



THE FRIENDLY VISITOR

Grace Lutheran Church

December 20, 2011

All Are Welcome!

December 24th
Christmas Eve Candlelight
Services

5:00 p.m. & 11:00 p.m.

December 25th
Christmas Day Service
10:00 a.m.

January 1st
New Year's Day
10:00 a.m.

Regular Sunday Services
resume January 8th
8:15 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.
Holy Communion at Both
Education Hour &
Adult Forum at 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday Adult Bible
Study Classes
resume January 3rd
8:45 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Super Wednesday
activities resume January 4th

Contact Us

Pastor Michael Schmidt
pastormike@gracedm.org

Director of Laity Ministries
Stephanie Johnson
stephaniejohnson@q.com

Music Director
worship@gracedm.org

Grace Kids' Care Director
Heather Nelson
heathernelsondc@msn.com

Office Administrator
Jackie Holmes
worship@gracedm.org

Office Assistant
Michelle Voelker
rvoelker1@mchsi.com

Receptionist
Diana Johnson
dianal.johnson@mchsi.com

Website
www.gracedm.org
276-6873
Fax 276-4048

Christmas Cards

The Christmas Pageant yesterday was wonderful! It was such a joy to watch as the youth and adults not only participated, but led us on a journey toward Bethlehem. We heard from a number of "Christmas Cards". Some were funny. Some were serious. Some were filled with snow (which made me quite nervous), while others smiles and waving. It culminated in the "group photo" imagery while being centered on the hymn *Silent Night*. Things immediately picked up with a rousing arrangement of the *Halleluiahs Chorus* and *Go Tell it on the Mountain* (well done, Adam!).

It was fun to watch the different scenes come to life as the cards were read. It got me thinking about different Christmas Cards, not ones that I've received (although that would be a fun topic too), but snapshots of Advent and Christmas from prior years. Some were funny. Some were serious. Some filled with lots of snow (2009), while other others were all smiles and waves.

My thoughts first went to 2004. It was my first Advent and Christmas as a parish pastor. It was a year filled with excitement and expectancy. There were many things that I learned that year, like where to buy candles for the Advent Wreath and that Christmas Eve is not a good time to go bilingual.

In 2005, we were filled with hope as we were allowed to stay open. That sounds odd, but it was our reality. The people of God at Our Savior's/El Renacimiento were overjoyed and it was hard to contain our excitement that Christmas. Joy abounded. Hope overflowed.

November and December in 2008 were difficult to say the least. We came to the realization that we were no longer viable as a community of faith. We looked forward to the chancel being robed in white for the Christmas season, but promptly returned to feeling of Advent as we clung to hope. The congregation had its final worship service on Transfiguration Sunday, 2009.

Advent and Christmas of 2009 was filled with transition as I prepared for interim ministry. And last year was a welcome change as well. It was almost one year ago today that I first interviewed here at Grace Lutheran Church. I was anxious heading into the interview. I had heard a great deal about the work and ministry of Grace (A community of faith this amazing cannot keep its light under a bushell!), and wasn't sure you would consider a young-ish pastor with only 7 years experience. I left the interview feeling like this would be a great fit and prayed that the feeling was mutual. It has been a great year and I love it here! This is something that I do not say near enough. You are an amazing community of faith and I am so excited to be a part of the work and ministry that takes place here.

This year's Christmas card would be filled with a similar joy. Right before the 10:45 service, which was home to the Christmas Pageant, the Congregational Council voted to extend an offer to an individual to be the Director of Music Ministry at Grace Lutheran Church. On December 19, this offer was accepted and we will have a new Director of Music Ministry on February 1, 2012. His name is Steve Berg and he is a gifted organist and director. I look forward to working with him! It was fun to hear the excitement in his voice as we talked about possibilities here at Grace. It reminded me of last year's time during Advent and Christmas and the excitement to begin work here.

It is shaping up to be an amazing year here at Grace and I am so excited to be on this journey with you!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
Pastor Mike

January Birthdays

January 1	Betty Hirschauer Elizabeth Dungan Theodore Tussing Bob Gweah	L O V E
2	Penny Hansen Sherry Merkwon Andrew Allen Nicholas Jessen	
3	Conrad Thompson Jay Wangerin Eric Weber Emily Scholten	J O Y
4	Lynn Niemuth	P E A C E
6	Julie Honsey Tammy Denton Amy Schmelzer Joseph Mattes	
8	Kathy Roat Catherine Lewis	
10	Dawn Pilon	H A P P I N E S S
13	Jaqueline Villela	
14	Lolita Huth Tessa Dawn Fenimore	
15	Laria Preston	
16	Carmen Buell Kathryn Farrell	G O O D
17	Barbara DeBolt Kari Berven McKenzie Carney	
18	Lonnie Jessen Stephen Kallenbach	
19	Arnold Johansen Rebecca Selander	
20	Jason Fry Samuel Speck	
21	Mary Freimuth Helt	H E A L T H
22	Marilyn Allie Andrea Harbaugh	
23	Donald Peterson Alice Kulzer	
24	Garry Lenhart	F A M I L Y
25	Helen Ballentine Norman Buihner Roy Mann Diane Jessen	
26	Patricia Allen Julia Beekman Valerie Culp Haley Honnold	
28	Elaine Westvold Charles Smith James Kaleewoun	
29	Norman Trentmann Cherlyn Lewis	P R O S P E R I T Y
31	Maryena Petty-Lee	

January Anniversaries

January 4	Mark & Elizabeth Dungan
6	Eric & Heather Nelson
9	David & JoAnn Gronert
11	Bruce & Barbara Nelson
28	Duleep & Dorothy Singh
30	Larry & Carmen Buell

Annual Meeting January 22 following 10:45 a.m. service

Finance Report – November Results

Financial results for November YTD are as follows:

- Pledged Offerings – Actual \$426,196, Budget \$432,413
- Other Income – Actual \$16,520, Budget \$17,136
- Expenses – Actual \$437,510, Budget \$455,023
- Net activity – Actual \$5,206, Budget (\$5,473)

Actual net activity was favorable to budget. This was due to offerings below budget offset by overall expense activity below budget to a greater extent. Favorable expense activity is the result of savings that was achieved due to lack of Lead Pastor, Music Director and Latino Communication Coordinator expense for a portion of the year. These savings were offset by higher building maintenance activity including the concrete repairs of the parking lot and a major unexpected repair on the mechanical systems of the church.

Grace-Fully Aware – The Gymnasium

In May of 1930 the cornerstone of the brick Parish House was laid and in November of 1930 the completed building was dedicated. Though designed as a community building, the Parish House soon became the primary home of Grace Lutheran Church. In those days the sanctuary was located in a white house where our parking lot is. The sanctuary was relocated to the Parish House and occupied the area where the current library and restrooms are. The basement of the Parish House had rooms with wooden floors that constantly buckled from water coming up out of the ground. Our magnificent gymnasium was constructed on the third floor of the Parish House.

In the early years the gymnasium had a small section of bleachers and was home to the Grace men's basketball team. They sported orange and black jerseys with black trunks. During the 1970's the Grace teenage girls played in the City Basketball League and games were held here and at neighboring churches. Our gym still receives lots of use, although rental has declined in recent years. Grace Kids' Care uses the gym often for play and exercise during periods of cold or rainy weather.

Guests are always fascinated when they see the gym for the first time. Immediately they look up at the high ceiling, then their eyes follow the brick walls down to the original wooden floor. The gym is accessible by elevator or two separate flights of stairs. A hot water heating system warms the area in about twenty minutes during cool weather. However, with no air conditioning, it gets very warm during the summer months. The mercury vapor light fixtures were replaced this past year by new, energy efficient fluorescent fixtures thanks to a grant from our Endowment Fund.

Fees to rent this space are:

Members – No fee for gym use and no deposit, mandatory \$25 custodian fee

Nonmembers - \$200 refundable deposit (We do cash the deposit fee and hold it to cover any breakage of windows, lighting, flooring, etc. At end of gym rental period, the deposit is refunded to the renter if conditions are satisfactory.) \$50.00 per gym use, \$50.00 custodial fee

All groups are required to complete paperwork and sign a Hold Harmless agreement. Please contact the office for hours of use. The gym can be reserved for up to 13 weeks of use in a row and can be reserved for up to a two hour period per use. The gym is not available on Wednesday nights, when any church service is in progress or during afternoons when the daycare children are napping.

Thank you to everyone who brought holiday treats to the office.

Winter Weather Policy

Reminder: If the Des Moines schools close due to ice and snow, Grace will also close. We want everyone to stay at home and be safe.

New Members

We welcome new members Joel, Stacie and Finnegan Holst to our Grace family. Finnegan has been enrolled at Grace Kids' Care since 2009. He was baptized at Grace on December 11, 2011.

Men in Mission

January 5th 2012

Starting at 6:30 p.m.

Our speaker will be Kevin McLaughlin from the Polk County Republican Party. He will bring us up to date on the Republican candidates. Please come and listen to our speaker following the caucus to be held on January 3, 2012.

Hospitalized?

If you desire a visit or call from the Pastor when you are in the hospital, please let the hospital know you are a member of Grace Lutheran Church in Des Moines. You can also ask a relative to call the church office and let us know your room number.

Pastor Mike's Office Hours

The pastor's office hours are 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Afternoons are open for visits to hospitals and the homebound members.

Adult Forum Schedule January 1 – No Adult Forum

January 8 – Iowa Lutheran Hospital Behavioral Sciences speaker Penny Bassman

**January 15 –
Budget presentation**

January 22 – Open

**January 29 – Burn Survivor,
Tammy Sealise**

**February 5 – Mike Hansen on
Wills**

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Council Minutes

November 22, 2011

Present: Kristin Medhurst, Jon Rissman, Julie Honsey, Pastor Schmidt, Carla Peterman, Kevin Krause, Mary Freimuth Helt, Janet Habick, John Roehrick, Rich Snyder, Gary Nehmer, Kathy Bowermaster
Absent: Joyce Lewis

Devotions were given by Pastor Schmidt on the hymn *By Gracious Powers*, written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

The 2012 proposed budget was presented by Kevin Krause for Council feedback and approval.

The agenda was adopted with an addition to New Business.

The minutes from the October 27, 2011 meeting were approved as printed.

The staff reports were accepted as printed.

-Pastor has set office hours which will be published in the bulletin and *Friendly Visitor*.

The Finance Report was accepted as printed.

Committee Reports

- Fellowship and Education Committee is planning a potluck for December 18 following the Christmas program.
- The English/Spanish language classes will resume Wednesday, December 7, 6:00-7:30 P.M.
- Candle lighters and Lenten banners have been ordered.
- The Property Committee has completed the patchwork in the parking lot.

Old Business

- The by-laws are updated with no need for changes to be voted on at the annual meeting.
- It has been decided that a purpose statement for the Lay Ministry Team should be drafted to clarify its position and specify its duties. Pastor and Stephanie will develop a statement about the history behind the development of the Lay Ministry Team with the Council and Lay Ministry Team leaders developing the purpose statement.
- The Worship Director Search Team has 3 candidates and will begin the interview/audition process the week of November 28.
- There were positive comments made regarding the pulpit sharing initiative.

New Business

- The Council approved that proposal that the Confirmation Class serve coffee January 8, 15 and 22 and keep the proceeds in order to purchase fleece to make fleece tie blankets for foster care kids.
- The Council supports promoting the food needs of DMARC Food Pantry by publishing their needs in the bulletin and *Friendly Visitor*.
- There will be monthly new member classes starting In January. Ten new members are being brought into the congregation in December.
- The December Council meeting will be held December 13 rather than December 27.
- The January Council meeting will be held on January 17 rather than January 24 in order for the Council to meet before the Annual Meeting.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 8:55 P.M.
Respectfully submitted, Julie Honsey, Council Secretary

Sympathy

We extend sympathy to the Jim and Sherry Merkwan family on the death of Jim's mother in South Dakota. Please keep this family in your prayers.

A Heartfelt Thank You

to Cleone Oberg for her dedication in assisting with weekly bulletin assembly for the past nine years.

Year End Deposit

The Year End Office Deposit will be done at **noon on Thursday, December 29th**. Please have all your 2011 contributions to the office by that date.



Lights, Camera.... Smile!

Do you know the person who is sitting at the opposite end of your pew? Does a particular person's face look familiar but you're not sure of the name? You're in luck! The Lay Ministry Team, in coordination with Council's vision of wanting to help the members of Grace get to know each other better, is encouraging your participation in a photo project that will culminate in a photo wall along the library corridor. On some soon to be announced dates, the Lay Ministry Team will be taking family pictures for which you can be as dressed up or as casual as you like. But keep this fun challenge in mind:

To help us get to know each other better, think of clothing or props that may help to communicate your interests as individuals or as a family. Are you a techie who loves to work electronics? Or someone with a flair for woodworking? Do you play an instrument? Does your family love to go camping? What says "you" or "the _____ family" more than anything? We'd love to know!

Stay tuned for more details and dates. And then bring out your best smiles! See you on the other side of the camera!

New Books in the Church Library

Fourteen Cows for America

By Carmen Deedy

In June of 2002 a very unusual ceremony began in a village in western Kenya. A gift is about to be bestowed on the men, women and children of America, and an American diplomat surrounded by hundreds of Maasai people is there to accept. It happened just nine months after the September 11 attacks. The gift is as unsought and unexpected as it is extraordinary. The Maasai offer their gift to a grieving people half a world away. The gift of 14 cows emerges from the choking dust and darkness as a soft light of hope and friendship.

If I Had a Hammer

By David Rubel

Habitat for Humanity has built homes with and for the people who are most in need of them, aided by more than a million multigenerational volunteers--two of the most devoted of whom are former president Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn. This captivating account relays some favorite Habitat stories and experiences.

Every Day a Friday

By Joel Osteen

In Every Day a Friday, best selling author Joel Osteen offers encouragement, spiritual guidance, and practical advice on how to find joy and happiness in every day of the week, every day of your life.

Humphrey's First Christmas

By Carol Heyer

We've all heard the story of the three wise men who brought their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the baby Jesus. But what about the camels who carried them? This is the story of Humphrey the camel and his long and cold journey to Bethlehem. The illustrations are beautiful as well as humorous.

Great Joy

By Kate DiCamillo

A young girl, Frances, watches a monkey and an organ grinder on the corner of Fifth and Vine. Frances watches the monkey hold out his silver cup to the busy passersby. Frances is troubled when she notices that the man and the monkey are still on the street late at night, and can't stop thinking about them even when she's practicing her line for the Christmas pageant. When the moment finally comes for Frances to speak, the gift of compassion allows her to share the perfect words with everyone, at just the right time. The surprise ending shows the miraculous, powerful secret of joy.

HOLDEN VILLAGE 2012

Fly with **Lutheran Lakeside Camp** to Holden Village in the Washington Cascade Mountains. **August 18-28, 2012**. On the return we spend a full day touring Seattle. Join pilgrims where Christ is the center of daily life. Each day is framed by matins, and community vespers. Christian fellowship is in abundance. Bell and vocal choirs, Bible study, crafts, hiking, fishing, pottery and weaving. Contact: Ranger Z at 712-336-2109 or z@lutheranlakeside.com Request a brochure or go online to www.lutheranlakeside.com (travel ministries)

SANTA FE

Fly with **Lutheran Lakeside Camp** from Des Moines to Albuquerque, New Mexico **September 10-17, 2012**. A time of personal reflection, prayer, meditation, reading, peace and fellowship. Take a pilgrimage to the Spanish missions where the Gospel has been preached for 400 years. **Pastor Mike Schmidt, Grace Lutheran in Des Moines is our chaplain, Bible study and worship leader**. Enjoy lectures and tours by local scholars and view stunning religious and contemporary art. Contact: Ranger Z at 712 336 2109 or z@lutheranlakeside.com. Request a brochure or online to www.lutheranlakeside.com (travel ministries)



Save the dates!

VBS



Due to the ever-increasing number of preschool and elementary age children from year to year, with a waiting list for preschool openings this past summer, we will be offering separate weeks for different age groups in 2012.

Please note the following:

June 11-15: morning only program for 3 year olds and preschoolers

June 25-29: full day program for kindergarten (morning only) through grade 5 (grades completed)

Confirmation Camp

Confirmation Camp at Lutheran Lakeside Camp will be **June 17-22**. It's a great week of learning, fun, and fellowship. We'll see you there!

Make Your Own Family Blessing Bowl



Families of youth are invited to gather together to make a Blessing Bowl of your very own!

Saturday, January 21, 1:00-3:30 p.m., Msindo Hall

Sign-up in the office by Stephanie's door

Cost is \$5.00

Please sign up by January 8 so materials can be purchased

With the guidance of Marion Nehmer, each family will create a family blessing bowl complete with stones. After the workshop, Marion will fire the bowls and stones. They will be ready for families to pick up in February--- in time for Lent.

Blessing Bowls are being used in the Sunday school classes to share stories, thoughts and prayers related to the many blessings in our lives. It has proven to be an excellent way to begin meaningful conversations with our youth, so we want to share this ministry with our families to spur conversations at home.

If you would like to see a Blessing Bowl, please ask your child's Sunday school teacher to show you the classroom bowl. If you have any questions, feel free to contact MeLissa Lawson at 554-5377 or lawson.chris@mchsi.com or Beth Flannery at 314-1022 or bdflannery@yahoo.com

Wednesday Night Children's Activities Continue

After a two week Christmas break, children's activities will resume on Wednesday, January 4.

Chapel Chimers from 5:30 to 5:50 p.m.

Youth Choir from 5:55 to 6:25 p.m.

Gym from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m.

Bible activities 7:00 to 7:30 p.m. in rooms 101 (elementary) and 104 (pre-K/K)

Starting in January the elementary youth will be led through the book series, "Learning to Get Along." Our 9th grade peer ministry group, other teens, and adults will lead small group discussions and activities based on one book each week. The lessons will teach essential social skills such as empathy, respect, cooperation, and kindness.

Sunday School Teacher & Support Staff "Thank You" Lunch

On Sunday, January 8, at noon all the people involved with Sunday school are invited to a "Thank You" lunch hosted by the Youth Education Team. This is for teachers, substitute teachers, sound team,

Sunday school support team and library readers. We want to let everyone know how important they are to our children and teens as they so generously share their faith.

Youth Service will be January 22 during both services.



DMARC FOOD PANTRY NETWORK TO REDUCE FOOD BOX SIZE, YET HOPE REMAINS

DES MOINES, Iowa (Dec 7, 2011) – DMARC trims food allocations as the economy drags, unemployment lingers, and donations are not keeping up with the number of families in need. Despite the challenges, the 12-site DMARC Food Pantry Network is determined to provide healthy food to people in Greater Des Moines who request it, even though it means changing protocol to cut costs and stretch resources.

One of the most obvious cutbacks will be a reduction in family food box contents. For example, a family of four would normally receive a box of 55 food items that includes all the servings of the foods listed on the USDA's "My Plate" program, once every 30 days. Now, a family of four will receive a food box of 33 items.

"These are hard decisions and we hope the reductions are only needed temporarily," said Sarai Schnucker Rice, DMARC's Executive Director. "People who used to serve as volunteers in our pantry sites are now themselves requesting assistance. Our site coordinators are on the front lines and they're telling us about the sense of urgency and despair that they hear from the people we serve."

What goes into a food box? "A very carefully planned list of shelf stable and fresh food," according to Elisabeth Ballstadt, Director of the Food Pantry Network. "Our food box contents are based on the best nutritional balance we can offer with the limited resources we have." Other cost efficiency measures including streamlining food deliveries and food donation pick-ups in order to save on truck usage, staff and fuel costs. "This is an unprecedented time and yet I'm confident that our community will rise to the need," said Rice. "We must."

The DMARC Food Pantry Network is grateful for the incredible support base of volunteers, in-kind donors and cash donors. Cash gifts are especially welcome, as we can buy two to six times as much food from our wholesale and Food Bank sources as can be purchased retail. Donations are accepted by credit card or Dwolla at MovetheFood.org/donate. Or mail your donation to: DMARC, 3816 36th Street, Suite 202, Des Moines, IA 50310. Or call: 515-277-6969.

The DMARC Food Pantry Network consists of 12 separate pantry sites, a centralized warehouse, and numerous community partners. It is the largest food pantry network in Iowa. Pantry sites are located in West Des Moines, Ankeny, Johnston, Urbandale, and eight sites in Des Moines. Each year, the network provides short-term food assistance for about 30,000 people, including nearly 15,000 who are children or youth under the age of 25 years. Food requests in 2011 are on pace to be the highest ever, with 7% more people asking for help. The Des Moines Area Religious Council is an interfaith organization with a core membership of about 137 congregations from ten faith traditions. Recipient of the 2010 Aurora Award from the Des Moines Register, DMARC provides a common means of responding to basic human needs and a context for interfaith dialogue. [MovetheFood](http://MovetheFood.org) is a DMARC-led initiative to address the entire food system in Greater Des Moines, building on more than 35 years of food assistance work, catalyzing fresh generations, and engaging new constituencies to further support a vision for a day when everyone in Polk County has enough to eat.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all.
(Titus 2:11)

Yes In this world where God creates with deep
beauty and profound mystery.
In this world where so many yearn for
God's healing and peace.
In this world where some have thought God has forsaken us:

Yes Here, in this world, the grace of God has appeared.
Not just in this world but for you.

Yes For you, weary from trying to meet the
expectations of others.
For you, worrying about an uncertain future.
For you, wondering if you are worthy.

Yes For you, the grace of God has appeared,
bringing salvation.

Not just for you but for all.

Yes For all, salvation has come in the wonder of
God in mercy bending low to meet us
in our humanity.
In the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection.
In the power and promise
of the gospel's proclamation,
God's goodness and loving-kindness has appeared
in the Savior Jesus.

So with angelic messengers and witnessing shepherds,
we raise our voices:

*"Glory to God in the highest heaven
and on earth peace among those
whom he favors."*

Mark S. Hanson
Presiding Bishop



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.