The Friendly Visitor

December 2019



Sundays Worship with Holy Communion 9:00 a.m. Fellowship, Adult Ed., & coffee time at 10:00 a.m.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Worship See page 7

Office Hours 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Monday-Thursday, closed Friday

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 Pink Insert: Poinsettia order forms

Disorientation

There are times when we can begin to feel disoriented or even lost. This can be while looking for something in an unfamiliar town, searching for something you lost, or something else. Sometimes we can feel lost in the spiritual sense. If this is or was you, please know that you are not alone. This feeling has been felt by countless people through the whole of our history.

> O Lord, God of my salvation, when, at night, I cry out in your presence, let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry. Psalm 88:1-2

The days are getting shorter. The nights are getting longer. Holidays are approaching with empty chairs at the table where loved ones once sat. The fevered pace of Christmas preparations is beginning. There are so many things on our hearts and minds and the experience of it all can feel quite disorientating. It makes it hard to find our bearings.

As the Psalmist later states in Psalm 89 *"I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens."* God has made a promise to us, and does speak to us in times of disorientation. God continues to meet us where we are and walk with us until we find that place of orientation again.

During Advent this year, and into the Christmas Season, we will be exploring these themes during worship, especially through a "Finding Peace" sermon series. This series will be focused on the texts from the Book of Isaiah that appear in the lectionary throughout the season. These themes and texts are as follows:

Dec. 1 – Where am I? Isaiah 2:1-5 Dec. 8 – Finding Hope. Isaiah 11:1-10 Dec. 15 – Finding Grace. Isaiah 35:1-10 Dec. 22 – Finding Faith. Isaiah 7:10-16 Christmas Eve – Finding Joy. Isaiah 9:2-7 Christmas Day – Finding Peace. Isaiah 62:6-12

We hope and pray that worship during Advent and Christmas helps all of us move from a sense of disorientation, to one of "Finding Peace." Please join us throughout this season, and consider recommending worship at Grace to others who may benefit from such a message of hope, grace, faith, joy, and peace during this busy season. In Christ, Pastor Mike

Happy December Birthday

- 1 Sarah Williamson Deanna Weber Josh Lund
- 2 Beverly Anderson Christopher Barks
- 3 Martha Page Ami Bradwell James Jordahl
- 4 Carter Woodruff
- 5 Anna Marie Peterson Duane Ulrick Darlis Honnold Aaron Brandsfield
- 8 Felicia Adams
- 9 Joy Averill Rosemary Randolph Salvador Rodriguez
- 10 Steve Young
- 11 Jamie Chamberlain Burke Shiffler Kari Dostalik
- 12 Evan Justice
- 13 Sherry Brindley Bradley Ashton Thomas Garcia
- 14 Stacie Holst Anthony Garcia
- 15 Mo Grotheer Norman Iverson Matt Ziska
- 17 Tanner Highland
- 18 Helen Fanning Payton Lawson Katja Rahjes Lucas Scholl
- 20 Shirley Shiffler
- 21 John Rudisill Chris Janson
- 22 Donald Moon Elizabeth Lewis
- 23 Nancy Crowfoot Wayne Curry Piper Hutton
- 24 Jon Rutter Stuart Mitchell Nicole Nelson
- 25 Jeffrey Nelson
- 27 Barbara Berven Christina Anderson
- 28 Ryan Randolph Sarah Chenoweth Samantha Schmidt Courtney Vander Plaats



Happy December Anniversary

1 – Cindy and Ross Peeler
 3 – Katharine and Matt Radermacher
 8 – Becky and Tom Seland
 14 – Gregory and Darlis Honnold
 26 – Megan and Charles Reynolds
 27 – Donald and Gloria Moon

Dear Grace Family,

Thank you for your friendship and caring during the time of our father/grandfather/great-grandfather's passing and funeral. Pastor Mike, Rich and Emma made the funeral service meaningful for our family and friends. Valerie and the ladies who served at the luncheon welcomed everyone graciously. We appreciated the beautiful flower arrangement sent by the Chancel Choir and the many other expressions of sympathy. Church was a central part of the lives of our dad and mom, and they felt that the Upper Room was a fitting resting place.

With our heartfelt thanks: Kathy, Jenny, Kurt, Kelley, Gabe and Zeppelin.

Save the Date: January 2020

Budget Forum Sunday, January 19 after worship, Grace Hall

Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday, January 26 after worship. Lunch will be served following the meeting.

Committee Reports should be turned into the office by Sunday, January 5.

Poinsettias for the Altar and our Homebound members The order for is now available on our website.

The cost is \$14, the order deadline is December 15.

Printed forms are included in this issue (pink insert) and in the Gathering Hall and upcoming bulletins.

December Birthdays Continued

- 29 Linda Rundle Kevin Krause Robin Randolph
- 30 Marion Nehmer Drake Carney
- 31 Verda Swanson Jean Thompson Nicholas Best





The Gift of Presence

Reprinted from Portico, a Ministry of the ELCA

Life is full of distractions, especially in this busy season of giving.

When we take the time to set intentions and be truly present, we gain clarity and direction to keep us focused on the people

and passions that matter most to us.

Being present allows us to make healthier choices for our financial, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being. In this state of mind, we can notice, listen, and attend to life within and outside ourselves with integrity.

Throughout the month of December, you are invited to use a Presence Jar. To begin find a clear container and print the daily activities below to guide your journey.

Cut out the activities from the list below, also found in printable form with additional suggestions, at the following REALLY long link (this link is clickable if you are reading online!) https://www.porticobenefits.org/CallToLiveWell/HowPorticoCanHelp/WellnessActivities/GiftOfPr esence Feel free to add your own ideas — and place them in the jar. Each day, draw an intention to focus on. You may choose to practice a new intention each day, or live into one for several days in a row. Complement your daily practice with weekly devotions to gain peace, connect with those around you, and experience the light of Christ this Advent.

Sing a favorite Seasonal Song

Meditate – sit in a relaxed position, notice your breathing, clear your mind of thoughts.

Declutter one room – an organized space can reduce your overall stress level.

Name one thing you are grateful for - friends, laughter, good coffee, pets.

Increase your Steps – take an extra walk today, even if it is just a short one.

Savor a snack – Take a moment to truly enjoy what you are eating.

Take a moment to notice nature – it is amazing what can go unnoticed when you're going about your day

Make a meal together

Speak or send a word of hope – be a light in the darkness for those around you.

Apologize - If something is weighing on your heart, seek reconciliation to find peace.

Make time for your passion – Release your creativity and reconnect with yourself.

Share your heart – Voice your gratitude, love, frustration, or pain with someone you care about.

Practice Patience – Focus on your breathing to reduce stress and give yourself time to respond rather than react.

Decide what you will commit to – e.g. yes to coffee with a friend, no to hosting your extended family.

Get a good night's sleep – Go to bed early after at least an hour of NO screen time.

Church Council Highlights From the October 22nd, 2019 Council Meeting

- Staff and Financial Reports:
 - The Council reviewed the monthly Staff reports.
 - Church and Grace Kids Care financial reports were reviewed and discussed. Daycare finances continue to be in the black. Church giving is ahead of budget, however some large unexpected expenses have placed us in a deficit position. The Executive Council will meet with the Finance Committee to discuss ways to achieve balance.
 - Daycare is at full capacity and full staff!
 - Emma Stammer, Minister for Worship and Music, reported that the experiment to have section leaders for the choir will be terminated.

• Stewardship:

 Commitment Sunday generated good response from the congregation. Several pledge cards were returned. Overall pledging is up! The committee will be following up on cards and pledges still outstanding.

• Capital Campaign

- The Capital Campaign Committee plans to start the campaign next spring.
- The Steering Committee has been going through lists of needs and wants and has been prioritizing them.

• Nominating Committee

• The Nominating Committee members are Barb Zimany, Don Peterson, and Carter Woodruff.

Little free Pantry/Pergola Project

- Don Peterson and Pastor Mike will attend a hearing to seek reversal of the denial of permits for the Little Free Pantry and Pergola.
- Action Items:
 - The Council approved use of funds from the Thrivent Choice reserve account to purchase Advent Devotional Booklets.
 - The Council approved use of funds from the Thrivent Choice reserve account to provide funding for faith enrichment and Christian education.
 - The Council approved guidelines for staff to approve requests for funding for faith enrichment and Christian education.

Respectfully,

Dave Gronert, Council Secretary

Finance Report – October Results

Financial results for October YTD are as follows:

- Pledged Offerings Actual \$351,265, Budget \$333,400
- Other Income Actual \$25,355, Budget \$24,750
- Expenses Actual \$398,964, Budget \$367,358
- Net activity Actual (\$22,345), Budget (\$9,208)

Actual net activity was unfavorable to budget by \$13,137. Pledged offerings are below budget while unpledged offerings were above budget. Expenses were significantly above budget due to boiler repairs, flooring repairs, HVAC replacement, higher insurance and snow removal costs.



Lydia-Martha Circle

Lydia/Martha Circle will meet Thursday, December 12th at 9:30 am. We plan to have a Christmas Carol sing along and fill Christmas Gift Bags for our Homebound members. All women of Grace are always welcome to join.

The Festival of Trees

Willing Workers and Staff will arrange trees in the Gathering Hall on Wednesday, December 4 (the Knitters Guild Tree will be placed a day early for their meeting on the 3rd). You will be able to start decorating after that date. As the Festival of Trees has been so successful over the past few years, we find it hard to accommodate everyone's request for specific size trees! So this year we will not be reserving them - trees will be on a first come first serve basis. We will still happily make a sign for your tree once it is set up – just tell the office which tree is yours!





Do you like to sing but can't make it to weekly choir rehearsals? Come be a part of the Chancel Choir for a night on Christmas Eve! The anthem at the 5:00pm service will be an arrangement of a familiar Christmas tune, sung in unison (no harmony.) It will require only a 30 minute rehearsal time before the service at 4:00pm, Tuesday Dec. 24, and you may sit with family in the congregation during worship. If you are interested

please let Emma know! Music will be distributed ahead of time, as well as a recording of the melody to listen to at home if desired. For further information or to commit, please contact Emma in person or at <u>emma@gracedm.org</u>.

December 1, 5pm - Grace ensembles and soloists provide the program for Advent by Candlelight **December 8, 9am** - Grace Bells and Grace Brass play in worship.

December 15, 9am - Grace Chancel Choir presents their musical Christmas offering in worship. **December 24, 5pm** - Grace Festival Choir sings in worship, rehearsal at 4pm.

Southwestern Community College Chamber Singers Presents: Holiday Carols in Concert

Friday, December 6, 2019 7:00 p.m. Grace Lutheran Church. A free-will offering will be taken.

Conductor, Lucas Mattson Conductor, Hanna Hearn

Works by: Rutter, Lauridsen, Mozart, Mattson, Dawson

Beaverdale Holiday Happenings

December 7th is Beaverdale's annual holiday tradition, featuring Santa Claus, a Bar Crawl, Shop Hop, and the Holiday Lights Bike Ride.

Holiday Bike Lights Ride! 5:30-7:30pm Hosted by <u>Beaverdale Bicycles</u>

New this year are WRISTBANDS and a SOCIAL MEDIA CONTEST for prizes, details at https://beaverdale.org

Lost and Found

Have you misplaced a pair of reading glasses, sunglasses, a dangly earring, headphones, gloves, a turquoise travel coffee mug, or other items? Please check the Lost and Found in the office! As many of the items have been hanging about for months, we will be donating unclaimed items after the first of the year.

Youth Ministry – Active Grace

Contact <u>ellen@gracedm.org</u>



Advent Service Learning

Believe it or not Advent Service Learning will soon begin! For several years now Confirmation students and mentors have engaged in acts of service each Wednesday evening during the season of Advent.

Wednesdays December 4, 11, and 18 from 6-8 p.m. 6th, 7th, and 8th graders and mentors will gather together for some meaningful time together learning about and helping others.

Here is a look at that schedule-

December 4 @ Grace: Joppa sleep mats with Jill Boeschen, bring your plastic bags! December 11: Moore Family Christmas shopping December 18 @ Grace: Moore Family Christmas wrapping

December 25 and January 1: NO CLASS January 8: Class resumes

This is one favorite times in our Confirmation schedule. I look forward to this every year and I hope you are looking forward to it, too!

Peace, Ellen

Eighth Grade Mentor Profiles

During the season of Advent we will be displaying eighth grade mentor profiles in the Gathering Hall. The third and final year of our Confirmation ministry here at Grace is a mentor year. Eighth grade students choose an adult member to serve as their mentor. One of the assignments is to create a profile of their mentor, sharing information about who that person is and what they have learned from them. Please take a moment to stop and see what they have to share about these special people.



2020 Save the Dates!

Information will be shared later, but please save these dates on your calendar for our youth fundraisers!

Cinnamon Roll Sunday 2020 Sunday, February 16

Garage & Plant Sale Saturday, May 2

Advent Daily Devotion Cards

Be sure to grab a deck of these super cool Advent daily devotion cards! You can find them in the Gathering Hall this First Sunday of Advent December 1, and we will be using them as part of Advent by Candlelight Sunday evening.



<u>Every Week (not all included at right)</u> Sundays

9:00 a.m. Holy Communion Worship 10:00 a.m. Coffee & Fellowship, Gathering Hall Active Grace Family Worship resumes in January

Tuesdays

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. Tuesday Bible Study with Pastor Mike, Grace Hall *(not 12/24 or 12/31)* 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. Centering Prayer in the

Upper room, led by Julie Honsey 11:00 a.m. Staff meeting, Innovation lab

Wednesdays

9:00 a.m. Willing Workers work & coffee time
9:45 a.m. Grace Kids Care Chapel
6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Confirmation, room 301
7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Choir rehearsal, music room

Thursdays (not 12/26)

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Quilters Msindo Quilting Room.

Other Grace Groups! Men's Work Group

We meet on the second Saturday of each month, 8:30 a.m. – noon. We will begin with breakfast in the kitchen, a devotion, followed by various projects around the church.

Altar Guild Meeting, meal, and fellowship:

Third Saturday of each month, offsite for coffee and breakfast. Contact

anderson.sue.a@gmail.com to be included on emails.

Grace Stitching & Needlework Group

Meets every 2nd & 4th Thursdays of each month from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., Gathering Hall. Contact Helen Ringgenberg, Carol Krause

First Circle Friends

LSI Respite Program for those in early stages of memory loss. Typically meeting at Grace on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month. January dates will be the 2nd & 4th Thursdays. Contact <u>https://lsiowa.org</u>

Grace Website <u>https://gracedm.org</u> for Announcements, Bulletins, Events Calendar, and more!

December Calendar

1 – Advent 1

8:00 a.m. Bells rehearse for Dec. 8 10:00 a.m. Private Reception Grace Hall II 5:00 p.m. Grace Fellowship Advent by Candlelight

- 2 4:30 p.m. AA Groups GH & Café
- 3 6-30 9:00 p.m. Des Moines Knitters Guild, Grace Hall
- 4 Festival of Trees set-up
- 5 10:00 a.m. 3:00 p.m. First Circle Friends, GH
- 6 3:00 p.m. SWCC Group arrives
 5:30 p.m. SWCC Group dinner, Grace Hall
 7:00 p.m. SWCC Concert, Sanctuary (see pg 5)
 7 8:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m. Contemplative Outreach
- of Central Iowa
- 8 Advent 2
- 8:15 a.m. Bells rehearsal, Sanctuary 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Mid – Iowa Cactus and Succulent Society, Cafe
- 9 4:30 p.m. AA Groups GH & Café
- 10 11:30 a.m. 1:30 p.m. Staff Lunch, offsite 5:30 p.m. Finance Team, Innovation Lab 6:30 p.m. Executive Meeting
- 12 10:00 a.m. Lydia/Martha Circle, GH (see pg 5)
 10:00 a.m. 3:00 p.m. Stitching Group Christmas Party, Gathering Hall
 5:30 p.m. – GKC Family Potluck, Grace Hall
 7:00 p.m. Evangelism Team Meeting,
- Gathering Hall 14 – 8:30 a.m. – noon Men's Work Group
- 15 Advent 3 January Newsletter submission deadline
 10:30 a.m. Council Meeting (tentative)
 6:00 p.m. Ladies Night Out Christmas (pg 10)
- 16 4:30 p.m. AA Groups GH & Café
- 18 no choir rehearsal tonight
- 21 9:30 a.m. Altar Guild meeting, offsite
- 22 Advent 4
- 23 4:30 p.m. AA Groups GH & Café
- 24 Christmas Eve Church Office Closed, GKC Closed 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service 11:00 p.m. Cristmas Eve Service
- 25 Christmas Day Church Office Closed, GKC Closed 10:00 a.m. Christmas Day Service
- 26 7:00 a.m. Private Event, Grace Hall Church Office Closed
- 29 Christmas 1, Lessons and Carols worship
- 30 Last Day for 2019 Deposits 4:30 p.m. AA Groups GH & Café
- 31 Church Office Closed



National Adoption Month

November is National Adoption Month, a time to honor families who have opened their hearts and homes to children in need. For LSI, it is a time to celebrate the families we support through Foster Care and Adoption, and to raise awareness for the hundreds of Iowa children in need of a safe, loving home.

In 30 counties across western Iowa, LSI Foster Care and Adoption recruits, licenses, and supports foster and adoptive families to ensure every Iowa child grows up in a safe, stable environment.

But more work needs to be done. According to the most recent federal data, more than 100,000 children in the U.S. are waiting to be adopted from foster care, and thousands of teens age out of foster care every year without a permanent family. To learn more about supporting lowa children in foster care, visit LSIowa.org/Foster, or contact Deb Whitford, LSI director of philanthropy and church relations, at <u>Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org</u> or 563.676.2065.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the Iove of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at <u>www.LSIowa.org</u> and <u>www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa</u>.

A Growing Family

Lindsey and Andrea were no strangers to foster parenting. Their older brother fostered children for 10 years, and they were inspired by his drive and passion for supporting vulnerable children. Until recently, they hadn't seen themselves as foster parents. But something in their hearts told them they were needed.

"It's been on our hearts for a lot of years, and we have the room and love," Andrea says. "It's something we knew we could do and it's needed."

The two sisters decided to become licensed foster parents earlier this year through LSI Foster Care and Adoption. Now, they are caring for children in foster care at the same time. Lindsey and Andrea regularly meet up to support one another and ensure the children can connect and feel less alone during the most vulnerable time in their young lives.

"It's been so important to have a connection to another foster family," Lindsey says. "The kids can see they're not different. There are other children in their same situation."

Meanwhile, they are busy building a strong bond with the children's birth families. Lindsey says foster parenting is a way for them to give a child stability while also nurturing their whole family.

Lindsey and Andrea have also found support from other local foster families. They are there for each other, offering a shoulder to lean on when anyone needs an extra boost on the difficult days.

"There is a need for foster families in Iowa, and there is so much good that comes out of fostering," Andrea says.



DMARC Requested Donations for December: Pasta, and dried Noodles, Burmese Style

December Adult Education



December 1: Advent Hymn Study

The second session in a series of encounters with the words of hymns of worship will occur in Grace Hall I following worship on December 1. The presentation will briefly address the advantages and disadvantages of sung hymns within worship followed by consideration of only the words to some familiar and possibly not so familiar hymns which are appropriate to the themes within the season of Advent. There will be no singing of the hymns; rather, the participants will be asked to consider the meaning or lessons contained within the words and then share those with the others in attendance.

December 8: Engaging All Generations in Service and Learning

Minister for Youth and Family Ellen Rothweiler will lead discussion on the importance of Cross Generational ministry in the Church.

From the materials we will use to guide our conversation-

"We have become a very age segregated society. And too many of our congregations have followed this unhealthy trend. Congregations are a vast untapped potential for bringing all the generations together. In doing so, we have an opportunity to practice accompaniment. This session will provide examples of how all the ages can accompany one another and serve together and truly be the Body of Christ"

Come hear more about what gifts your generation can offer to the whole Body of Christ.

Here is information on what the kids will be doing in Grace Hall II

Come and craft!

On Sunday, December 8 beginning at 10 am children of all ages are invited to come and make an ornament for our homebound members. Each year our ladies circles assemble a Christmas bag for each homebound member, and in years past our Sunday School kids have contributed to the effort. The children's crafts are always a big hit! Beginning at 10 am in Grace Hall II Karri Brandsfield and Deanna Weber will have all the materials needed for you to make an ornament or two for the Christmas bags. Please come and have some fun while bringing joy to our members who cannot be here at Grace with us.

December 15 and 22: Because of Bethlehem. A Max Lucado Advent Study

Join us for an Advent Study by Mac Lucado. Max will unpack for us the promises of Christmas that reveal a lifetime of hope all because of one baby born in Bethlehem.

December 29: Fellowship



Grace Fellowship Advent by Candlelight

The next meeting of Grace Fellowship will be at 5 p.m. on December 1, 2019 for **Advent by Candlelight.** As of printing time, the sign-up deadline has passed, but we are expecting over 100 to attend! As the color of Advent is blue, we are encouraging everyone to find an item of blue to wear! This family friendly event will feature an Advent program with readings, musicians from Grace, and a catered traditional holiday meal – come hungry!

Grace Fellowship meets quarterly in Grace Hall at 5:00 p.m. for a light luncheon and a program. We'd be happy to have you join us! If you have any questions, or have a program idea, contact Karen Taylor.

Ladies Night Out – Open to all women of Grace

The annual LNO Christmas Party will take place this year at Valerie Culp's house on Sunday 12/15 at 6 p.m. A game/gift exchange will take place with a wrapped gift around \$20 (this is NOT a white elephant gift, this should be a gift you would like to receive). The game/gift exchange is a favorite event every year so please join us! This is a potluck so bring a dish to share and come hungry! Please let Val know what you are bringing so we don't end up with several veggie trays or - more likely with this group – 5 types of meatballs or desserts!

Please RSVP to Val by Friday, December 13th <u>valerieculp@mchsi.com</u> or 515-965-5972.

Grace 2020 Endowment Applications

Now available on the website https://gracedm.org/resources/forms-and-applications/

Applications are due January 31, 2020. Awards will be announced by March 31, 2020. Requests for specific, finite projects are preferred. The Endowment does not fund operational expenses. Submit proposal with detailed breakdown of project expenses. If the entire request is not granted this will allow for possible partial funding. 2. A final written report is required to be submitted to the Endowment Fund Committee no later than December 1st of the year of the grant. The report shall include documentation of the expenditures and completion status of the project.

Grace's Star Tree

NO

Choose a star and make someone's Christmas special – an adult from one of Mosaic's local group homes or a child from LSI's Early Development Program.

Please select a star from the Star Tree in the Gathering Hall. It will be up the Sunday <u>before</u> Thanksgiving (since Thanksgiving is so late this year). Items should be returned, unwrapped, to Grace by Sunday December 15. Please limit the cost for gifts to about \$25. If several items are listed, you may choose the one or ones to fit the money amount.



Mosaic is a faith-based organization serving adults with intellectual disabilities. LSI's Early Childhood Program provides supportive services to at risk single mothers from the prenatal period until age five when the child starts kindergarten.

If as we approach December 15th, you are unable to shop for your star gift, let us know so we can. If you have your gift and are unable to deliver it to church by the 15th, please also let us know so we don't go shopping and duplicate presents.

If you have questions, contact Joie Gronert at 279 - 4974 or Denise Friesth at 276 - 6873. Have fun shopping!

ELCA Good Gifts

Give the gift that keeps on giving; a cow, goat, bees, chickens, microloan for a woman... The ELCA Good Gifts tree is in the Gathering Hall (after the Stars have been chosen). Select the ornament with the gift of your choice. Write your check to Grace Lutheran Church with ELCA Good Gifts in the memo line.

Thank You, the Hunger Team