



GRACE
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

5201 Urbandale Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50310
515-276-6873
www.gracedm.org

Pastor Michael Schmidt
mike@gracedm.org

Vicar Adam Barden
adam@gracedm.org

Organist
Richard Snyder
rich@gracedm.org

Minister for Communications
Michelle Voelker
michelle@gracedm.org

Office Assistant for Worship
Jessye Flannery
jessica@gracedm.org

Administrative Assistant
Kami Chicas
kami@gracedm.org

Bookkeeper
Mike Hilsabeck
mike.h@gracedm.org

Custodian
Todd Haugen 1-515-520-4450

Inside This Issue...

- 2... Festival of Trees, Poinsettia pickup
- 3... Holiday Worship Schedule & Volunteer needs, 2024 Altar Flowers
- 4... Year End Dates to know, Annual Meeting & Year-end Reports, New Member Classes, Fellowship & Education Schedule for January
- 5... Accessing Worship, Little Free Pantry Request, Confirmation Class shops for Christmas, January Anniversaries
- 6... January Birthdays, LSI Update
- 7... Service Projects, more event photos!
- 8... Council Highlights

Longest Night Service
Wednesday, December 20, 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 24, 9 a.m.

Christmas Eve Worship
5 p.m. & 9 p.m.

Christmas Day Worship, 10 a.m.

Lessons and Carols, December 21, 10 a.m.



*Merry Christmas
from the Staff of
Grace Lutheran Church*

Pastor Michael Schmidt

Vicar Adam Barden

Kathy Bowermaster

Kami Chicas

Jessye Flannery

Todd Haugen

Mike Hilsabeck

Rich Snyder

Michelle Voelker



Gathering Hall Festival of Trees!

The trees in the Gathering Hall look amazing. Thank You to the Willing workers (Rich Snyder, Brian Gerling, Paul Nelson) for setting up the trees, arranging, "unsmushing" and adding lights. Also to the Gerlings for donating lights and ornaments. Don't mind if you wander through on a weekday and find that staff have relocated to the Gathering Hall with their laptops to enjoy the ambiance.

As is now tradition at Grace, there will be treats for all under/near the trees on Christmas Eve!

Several groups and individuals have decorated trees this year, and a few more remain if you would like to decorate one. Quilters have a beautiful LWR/Quilting tree, there is a pink tree, and once again we have a beautiful Mitten Tree! Mary Helt shared a little more about this year's mitten tree:

Lydia/Martha Circle contributed and filed for a Thrivent grant to assist the Merle Hay Neighborhood Association with their annual purchase of coats for students at Moore Elementary. The Mitten Tree has hats and mittens - made by the Knitting Guild and Fibersmiths – which will be given to students at Moore after the holidays. Everyone is welcome to contribute to the tree and keeping Moore students warm. Simply bring homemade or purchased hats, scarves, gloves, or mittens, and place them on the tree. Thank you.



Christmas Poinsettia Pickup

Thank you for sponsoring a Christmas poinsettia for the sanctuary this Christmas! We encourage you to take your plant home or deliver it to a friend so all of our lovely flowers find good homes for the season. You may pick up your poinsettia after worship on Christmas Day, after worship on December 31, or anytime during church open hours January 2–5 when they will be moved to the Gathering Hall.



Star Tree update: Thank you

Staff want to thank Joie Gronert and Gail Peterson for continuing to organize and coordinate this wonderful program, which brings Christmas to many families and individuals served by LSI and Mosaic.

Thank you to all who choose stars and donate items. Your love is a gift and example.



All worship services will be livestreamed, available at www.gracedm.org, **with the exception** of Christmas Eve at 9 p.m., and Christmas Day at 10 a.m.

Sunday, December 24: Advent worship at 9 a.m.
No donuts/coffeetime or Education hour this morning.

Longest Night Worship: December 20 – 6:30 p.m.

We recognize that the season of Advent and Christmas is also a time of grief for many people. For those who mourn the losses of loved ones, those estranged from their families, or for the many reasons the seasons open up doors to feel sorrow.

This service is a time to reflect upon grief as a community; to not have to put on the holly jolly smile for family and friends.

Even if you are not feeling the holiday blues, you are invited to come be a part of the community as a support for those who need it.

Christmas Eve Worship December 24 – 5 p.m.
Christmas Eve Worship December 24 – 9 p.m.

Christmas Day Worship December 25 – 10 a.m.
No donuts/coffeetime or Education hour this morning.

Lessons and Carols December 31 – 10 a.m.
*Join us for a joyful worship of readings and singing!
There will be an opportunity for an abbreviated fellowship in the Gathering Hall after worship.*

January 7, Sunday Worship – 9 a.m.
Fellowship/coffeetime and Education Hour return

Advent & Christmas Worship volunteer needs

Sign up here, [Online Worship Volunteer Signup](https://volunteersignup.org/8X7MC) or contact the office at 515-276-6873.

- Lectors:
 - Christmas Eve 9 p.m.
 - December 31 Lessons & Carols
- Communion Assistants:
 - Christmas Eve 5 p.m. (1)
 - Christmas Eve 9 p.m. (2)
- Greeter:
 - December 24 9 a.m.
 - Christmas Eve 9 p.m.,
 - Christmas Day 10 a.m.
 - Lessons & Carols, 10 a.m.

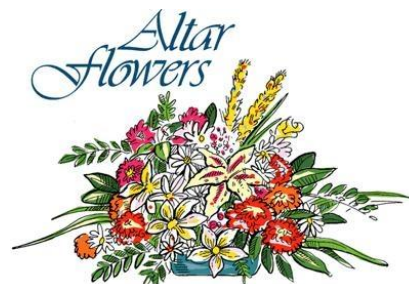
2024 Altar Flowers

The 2024 altar flower signup sheet is now online:

<https://volunteersignup.org/8X7MC>

We invite you to sponsor a bouquet of flowers for the altar. You can include a special message in the bulletin, and the flowers are yours to take home after the worship service on Sunday.

The cost is \$25 and you can pay through Grace's online giving site (<https://gracedm.org/give-to-grace/>) or by check or cash to the office. Please put your first AND last name(s) in the first name field and type a special message (optional) in the last name field (in memory of ... in honor of). Contact Kathy at kbowerma@hotmail.com questions. Thank you!



New Member Classes with Pastor Mike

The next **New Member Class** with Pastor Mike will be held on Sunday, January 7, 2024 in the Innovation Lab/Conference room. Let us know in advance if you are coming, or just show up! If you have questions please contact Pastor Mike Mike@gracedm.org or 515/276-6873.

December & Holiday Office Hours The church office will be closed between Friday, December 22nd, and Tuesday, January 2nd.

Monday, December 18 through
Thursday, December 21:
Office open from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Friday December 22

Office Closes for the year*. We will return
on Tuesday, January 2nd.

*Mike will make the year-end deposit
after December 27th, before banks close
for the holiday. Please note the building
and office will not be 'open'.

Final Contributions for 2022 should arrive at
the church no later than Wednesday,
December 27, to be counted for 2022.



You may also:

- Use the online giving site on our website www.gracedm.org Click on the word "Give" at the upper right corner of the page. Or go direct to <https://gracedm.org/give-to-grace/> Then scroll down, click on the red "Donate" button, and follow the instructions from there.
- Drop items off in person by Sunday December 24 -25 when you are in the building for Christmas worship.
- Placing non-USPS items, especially those without stamps, in the mailbox is illegal.

Congregational Annual & Year End Reports

We need your year-end reports please!
Due Date: Monday, January 8

We appreciate all that you do! If you have a moment to put yours together now, go right ahead and send it off and get that off your New Year's To-do list! You may send your reports to kami@gracedm.org or michelle@gracedm.org



Fellowship (10 a.m.) & Coffee Hour (10:15 a.m.) Education Hour both return in January!

January 7: (combined at 10 a.m.)

All-ages Service project and coffee hour combined in Grace Hall. Please see page 7 for more details!

January 14:

K-5 and High School Youth Education returns

Adults: Deacon Jodi Scheuman will be with us in worship, and will lead a forum on all things synod!

January 21:

K-5 and High School Youth Education continue
Finance and Budget Forum in Grace Hall

January 28:

K-5 and High School Youth Education continue
Annual Meeting in Grace Hall

December Little Free Pantry Request of the Month:

December is the last month of the current HyVee Perks deals. Donations of any of the following items would be great to build up in our backstock over the colder months.

- 12pk Ramen noodles
- HyVee boxed pasta
- Knorr Pasta or Rice side dishes

You can also order items from the Grace Wish List on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), which will be shipped directly to the church, or you can donate through our secure [GIVE](#) page to build up our fund used to purchase items to stock the pantry. Thank you for your donations.

Accessing Worship in person or online

Sunday Worship in-person and livestreamed every week at 9:00 a.m. January 8, 2024 & beyond

- **On our website:** On the home page, in the "Welcome to Grace" section on the www.gracedm.org homepage, click on the red "Online Worship" button.
- **Find us on Facebook @GraceLutherandm:** The service will appear as live shortly before 9:00 a.m. If you see our logo, you are in the right place!
- Worship is recorded and archived on our website. Please allow us 24 hours to post the recording.
- **Worship materials are posted prior to worship on our [website worship page](#)**
- **Find weekly announcements, past newsletters, and more on our website [Resources](#) pages!**

Weekday Prayers on Tuesdays and Fridays with Pastor Mike or Vicar Adam 9:30 a.m. on Facebook. Simply type [@GraceLutherandm](#) into your browser or search engine to find us even if you don't have a Facebook account.

Christmas Giving!

The Confirmation Students once again enjoyed shopping for Moore Elementary families this Christmas. This year they were assisted with Thrivent Choice Funds. Here Melissa from Moore picks up the items from Vicar Adam at Grace!



Happy Anniversary from Grace!

- 4 – Elizabeth and Mark Dungan
- 9 – Joie and David Gronert

Happy January Birthday

- 1- Elizabeth Dungan
Gumarito Marquez
Mable Moran
Tana Friesth Perry
Adilyne Reyes
- 2 - Andrew Allen
Nicholas Jessen
- 3 - Jay Wangerin
Eric Weber
- 4 - Lynn Niemuth
- 6 - Julie Honsey
Tammy Denton
Amy Schmelzer
Paul Calahan
- 8 - Kathy Roat
Catherine Lewis
- 9 - Sandra Briggs
Michael Friesth
- 10 - Caden Mendez
- 13 - Jacqueline Villela
- 14 - Tessa Fenimore
- 15 - Laria Preston
Cyrus Stammer
- 16 - Daniel Robbins
- 17 - McKenzie Carney
- 18 - Carli Stee
Lon Friesth
Lonnie Jessen
Stephen Kallenbach
Cooper Bigg
- 19 - Becky Selander
- 20 – Jason Fry
Tammi Simet
Samuel Speck
- 21 - Mary Helt
Cheryl Wilner
- 23- Donald Peterson
Alice Kulzer
- 24 - Garry Lenhart
- 26- Patricia Allen
Valerie Culp
Amber Davik
Haley Honnold
- 28- James Kaleewoun
- 29- Norman Trentmann
Cherlyn Lewis
- 30- Elizabeth Prescott
Nayeli Rodriguez
- 31 - Maryena Petty-Lee



Amplifying the Voices of Iowa Children and Families

Individuals struggle without access to critical healthcare and family support services. Human service providers are overworked and underpaid. Former refugees and immigrants strive to build new lives in the U.S.

These are all issues faced by Iowans from all different walks of life. Join Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) to advocate for our community members at Lutheran Day on the Hill (LDH) on **Monday, February 19, 2024.**

In partnership with the three Iowa synods of the ELCA, LDH is LSI's biggest day of advocacy. Over 150 participants gather at Capitol Hill Lutheran Church in Des Moines to learn about critical issues Iowa children, adults, and families are facing. You'll learn more about the legislative process, the issues impacting your neighbors, and your role as a citizen in helping to amplify their voices.

After learning how to advocate for our neighbors, the group heads to the Iowa State Capitol to talk directly with legislators.

For more information and to register for this year's Lutheran Day on the Hill, visit LSIowa.org/LDH.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love 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 LSIowa.org and facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

January 7 All ages Service Project

For our all ages service project on January 7th, join us after worship in Grace Hall, where we will be putting together We Care kits for Hope Ministries Women's shelter. These kits contain essential toiletries and are given to women when they first come into the shelter, to help them make a fresh start. This project is funded by a grant from our Mission Action Fund.

Hope Ministries mission is to rescue those who are homeless, hungry, abused or addicted, providing opportunities for hope, recovery and restoration through the love of Jesus Christ.

Look for more details about Hope Ministries projects in upcoming Tuesday enews. You can sign up for this at our website, just go to www.gracedm.org, scroll down on the front page, enter your email address, and press the red "submit" button!

Library Hallway Family & Single-use Restrooms

Both are usable again, and we are thrilled to have family friendly options for those who attend services with young children.

Thank you to Dean Watson for donating and spearheading the replacement of the damaged floor tiles, Pastor Mike for the new door handles, and Jenny Rehder for the signs. Your care and commitment to Grace deserve thanks (even though all three had no idea we would publicly thank them and likely wish we hadn't.)

December's Service Project was packing gift bags for our members who cannot often venture out to Grace for Worship. Several groups contributed to the included goodies, and fun was had by all.



On December 17 we enjoyed our second Annual Dessert Potluck during coffeetime – sooo many goodies, plus a room full of happy members enjoying a little downtime in a busy month – delightful! (These are the goodies that remained at the END of the hour – many were bagged up for the Little Free Pantry).



Grace Lutheran Church Congregational Council Minutes

November 28 6:00 P.M. in Grace Hall

1. Call to order – Meeting called to order at 6:10 P.M. following a tasty dinner provided by Greg (and Jill!).
2. Devotions – Vicar Adam Matthew 11:28
3. Adoption of Agenda – Approved by unanimous consent.
4. Approval of Minutes from 10/24/2023 council meeting – Approved by unanimous consent.
5. “Ideas that will get you fired” – Paint the pews white. Put whiteboards or chalkboards in the back pews for kids.
6. Staff Reports – no comments.
7. Finance Report – Down \$35K to budget and \$50K to break even for the year. Hopefully will make up ground in Nov and Dec.
 - a. Revenue Task Force meeting – LSI did an initial tour and liked the space at Grace. They are currently hiring a CEO so finalizing any rental agreements may take a longer time due to this activity.
 - b. Stewardship update – Goal is \$375K, currently have approximately \$330K after commitment Sunday with some outstanding pledges likely to come in.
8. New Business
 - a. Little Free Pantry grant from Immanuel Vision Foundation for \$7400 was approved!
 - b. Upstairs bathroom – new signage purchased. Have a donation for putting in a new floor in the second first floor bathroom so both will be single use and functional.
 - c. New refurbished office computers have arrived! Kevin made a motion to fix Pastor’s laptop (paid out of Thrivent funds), seconded by Aaron, motion approved.
9. Old Business
 - a. Staff Updates
 - i. Chancel Choir – no permanent hire yet. Kathy will continue to direct and accompany the choir through the school year and will be paid a stipend starting in January.
 - ii. Mike Hilsabeck – new Bookkeeper
 - iii. Kami Chicas – new Administrative Assistant
 - iv. Compensation for Denise (for training of new staff) – Greg moved that Denise be compensated up to 50 hrs. total for training, paid at \$28.25 /hour. Jenny seconded; motion approved.
 - b. Church Rental – see revenue task force update.
 - c. Constitution and Bylaws Update – teams met again on 11/28 and are finalizing updates. Updated Constitution will be sent out to council for review, then can be sent to the ELCA Synod.
10. Adjournment – Carter adjourned the meeting at 7:12 P.M.

2023 Congregational Council Members

Term ends 2024: Aaron Brandsfield, Tom McCleary, Linda Moravec, Dean Watson

Term ends 2025: Carter Woodruff, Mike Hilsabeck, Kevin Drury, Jenny Rehder

Term Ends 2026 Valerie Culp, Greg Boesch

Finance Report

The December Finance Report will be included in the 2023 Annual Report which will be made available to all members in January.