

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD
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December 2021 & January 2022

**“The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.”
(Revelation 22:17; ESV)**

Dear Friends in Christ:

A few weeks ago, I received this email from the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL), of which I am a member:

Subject: November Bulletin Delivery Delayed

Due to labor shortages and supply chain issues with our magazine printer, most members will experience a delay in receiving the November issue of the *Bridge Bulletin*. The target date for delivery – ordinarily the 1st through the 3rd of each month – will be the 7th through the 10th of November. ... The ACBL apologizes for the service interruption. We are working with our long-time printing company to avoid this for future issues.

I did receive the magazine about a week later than usual. In the grand scheme of things, this kind of delay is unimportant and inconsequential. However, it seemed to me a microcosm of the continuing social and economic problems facing us, both individually and collectively, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. I don't expect life to ever return to normal (i.e., pre-March 2020). Rather, we will have to adjust to a “new” normal, whatever that new way of life might be for us.

Thanks be to God that despite the challenges and uncertainties of our world, His love for us in His Son, Jesus Christ, has not changed. This is what the Church is preparing to celebrate soon at Christmas. As the angel said to the shepherds that glorious night: “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10–11).

My friends, Jesus, our Savior, is with you. He is Immanuel, which means, “God with us” (Matthew 1:23). Having won your salvation by His death and resurrection, He comes to be with you in His Word and Sacraments to give you His gifts of forgiveness and everlasting life. Jesus invites you to come to Him often to receive and be strengthened by these gifts—not only at Christmas, but every Sunday and every time we gather as God's people in His Church.

Very little is free in the world, and with growing inflation, even the basics of life, such as food and gasoline, are getting more and more scarce and expensive. But the gifts of Jesus remain free and without limit. Jesus paid for them by the blood of His cross, and He gives them all to you by His grace. He says to you and to all people, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Or, as we read in the prophet Isaiah:

“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.”
(Isaiah 55:1–3)

Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem, the city of David, to be your Savior, invites you to come to Him to receive His free and priceless gifts. He is your rock and refuge amid the storms and stresses of life. No matter how much things may change in the world, Jesus will never change. He is the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). His love for you will never change either. He promises you, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Brian Crane

ADVENT MIDWEEK SERVICES 2021

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 Thursdays 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

"Symbols of Salvation"

Thursday, December 2nd

"Old Testament Christmas" (Exodus 3:1–14)

Thursday, December 9th

"The Lord Sets Up His Tent Among Us" (Exodus 40:17–21, 34–38)

Thursday, December 16th

"You Shall Defeat Them as One Man" (Judges 6:11–24; 7:2–9)

ADVENT SUPPERS – The Board of Parish Fellowship is coordinating the Advent pot-bless suppers.

FROM THE BOARD OF PARISH FELLOWSHIP

Ladies of Grace Luncheons will be held at 11:30 AM on Friday, December 10th, and Friday, January 14th. December's luncheon location is Douglas Avenue Diner, located at 5121 Douglas Ave. in Racine. (The location of the January luncheon is still to be determined.) If you wish to attend, please contact Jane Kunstman or Linda Eaton no later than the day before the luncheon.

Invite a Friend to Game Day on Wednesday, December 15th. There is no Growing Strong with Grace on this day, so bring your own lunch at 11:30 AM and games will begin at 12:00 PM. On Wednesday, January 19th, Game Day follows Growing Strong with Grace.

Advent Pot-Bless meals are on the following Thursdays in Advent: December 2nd, 9th, and 16th. Please bring your favorite dish to pass and join us at 5:15 PM. Please watch the bulletin announcements for news about weekly meal themes.

Grace Family Soup Night is at 5:15 PM on Wednesday, December 15th. Enjoy a family night out for soup and dessert.

Coffee Fellowship continues every Sunday morning following worship.

Please feel free to contact Barb Galis with any questions or concerns.

God's blessings,
Barb Galis

FROM THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

Why do we give? Is it simply because God commands us to? Or is there more to it? To be sure, the Word and instruction of God in the Bible says we should give, and this is sufficient to encourage us to give (Luke 6:38; Acts 20:35; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:7; Gal. 6:6).

But there's more to it than just obligation. We're not just trying to fulfill a work of the Law. We are bearing fruits of the Spirit given to us by our Father in heaven through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, we're not just doing what our Father said; we're also doing what He did.

Children emulate their parents. When they grow up, they often carry many of the same mannerisms and characteristics as their parents. But there is more to it than that. Children copy their parents even on a more mundane level. They watch how their parents cross their legs, how they fold their hands, how they stand and sit and walk, and how they do and say most everything. Then children try to copy it.

This can be quite humorous when caught in the act. They do this even when parents don't want them to. Everyone has been in the uncomfortable – and embarrassing situation – where a child does or says something one of their parents has done or said that is less than polite. Sitcoms thrive on these. It only works because of the truth that children emulate their parents, and they do it because they want to be like them.

We are the children of God – by grace through faith. In Holy Baptism, God the Father declares of us what He declared of Jesus at His Baptism in the Jordan, “You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” God the Father claims us as His own. He takes away all our sins. In exchange, He gives us His righteousness, His purity, His holiness, and His Spirit – by which we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

We are born again – born from above, born of water and the Spirit – to a new life in Christ as His children. We are sons of God in Christ through Baptism. Since we are sons, we are heirs who share in the glory of the Son of God. The inheritance is ours because of the Father's grace, mercy, and generosity in sending His Son in time to save us for all eternity.

This is why we give generously of our income to the work of the church. We want to be like our heavenly Father. We want to emulate His generosity by being generous ourselves. We give to the work of the church because we have witnessed the generous giving of our Father in heaven.

More than that, we are recipients of it. It is because we have received our Father's gifts that we desire to give ourselves. His gifts are not just spiritual. They are temporal and earthly as well. As *Luther's Small Catechism* teaches in the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer:

Give us this day our daily bread.

What does this mean? God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread? Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

In other words, He gives us everything that we need for the care of both body and soul. His generosity knows no bounds.

Therefore, we sit down at the beginning of the year, the beginning of the month, or the beginning of the week and set aside a generous portion of God's daily bread for His work in the church. This is not done because He has commanded us so to do but rather because we, as His children by grace, want to emulate His generosity in our own lives. He is our Father; we are His children. And children want to be like their parents.

2022 FLOWER CHART is now available for sign-up in the narthex. To reserve a Sunday, please sign your name and the occasion. 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. Thank you!

ELEVATOR: As of **October 31st**, the balance on our elevator loan stands at **\$226,878.84**. Thank you for your support and generosity!

VOTERS' MEETINGS: The Budget and Elections Voters' Meeting is on **Sunday, December 19th**, at **10:30 AM**. Immediately following the Budget and Elections Meeting will be a Special Voters' Meeting for the discussion of the proposal brought to the October Voters' Meeting to look at the dissolution of the Endowment Fund and moving the fund proceeds back into the Memorial Fund. Our next regular Quarterly Voters' Meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 16th, 2021, at 10:30 AM**.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES: Christmas Eve worship will be held at **4:30 PM**. The Christmas Day service will be held at **10:00 AM**.

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!

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.

PASTOR'S PHONE: To reach Pastor Crane directly, please call his cell phone number, 608-567-9029. Pastor's home phone is no longer in operation. Thank you.

CHURCH VISION MEETING: The Church Council would like to invite you to a church vision meeting on **Wednesday, December 15th**, for your input regarding our building and grounds, specifically the possible expansion of the church parking lot. A light dinner will be served at **5:15 PM** followed by the meeting at **6:00 PM** in the Fellowship Hall downstairs.

ATTENTION CHURCH MEMBERS: Elections for church offices and board members are in December. A sign-up sheet for open positions is posted on the Office Equipment Room door. Please prayerfully consider signing up for one of these open positions and serving as an officer or board member at Grace. Some positions are for election to a full three-year term and other positions are for appointment to fill an open position and could be for either one year or two years. – Board of Stewardship

OUR MEMORIALS AND GIFTS COMMITTEE wants to let you know the giving opportunities of our congregation outside of your regular tithes and offerings. The following funds currently have balances: Baptismal Gowns, Bibles, Audio / Video Ministry, Pew Cushions, Sound System, Stained Glass Restoration, Decorations, Library, Children's Library, Music Ministry, Sunday School, and Church Celebrations. We also process Elevator Fund monies through our committee (though we don't hold these funds). Dorothy in the church office can take in your memorial or gift. We have another twelve funds set up that you'll see on the Memorials and Gifts Balances Sheet presented at the Voters' Assemblies. For more information, please contact Becky Saxena, Donna Robinson, or Yvonne Nowak.

HOST FAMILY SOUGHT for a young man from Spain. He is a foreign exchange student attending Park High School. For more information, please contact Jeana Eaton at 262-939-6940.

CONNECTION CORNER



The Eatons: David, Jeana, Christopher, and Ashley

David is a lifelong member of Grace, baptized in May of 1974. David and Jeana met here at Grace when they attended the wedding of his best friend and her cousin. Jeana says she was born a Lutheran, raised a Catholic. She joined Grace shortly after they were married in November of 1999. Both David and Jeana have served in various roles within the church. David has served as an usher, Trustee, Elder, Youth Board member, President and Vice President of the congregation, as well as singing in the choir. Jeana has taught Sunday School, worked with VBS in various capacities, been on the boards of education and youth, and was a part of the bell choir for many years.

Away from church, David works in accounting for a company in Union Grove. He enjoys reading, watching sports, and occasionally golfing in his free time. Jeana is a special education assistant for preschoolers in the Racine Unified School District. She enjoys reading, taking walks, and listening to music in her free time.

Christopher and Ashley have been members of Grace their entire lives. Both have been active in Sunday School, VBS, and Youth Group, as well as singing and ringing in the choirs. Christopher also plays the organ when able, and Ashley has been able to play violin to accompany the choir on occasion. Christopher is in his second year of college at UW-Stevens Point where he is studying Music Education. He is active with Peace Campus, an LCMS mission campus ministry at school. He is currently employed as their music director where he works directly with the pastor to plan the music for the worship services and works with other students to play and sing during those services. Ashley is a Senior at Case High School. She recently got her CNA certification and is planning on studying nursing when she goes to college next year. Ashley enjoys singing with her choirs at school. She was working at Piggly Wiggly as a cashier, but as of the time of printing should have recently started a CNA position with Ascension.

We have also added a foreign exchange student from Italy to our family for the remainder of the school year. Lorenzo is a 17-year-old going to school at Park High School. He is active in sports, playing volleyball this fall, and joining the swim team this winter.

Favorite memories of church for David are going on Youth trips, including going to Germany back in 1990. Ask him about the time he had to let Pastor Poppe in after hours over there. Jeana's favorite memories include Saturday morning breakfast Bible studies with the other ladies of the congregation.

Daily Lectionary Readings: December 2021 – January 2022
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Wednesday, December 1:	Isaiah 7:10-8:8 1 Peter 3:1-22	Saturday, January 1:	Isaiah 61:1-11 Luke 1:57-80
Thursday, December 2:	Isaiah 8:9-9:7 1 Peter 4:1-19	Sunday, January 2:	Isaiah 62:1-12 Luke 2:1-20
Friday, December 3:	Isaiah 9:8-10:11 1 Peter 5:1-14	Monday, January 3:	Isaiah 63:1-14 Luke 2:21-40
Saturday, December 4:	Isaiah 10:12-27a, 33-34 2 Peter 1:1-21	Tuesday, January 4:	Isaiah 63:15-65:2 Luke 2:41-52
Sunday, December 5:	Isaiah 11:1-12:6 2 Peter 2:1-22	Wednesday, January 5:	Isaiah 65:8-25 Luke 3:1-20
Monday, December 6:	Isaiah 14:1-23 2 Peter 3:1-18	Thursday, January 6:	Isaiah 66:1-20 Luke 3:21-38
Tuesday, December 7:	Isaiah 24:1-13 1 John 1:1-2:14	Friday, January 7:	Ezekiel 1:1-14, 22-28 Romans 1:1-17
Wednesday, December 8:	Isaiah 24:14-25:12 1 John 2:15-29	Saturday, January 8:	Ezekiel 2:1-3:11 Romans 1:18-32
Thursday, December 9:	Isaiah 26:1-19 1 John 3:1-24	Sunday, January 9:	Ezekiel 3:12-27 Romans 2:1-16
Friday, December 10:	Isaiah 26:20-27:13 1 John 4:1-21	Monday, January 10:	Ezekiel 18:1-4, 19-32 Romans 2:17-29
Saturday, December 11:	Isaiah 28:14-29 1 John 5:1-21	Tuesday, January 11:	Ezekiel 33:1-20 Romans 3:1-18
Sunday, December 12:	Isaiah 29:1-14 Jude 1-25	Wednesday, January 12:	Ezekiel 34:1-24 Romans 3:19-31
Monday, December 13:	Isaiah 29:15-30:14 Revelation 1:1-20	Thursday, January 13:	Ezekiel 36:13-28 Romans 4:1-25
Tuesday, December 14:	Isaiah 30:15-26 Revelation 2:1-29	Friday, January 14:	Ezekiel 36:33-37:14 Romans 5:1-21
Wednesday, December 15:	Isaiah 30:27-31:9 Revelation 3:1-22	Saturday, January 15:	Ezekiel 37:15-28 Romans 6:1-23
Thursday, December 16:	Isaiah 32:1-20 Revelation 4:1-11	Sunday, January 16:	Ezekiel 38:1-23 Romans 7:1-20
Friday, December 17:	Isaiah 33:1-24 Revelation 5:1-14	Monday, January 17:	Ezekiel 39:1-10, 17-29 Romans 7:21-8:17
Saturday, December 18:	Isaiah 34:1-2, 8-35:10 Revelation 6:1-17	Tuesday, January 18:	Ezekiel 40:1-4, 43:1-12 Romans 8:18-39
Sunday, December 19:	Isaiah 40:1-17 Revelation 7:1-17	Wednesday, January 19:	Ezekiel 44:1-16, 23-29 Romans 9:1-18
Monday, December 20:	Isaiah 40:18-41:10 Revelation 8:1-13	Thursday, January 20:	Ezekiel 47:1-14, 21-23 Romans 9:19-33
Tuesday, December 21:	Isaiah 42:1-25 Revelation 9:1-12	Friday, January 21:	Joel 1:1-20 Romans 10:1-21
Wednesday, December 22:	Isaiah 43:1-24 Revelation 9:13-10:11	Saturday, January 22:	Joel 2:1-17 Romans 11:1-24
Thursday, December 23:	Isaiah 43:25-44:20 Revelation 11:1-19	Sunday, January 23:	Joel 2:18-32 Romans 11:25-12:13
Friday, December 24:	Isaiah 44:21-45:13, 20-25 Revelation 12:1-17	Monday, January 24:	Joel 3:1-21 Romans 12:14-13:14
Saturday, December 25:	Isaiah 49:1-18 Matthew 1:1-17	Tuesday, January 25:	Zechariah 1:1-21 Romans 14:1-23
Sunday, December 26:	Isaiah 49:22-26, 50:4-51:8, 12-16 Matthew 1:18-25	Wednesday, January 26:	Zechariah 2:1-3:10 Romans 15:1-13
Monday, December 27:	Isaiah 51:17-52:12 Matthew 2:1-12	Thursday, January 27:	Zechariah 4:1-5:11 Romans 15:14-33
Tuesday, December 28:	Isaiah 52:13-54:10 Matthew 2:13-23	Friday, January 28:	Zechariah 6:1-7:14 Romans 16:17-27
Wednesday, December 29:	Isaiah 55:1-13 Luke 1:1-25	Saturday, January 29:	Zechariah 8:1-23 2 Timothy 1:1-18
Thursday, December 30:	Isaiah 58:1-59:3, 14-21 Luke 1:26-38	Sunday, January 30:	Zechariah 9:1-17 2 Timothy 2:1-26
Friday, December 31:	Isaiah 60:1-22 Luke 1:39-56	Monday, January 31:	Zechariah 10:1-11:3 2 Timothy 3:1-17