
December 2024 In Touch with Grace



Dear family and friends of Grace,

As we enter the season of Advent, we find ourselves surrounded by messages of hope. The color you will see as we worship is blue. Blue has traditionally been the color of hope. Advent is a word that means the arrival of something new, an advent of a new age beginning. Advent is the season that leads to the birth of Christ which we celebrate on Christmas Eve & Day.

Our Advent Wreath in worship will hold four candles, one for each week of Advent. The prophet Isaiah told us that “the people who walk in darkness will see a great light. Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined. You have multiplied the nation and increased its joy.” Lighting the candle each week represents the light coming into the world as more and more candles each week give us more and more light.

So often, we find ourselves in times of darkness and forget to see the hope and light in our lives – for it is always there. No matter what we are facing, the light of the world in Jesus is with us, overcoming the darkness and giving us a future with hope.

When you see our Advent Wreath, you will notice that three candles are blue and one is pink. Why does this candle

stand out? It is because in the midst of hope we find joy. Traditionally, the third week of Advent is the candle of joy for we know the birth of our Savior is near. The other candles are blue for hope found in the prophets, peace for Bethlehem, and love found in Christ of which the angels sing. In the center is a white candle representing Jesus, the light of the world. We share this light as we sing Silent Night with individual candles reminding us that we each carry the light of Jesus into the world to give hope, peace, joy, and love wherever we may go this season and into the new year.

May the light of Christ, the hope, peace, joy and love be yours this season as we journey together through Advent to the birth of Jesus, one small child born to change the world with blessing.

See you in worship,
Pastor Karen



Announcements

- Confirmation classes on December 8 & 15 after worship. We will be exploring the meaning of Advent & Christmas through the prophets and gospels.
- Advent Worship each week on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. will be filled with hope and joy as we bring to you a variety of our traditional worship services.
 - Advent 1** - December 1 - hear of hope from the prophet Joel
 - Advent 2** - December 8 - The Sunday School children will share a message of inspiration following the story of the Innkeeper.
 - Advent 3** - December 15 - Our music ministries will share the message of the season in music and scripture.
 - Advent 4** - December 22 - a Gentle Christmas which will bring a message of peace and calm in the midst of a busy and sometimes stressful season.
 - Christmas Eve - December 24** - come and worship with us at 4 p.m. & 9:30 p.m. with Holy Communion and candle light.
 - Christmas Morning December 25** - Grace will offer a pre-recorded worship service online. We will not gather in person but encourage you to keep Christmas in your hearts as you celebrate the birth of Jesus by taking time to watch the video together with family, friends, and your own special traditions.
- Grace is offering a new Advent tradition on Saturday, December 21, at 2 p.m. to commemorate the longest night of the year and the Advent promise of hope and light in the darkness. Come and sing as we bring the light of Jesus into the world by joining our choir for a singalong of the first section of Handel's Messiah. The first half of the Messiah is dedicated to the season of Advent. Russ will be directing and Kathleen will be at the piano. Come and listen. If you are not a singer but love good choral music, you are invited to come and listen. No charge, but if you would like to bring a non-perishable food item it will be shared with Merrick.
If you have a score, please bring it. If not, we will have scores available to borrow for the sing-a-long. We will conclude the program with the Hallelujah Chorus followed by refreshments.
- If you have a family member suffering from dementia, there is a Dementia Support Group that meets every third Wednesday of the month from 2-3 p.m. at Cerenity-Marian. (225 Frank Street, St. Paul. All are welcome to attend.

Sunday, December 1st, is the first Sunday in Advent!! We will be having our usual **Advent Bash** as a Potluck again this year after worship about 10:45 am. Bring your favorite potluck dish (or Turkey leftover dish) to share and we will see what shows up! Community Connections Committee will furnish beverages, plates, utensils, a bread option and condiments.

Come join the fun and celebration of the start of the church's New Year!



The Giving Tree - a Christmas tradition at Grace - will be up in the Good Shepherd Lounge on **December 1st**. The tree will be adorned with ornaments with a gift item written on each one. Please feel free to take 1,2 or as many as you would like or purchase multiples of the items on the ornament if so moved and return unwrapped and place under the tree by Sunday, December 15th. The items are warm clothing items for winter in Minnesota. Many of the children served by these 2 organizations are in desperate need of these items. Please include those less fortunate in your Christmas shopping this year and spread the joy of the greatest gift **EVER - JESUS CHRIST**. The Mission committee will deliver them to LSS school located in the lower level of Grace and to Project Home. We receive so many requests for help for those in need all year round but especially during the holidays. We have decided to share with two organizations. Thank you for your participation.



DECEMBER MISSION OF THE MONTH

The Mission of the month for December at Grace is Second Stork. Second Stork provides families in need with essential newborn care items to give their baby a safe and healthy start.

Welcoming a newborn into the world should be a joyous and hopeful time! The reality is that many new parents are financially stretched, anxious and unprepared to bring their baby home from the hospital. Often, they don't have the basic supplies to keep the baby safe and healthy those first few weeks of life. By basic, they mean a safe place to sleep, an adequate supply of diapers and wet wipes, newborn clothing and blankets. Second Stork can bridge an approximate 2 week gap from the time newborn is discharged from the hospital to when family support or social services become available. Second Stork believes every baby should have a safe and healthy beginning.

Please prayerfully consider making a donation to this wonderful organization who reaches out to the newest of God's children and their families to ensure that they have the items necessary to get a healthy and safe start in life. Please use your blue multi-purpose envelope, mark mission of the month and place in the offering or mail to the church office. Checks should be made payable to Grace. Thank you.



Second Stork
Helping new parents in need

Music Notes -

Can you believe we are closing in on the Christmas holidays? Of course, the stores started stocking holiday items immediately after Halloween, in some cases even before the trick or treaters rang the doorbells. Perhaps the celebrations of Thanksgiving being commercially bypassed is not a bad thing. Having a time to enjoy family and friends without the stress of how much to spend and what to give, but rather how much and what to prepare, followed by not worrying about how much to eat.

December not only welcomes the exciting time of getting ready for the holidays; it welcomes some of the most joyous music of the whole year. There's never enough time to sing all our favorite carols and hymns. One song usually sung as a solo is "O Holy Night", in the original French "Cantique de Noel". Placide Cappeau, a French poet, wrote the lyrics. His parish priest asked him to write a poem for Christmas eve. One version of the story says that he wrote it, giving it to his friend Adolphe Adams to set it to music. Another version says Cappeau was on his way to Paris when his parish priest asked him to give it to Adams who was enjoying celebrity status as a composer, but not friends with Cappeau. Either way, Adams accepted and we hear his creation every Christmas.

As happens far too often, this song almost disappeared, only being discovered during our Civil War, promoted especially for its' third verse: "Truly He taught us to love one another His law is love and His gospel is peace. Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother....."

Trivia: The poet Placide Cappeau had only one hand, his left. He and his friend were playing with the friend's father's gun and it went off. The friend's father felt so bad about Cappeau losing his hand that he paid for his education, which opened the door to him becoming a recognized poet.

So enjoy the month of December for all the joyous celebrations, music, food, friends and fun; especially enjoy the anticipation that leads up to the big Day and all twelve that follow.



FROM THE LIBRARY:

Thank you to donors Barb Holtan, Kathleen Hollar, and all anonymous donors. Remember, books are filed by author, last name first.

BOOK CLUB READS -

Trust

Hernan Diaz

FICTION -

A Home for Unloved Orphans

Rachell Wesson

Whiskey Beach

Nora Roberts

Night Circus

Erin Morgenstern

Unspeakable

Sandra Brown

Longitudes and Beatitudes

Thomas Friedman

A Hawk Among Sparrows

Austin Ferrer

It Ends With Us

Coleen Hoover

SELF HELP -

7 Habits of Highly Effective People Stephen Covey

The Government Manual for New Wizards Matthew Broziks



Grace Book Club -

Here are the latest titles chosen -

For discussion on: December 5 - The Women - Kristin Hannah

January 2 - The Briar Club - Kate Quinn

February 6 - Lessons in Chemistry - Bonnie Grams

Sunday School

Our Sunday School kids have been traveling with Moses this year and made it through to the Promise Land. Many more stories to learn, but it's time to shift our focus and start to prepare for the birth of Jesus. The kids have been learning songs for the Christmas program December 8th, and we can't wait to show you what we have been working on. There is always Room in our hearts to hear the story of Jesus one more time. We will be telling the story of a reluctant Inn Keeper, and a small but resilient group of kids following Jesus.

As always, if anyone is wanting to help out with Sunday School in any way please contact Amanda Christie.

During the annual meeting, the kids were blowing their trumpets and walking around the walls of Jericho. →



XYZ's will meet at Lake Elmo Inn on December 12th at 11 am for their annual Holiday Lunch. If you haven't signed up yet, please do so by December 5th as we need to get numbers and food choices to the restaurant by then. The clipboard and menu are in the Tower room. Feel free to call the office with your selection and/or to let us know you would like to come along. The cost per person is \$30 and includes beverages and dessert along with your meal choice. Happy Holidays!

January XYZ meeting - January 9th, at 1:00 pm in the Tower Room

Downsizing and Decluttering! (You can't take it with you)

Having too much can impede people from relocating or getting healthcare into their homes. This engaging presentation explores why stuff is so important for some people and teaches practical, easy-to-follow tips on downsizing and decluttering. Learn how to get started.

Representatives from AARP will lead this program and answer our questions.

Refreshments will follow, of course!



October trip to Mill City Museum →

President's Thoughts

December is both an ending and a beginning! It is the end of our calendar and financial year, but it is also the beginning of the church's New Year as we begin the season of Advent on December 1st this year. During this season of anticipation and hope we sometimes get carried away with the busyness of Christmas shopping and preparations for family gatherings and maybe forget the season of Advent. This season in the church is one of waiting in hope and anticipation of the Savior's coming. It is a time of reflection and prayer for the promised Messiah and all he brings with him.

Please keep this congregation in your prayers as we move forward into 2025. No doubt there will be both challenges and triumphs to overcome and celebrate. Grace has been around for over 100 years and there have been many of both the highs and lows and yet we remain a light on the East Side pointing toward our God and doing His work in this neighborhood that is constantly changing. May that mission continue to be our priority as we move forward.

This December also brings to a close my tenure as President of this congregation once again. I need to thank those that have been very supportive during this time of transition for the church, especially the Council and Committee chairs. It is a position that is not possible without help and support.

Take advantage of all that Advent offers and Christmas blessings to you all!!

Linda Sackreiter, Congregation President

FOOD SHELF SUNDAY IS DECEMBER 1st!!!



G. F. Handel's *The Messiah*
Saturday, December 21st at 2 pm

Come one, come all! Grace is hosting a Sing-a-long of the first part of this amazing oratorio on Saturday, December 21st. 2 pm in our sanctuary. Come and sing -- Russ will be directing and Kathleen will be at the piano. Come and listen. If you are not a singer but love good choral music, you are invited to come and listen. No charge, but if you would like to bring a non-perishable food item it will be shared with Merrick.

If you have a score, please bring it. If not, we will have scores available to borrow for the sing-a-long.

Community Connections - ongoing projects!!

Internal, Local and Global

If you would consider serving treats on a Sunday morning, we would appreciate your help. Please take a look at the sign-up schedule in the South Tower room and see if there is a date that works for you to help out! If you would be willing to bring treats but would prefer to not serve, please speak with Linda Sackreiter and we can arrange that as well.

Thanks for your help!!

2024 Collections

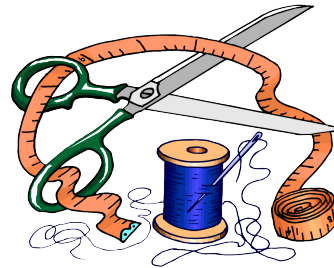
Quilts, baby care kits (Note: soap size accepted for baby care kits is 3.5 or 4 oz gentle soap; soap in each kit has to total 8 or 9 oz)

We delivered 30 Quilts and 9 baby kits to the LWR warehouse last month and have already started with new ones.

Other on-going collections at Grace - used eye glasses and cancelled stamps. Please find the small collection baskets on the library shelf. Also, Sandy Abernathy will take any American Flags that need to be disposed of properly. These can be left in the collection area in the library. (We are not currently saving soup can labels) Thank you for all donations!

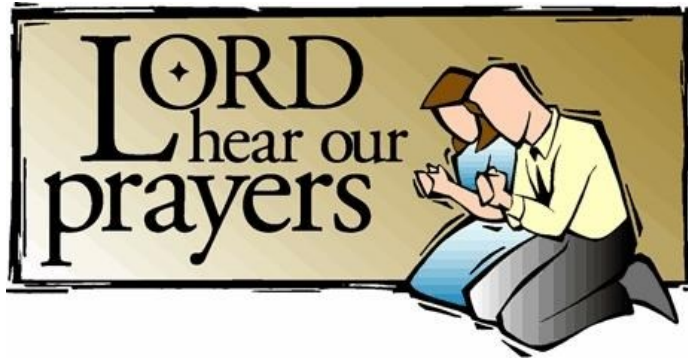


Quilt Days— We will be meeting again in December on the 2nd Saturday (14th) but **not** the 4th Saturday (28th) due to the holiday. All are welcome to join us. No skills necessary, we will teach. Most months we meet on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays in the Tower rooms. Come join us in this month for some good conversation and to put those hands to use for a wonderful cause. Lutheran World Relief distributes donated quilts all over the world including in the US.



Miles of Pennies The large collection jar in the library is always accepting donations toward giving to the LSS fund for helping homeless Youth in St. Paul. Our goal is \$250.00 for 2024. Let's exceed that again in 2024! We are getting close. Thank you to everyone who participates in this important mission. Your generous donations of coins and paper money are appreciated.





We lift our prayers to God in times of thanksgiving and times of need, in times of joy and times of sorrow. This month we especially pray for Stacy Bray, (Marlene Hockbein's niece), Judy Adam, Bev Henderson, Ron House, Carol Anderson, Butch Nelson, April Premo (niece of Judy Nelson), and all those we name in our hearts.

How to donate other than in the offering plate:

There is always snail mail. The office is open to receive the mail and our bookkeeper will count what comes in each week and deposit it in the bank. Our address: 1730 Old Hudson Road, St. Paul, 55106.

To donate electronically: You can schedule a transfer of funds with your own bank if they have bill pay available and it will come automatically on the date you choose. Otherwise, you can go to our website (www.gracelutheranstpaul.org) and click on the GIVE page.

This site is secure for financial transactions through Vanco which is the Simply Giving program. At the GIVE page you can go through the steps as directed and give whatever amount you wish to several different categories (general, other, etc.) This works best on the Firefox or Edge browsers. This does get to us electronically in a very timely manner. If you are comfortable using the QR, it will take you directly to the GIVE page on the website. **Please call the office if you have any questions.** Thank you.

Give QR



Financial Snapshot for GLC-2023

	<u>October Actual</u>	<u>YTD Actual*</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
General Fund	\$ 13,896.98	\$ 182,186.02	\$196,777.50
Expenses	\$ 32,855.66	\$ 231,179.82	\$243,662.30
Deficit/Overage	- \$ 18,958.68	-\$48,993.80	-\$46,884.80

* Does not include \$296,000.00 rec'd in June from the Met Council.



2 Foday Kargbo
3 Holly Richie
7 James Baumer
Coley Gillis
8 Carol Sabo
9 Brianna Young
12 John Luckfield
14 Rick Major
15 Stephen Abudulai
Kyle Amlee
Jena Gracik
16 Richard Castle
Kimberly Killeen
18 Julie Major
James Mohn
23 Gina Gilgenbach
24 Michael Schoonover

28 Carol Goebel
29 Alraina Ray-Taylor



Worship Leaders for December 2024 -

<u>Date</u>	<u>Liturgist</u>	<u>Acolyte</u>	<u>Lay Reader</u>
1	Barb Holtan	Alexis Petersen	Carolyn Hesterberg
8	Jeff Oberlander	Kaliska Reed	Barb Holtan
15	Peter Zitzewitz	Tony Childs	Linda Sackreiter
22	Barb Holtan	Cami Alleman	Carol Golder
24	4 pm Jeff Oberlander	Alexis Petersen	Keith Smeby
	9:30 Russ Carlson	Kaliska Reed	Sig Johnson
25	prerecorded - available online		
29	Monique McClure	Tony Childs	Bob Golder

<u>Date</u>	<u>Ushers</u> (the families of the acolytes are also helping out)
1	Brian Petersen, Rachel Petersen
8	Brian Jackson, Patty Young
15	Bob Golder, Karen Nikula
22	Norm Walby, Jonathan Williams
24	4 pm Brian Jackson, Patty Young
	9:30 Brian Petersen, Rachel Petersen
29	Jeff Oberlander, Anne Oberlander

<u>Date</u>	<u>Money Counters</u> - (we could use some additional volunteers on our counting teams)
1	Amanda Christie team
8	Monique McClure-Hegge team
15	Kate Pray team
22	Amanda Christie team
29	Monique McClure-Hegge team



Construction and Traffic updates!

The Gold Line is progressing which affects our parking lot with construction and also the traffic pattern in the area. Since the east entrance to the lot has been drastically narrowed, consider using the other driveway (to the west of the church) to enter. When the project is complete we will make alterations as necessary to the east entrance.

The bridge across 94 on White Bear is now open again as are the accompanying entrance and exit ramps!! And Old Hudson Road between McKnight and Ruth is now open again.

There are still several detours on many of the streets in the area due to repaving of streets, construction, etc. so we aren't back to usual yet, but getting there.

Thanks for your patience!!

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Pastor:

Rev. Karen Williams

Intern:

Bethany Ketchem

Custodial Staff:

Linda Denson

Office Staff:

Linda Sackreiter

Music Staff:

Russ Carlson—Director of Music
Ministries

Kathleen Hollar—Organist

Jan Steingas—Triple G's

Russ Carlson—Bells of Grace

Connie Smeby—Joyous Juniors

