep His promises of sustaining you in this life.

Jesus says this: Seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness. God's kingdom is His rule among us. His rule among us comes when our Father in heaven gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity. This is what we ask God to do for us in the prayer Jesus taught us.

Your Father in heaven knows what you need – food and clothing, house and home, etc. – and He promises to give it to you. Chief of the things you need is His grace and mercy in His Son, Jesus Christ. So, seek after that. Those who seek will find. And all the necessities of life, our Lord says, will be added to you.

FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE BOARD OF YOUTH

Thank You! The Youth Group would like to thank the congregation for their awesome support for the Fiesta Luncheon that was held on Sunday, November 17th. The food and fellowship were enjoyed by all. We had 65 people attend the luncheon and raised \$886! Thank you to everyone who donated items for the raffle. Your continued support is very much appreciated. We look forward to our next luncheon on Sunday, February 9th!

Please join us on **Saturday, December 14th, at 2:00 PM**, for the Sunday School and Youth Bible Study students to share the message of Christmas in word and song. This year's Children's Christmas Service is titled "Behold the Child." Please attend this service if possible, first and foremost to hear the children share the message of Christmas, but also to support them and all the work they put in to practicing and preparing for the service. Following the service, there will be a light fellowship time with snacks and treats in the Fellowship Hall. (On **Saturday, December 7th**, the Sunday School and Youth Bible Study students will hold a practice from **10:00 AM to Noon** for the Christmas Service.)

On **Sunday, December 15th**, the Youth invite the congregation to join us in Christmas Caroling to our shut-in members. It is always a good time and our shut-in members look forward to it every year. We will have lunch at church following Bible Study and then carpool for caroling.

There will be no Sunday School or Youth Bible Study on **Sunday, December 8th**, due to the Bartz Brunch Pot-Bless being held that day.

There will be no Sunday School or Youth Bible Study on **Sunday, December 29th**.

Youth Schedule

December 4 th	Advent Supper Help	5:00 PM–6:30 PM
December 6 th	Meeting	6:00 PM–8:30 PM
December 7 th	Christmas Service practice	10:00 AM–12:00 PM
December 11 th	Advent Supper Help	5:00 PM–6:30 PM
December 14 th	Christmas Service	2:00 PM
December 15 th	Christmas Caroling	11:30 AM–?
December 18 th	Advent Supper Help	5:00 PM–6:30 PM
December 22 nd	Christmas Party w/SS Kids	10:30 AM–11:30 AM
January 10 th	Meeting	6:00 PM–8:30 PM
January 26 th	Meeting	11:30 AM–2:00 PM

ADVENT MIDWEEK SERVICES 2019

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

“Behold the Child”

Wednesday, December 4th

“For You and All the World” (Luke 2:8–20)

Wednesday, December 11th

“To Set You Free from All Your Sorrow” (Matthew 2:1–12)

Wednesday, December 18th

“For You, to Bear Your Flesh in Weakness” (Luke 1:46–55)

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**ADVENT SUPPERS** – The Board of Parish Fellowship is coordinating the Advent pot-bless suppers. Please sign up on the Office Equipment Room door to bring a dish corresponding to the week’s theme. Freewill monetary donations will be gladly accepted. Doors open by 5:00 PM and suppers begin at 5:15 PM. Come enjoy the fellowship and food!

#### **HERE ARE THE THEMES:**

- Wednesday, December 4<sup>th</sup> – Family Favorites
- Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup> – Soup and Sandwiches
- Wednesday, December 18<sup>th</sup> – Breakfast for Dinner

## CONNECTION CORNER

Phyllis Lenz



When I came to Racine in 1952, I became a member of Grace Lutheran Church (67 years ago, when Rev. Bartz was pastor). During this time, I was part of the group that made Braille Bibles until they were no longer needed. Since then, I'm one of the members that gets the newsletters ready to be put into members' mail slots. I'm also active in trimming the bushes around church (we could always use more help) and assist in making many quilts that are distributed to many service organizations and also given to our shut-ins as Pastor Crane visits. Ruthie keeps me busy!

I'm also a member of the Safety and Security Team and part of the Growing Strong with Grace group that meets monthly for a pot-bless lunch in the Fellowship Hall where we also have a monthly speaker. We encourage others to take advantage of this enjoyable time and join us.

I'm retired after 45 years of working for Piggly Wiggly at their Grove Avenue office as Personnel Director. Daily I thank God for all my many blessings and for always being there for me. It's wonderful and appreciated to have the new elevator available for everyone to use. Many thanks to all who contributed to make this happen.

**ELEVATOR FUND:** As of Sunday, November 24<sup>th</sup>, we have raised \$47,249 for the Elevator Fund. Thanks be to God! To make additional donations, you may use the specially marked white envelopes in the pew racks.

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**KWIK TRIP AND SPEEDWAY GAS CARDS** are for sale in the Office Equipment Room. Grace gets 5% back on all cards sold.

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**VOTERS' MEETINGS:** Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, at 10:30 AM. Agenda: Elections and 2019 Budget. Regular Quarterly Voters' Meeting: Sunday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, at 10:30 AM. Please join us!

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**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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**2020 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 2019.** Thank you!

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**TELEVISION IN ELEVATOR LOBBY:** The new television and accompanying Wi-Fi system are gifts to Grace from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) to enhance our elevator lobby. The television serves as an electronic message board to welcome people to Grace and to broadcast church and LCEF announcements. We thank LCEF for their generous gift! (LCEF was our lender for the elevator project.)

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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.

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**GROWING STRONG WITH GRACE** meets again on **January 15<sup>th</sup>**. Pastor will say grace at **11:00 AM** sharp. Not to be missed!

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# CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup> – 2:00 PM**  
**CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE**

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

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

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

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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!

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**REQUEST FROM CHURCH OFFICE ABOUT HOSPITALIZED MEMBERS:** Due to HIPAA Laws, we are no longer able to contact the hospital and find out if our members are hospitalized. Please call the church office and inform us of your hospitalization so that we can keep you in our prayers and pastoral calls can be made. Thank you!

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**CANCELLATION POLICY:** When the Racine Unified School District is cancelled for the day or has early release because of weather conditions, all activities at church are cancelled. Please feel free to call the church office if you are unsure if a meeting or event will take place.

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**REGULAR CHURCH OFFICE HOURS** are Monday –Thursday from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

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**Daily Lectionary Readings**  
**December 2019 – January 2020**

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|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Sunday, December 1:    | Isaiah 7:10-8:8<br>1 Peter 3:1-22                    | Wednesday, January 1:  | Isaiah 61:1-11<br>Luke 1:57-80             |
| Monday, December 2:    | Isaiah 8:9-9:7<br>1 Peter 4:1-19                     | Thursday, January 2:   | Isaiah 62:1-12<br>Luke 2:1-20              |
| Tuesday, December 3:   | Isaiah 9:8-10:11<br>1 Peter 5:1-14                   | Friday, January 3:     | Isaiah 63:1-14<br>Luke 2:21-40             |
| Wednesday, December 4: | Isaiah 10:12-27a, 33-34<br>2 Peter 1:1-21            | Saturday, January 4:   | Isaiah 63:15-65:7<br>Luke 2:41-52          |
| Thursday, December 5:  | Isaiah 11:1-12:6<br>2 Peter 2:1-22                   | Sunday, January 5:     | Isaiah 65:8-25<br>Luke 3:1-20              |
| Friday, December 6:    | Isaiah 14:1-23<br>2 Peter 3:1-18                     | Monday, January 6:     | Isaiah 66:1-20<br>Luke 3:21-38             |
| Saturday, December 7:  | Isaiah 24:1-13<br>1 John 1:1-2:14                    | Tuesday, January 7:    | Ezekiel 1:1-14, 22-28<br>Romans 1:1-17     |
| Sunday, December 8:    | Isaiah 24:14-25:12<br>1 John 2:15-29                 | Wednesday, January 8:  | Ezekiel 2:1-3:11<br>Romans 1:18-22         |
| Monday, December 9:    | Isaiah 26:1-19<br>1 John 3:1-24                      | Thursday, January 9:   | Ezekiel 3:12-27<br>Romans 2:1-16           |
| Tuesday, December 10:  | Isaiah 26:20-27:13<br>1 John 4:1-21                  | Friday, January 10:    | Ezekiel 18:1-4, 19-32<br>Romans 2:17-29    |
| Wed., December 11:     | Isaiah 28:14-29<br>1 John 5:1-21                     | Saturday, January 11:  | Ezekiel 33:1-20<br>Romans 3:1-18           |
| Thursday, December 12: | Isaiah 29:1-14<br>Jude 1-25                          | Sunday, January 12:    | Ezekiel 34:1-24<br>Romans 3:19-31          |
| Friday, December 13:   | Isaiah 29:15-30:14<br>Revelation 1:1-20              | Monday, January 13:    | Ezekiel 36:13-28<br>Romans 4:1-25          |
| Saturday, December 14: | Isaiah 30:15-26<br>Revelation 2:1-29                 | Tuesday, January 14:   | Ezekiel 36:33-37:14<br>Romans 5:1-21       |
| Sunday, December 15:   | Isaiah 30:27-31:9<br>Revelation 3:1-22               | Wednesday, January 15: | Ezekiel 37:15-28<br>Romans 6:1-23          |
| Monday, December 16:   | Isaiah 32:1-20<br>Revelation 4:1-11                  | Thursday, January 16:  | Ezekiel 38:1-23<br>Romans 7:1-20           |
| Tuesday, December 17:  | Isaiah 33:1-24<br>Revelation 5:1-14                  | Friday, January 17:    | Ezekiel 39:1-10, 17-29<br>Romans 7:21-8:17 |
| Wed., December 18:     | Isaiah 34:1-2, 8-35:10<br>Revelation 6:1-17          | Saturday, January 18:  | Ezekiel 40:1-4; 43:1-12<br>Romans 8:18-39  |
| Thursday, December 19: | Isaiah 40:1-17<br>Revelation 7:1-17                  | Sunday, January 19:    | Ezekiel 44:1-16, 23-29<br>Romans 9:1-18    |
| Friday, December 20:   | Isaiah 40:18-41:10<br>Revelation 8:1-13              | Monday, January 20:    | Ezekiel 47:1-14, 21-23<br>Romans 9:19-33   |
| Saturday, December 21: | Isaiah 42:1-25<br>Revelation 9:1-12                  | Tuesday, January 21:   | Joel 1:1-20<br>Romans 10:1-21              |
| Sunday, December 22:   | Isaiah 43:1-24<br>Revelation 9:13-10:11              | Wednesday, January 22: | Joel 2:1-17<br>Romans 11:1-24              |
| Monday, December 23:   | Isaiah 43:25-44:20<br>Revelation 11:1-19             | Thursday, January 23:  | Joel 2:18-32<br>Romans 11:25-12:13         |
| Tuesday, December 24:  | Isaiah 44:21-45:13, 20-25<br>Revelation 12:1-17      | Friday, January 24:    | Joel 3:1-21<br>Romans 12:14-13:14          |
| Wed., December 25:     | Isaiah 49:1-18<br>Matthew 1:1-17                     | Saturday, January 25:  | Zechariah 1:1-21<br>Romans 14:1-23         |
| Thursday, December 26: | Isaiah 49:22-26; 50:4-51:8, 12-16<br>Matthew 1:18-25 | Sunday, January 26:    | Zechariah 2:1-3:10<br>Romans 15:1-13       |
| Friday, December 27:   | Isaiah 51:17-52:12<br>Matthew 2:1-12                 | Monday, January 27:    | Zechariah 4:1-5:11<br>Romans 15:14-33      |
| Saturday, December 28: | Isaiah 52:13-54:10<br>Matthew 2:13-23                | Tuesday, January 28:   | Zechariah 6:1-7:14<br>Romans 16:17-27      |
| Sunday, December 29:   | Isaiah 55:1-13<br>Luke 1:1-25                        | Wednesday, January 29: | Zechariah 8:1-23<br>2 Timothy 1:1-18       |
| Monday, December 30:   | Isaiah 58:1-59:3, 14-21<br>Luke 1:26-38              | Thursday, January 30:  | Zechariah 9:1-17<br>2 Timothy 2:1-26       |
| Tuesday, December 31:  | Isaiah 60:1-22<br>Luke 1:39-56                       | Friday, January 31:    | Zechariah 10:1-11:3<br>2 Timothy 3:1-17    |